

How to make your adult Sabbath School attractive to the people who aren't there <u>yet</u> ... or who stopped coming long ago

√ This programme is available in PDF printed form online at <u>www.nnzc.org.nz/sabbath-school</u>.
 √ Its original form is a Keynote-Mac on-screen presentation. For inquiries about the on-screen presentation, contact Ed Gallagher, <u>eddieg@actrix.co.nz</u>.
 √ PRINTING THIS OUT? We recommend going to "Layout" on the Print screen, and specifying 2 pages per sheet. Important—when you see a preview of the print job, check the order of slides on the page. If the order of slides is not correct, use Layout direction to select the correct order. You might want to print out the first page only as a test, before printing out all pages.

BRING YOUR SABBATH SCHOOL TO LIFE!



1) CRISIS IN SABBATH SCHOOL 2) LET'S BEGIN AGAIN! 3) HOW TO USE THE TIME? 4) THE MOST IMPORTANT JOB 5) UNDERSTAND YOUR GROUP 6) BRING THE BIBLE TO LIFE 7) HOW TO CREATE DIALOGUE 8) MISSION & OUTREACH THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

 $\sqrt{1}$ (The scene is Opito Beach on the Coromandel Peninsula ... one of the most beautiful beaches in New Zealand.)

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Discovered: Two main reasons for non-attendance

- Lack of fellowship and caring
- A format and style that don't meet the needs of most people ... "It's boring"

Observed: A steady drop in adult Sabbath School attendance, at least in Western societies

> Sunday schools similarly affected



Look who's mostly missing ...

Most noticeably: People in their 20s and 30s Also: People in their 40s



 $\sqrt{According}$ to some research done by the General Conference / NAD Sabbath School department some years ago. If anyone's not sure about this, visit around a few adult Sabbath Schools and take a look!





Look who's also missing ...

People from the neighbourhood! People looking for friendship People who hear that God can be found at something called "Sabbath School"









 $\sqrt{\text{Counsels on Sabbath School Work, p9.}}$





 \sqrt{A} 1949 Ford Anglia. $\sqrt{11}$ It's called the "Oldsmobile" effect—after becoming the oldest surviving American nameplate and selling more than 35 million cars, the company was dissolved in 2004—it failed to adapt to the younger market.





 $\sqrt{1}$ [Sermonview extended license purchased for this illustration—OK for print; cannot be captured or transferred by other person or entity.]

If Jesus showed up at your Sabbath School, and you asked him to take the lead ...

- What might he focus on?
- What <u>atmosphere</u> would he create?
- What <u>style</u> and <u>approach</u> would he choose?





How are people motivated?

Is a 1940s–60s model effective today?

What will most attract and hold people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s from the community around us?

 \sqrt{N} Needed: participation ... involvement ... action ... personal interest ... relationship-building ... real-life solutions and application ... humour ... joy. Meaningful relationship ... "The truth is, I'm lonely" Action-involvement ... "I'd like to do something worthwhile" Help in daily living ... "Sometimes I wonder if I'll make it" An understanding about God ... "Life is confusing—what can I count on?" A sense of value ... "Do I mean something to somebody?"









Original emphasis ... James White, Uriah Smith

- Bible study
- Fellowship
- Missions ... outreach

him. Their efforts are appreciated, and people have been blessed.

The intentions were good! Leaders Love God and want to serve But now we must face a reality, and respond with grace.

 $\sqrt{}$ Sabbath School was started by James White in 1853.

What Sabbath School became

- Monologue
- Heavy discussion
- Another church service







* "Less should be said to the scholars ... and much more should be said in regard to the salvation of souls."

* "The prevailing monotony ... needs to be disturbed....The Holy Spirit's power will move upon hearts when this dead, lifeless monotony is broken up."

* "Many ... make long, dry speeches in the Sabbath School... They do not adapt their instruction to the real wants. . . . They do not realise that by their long, tedious talks they are killing interest in, and love for, the school."

 $\sqrt{1}$ Looks like Ellen White personally was bored by the Sabbath Schools of her time!

 $\sqrt{12}$ It's incredible how quickly adult Sabbath School left its original design of Bible study, fellowship, and mission-outreach. It we have not done well with it in recent years, we could take some comfort from the fact that we're simply following many decades of practice and tradition... All the more reason to bring about positive change now! $\sqrt{1}$ The highlighted words give us our marching orders for Sabbath School. Salvation of souls ... Holy Spirit ... adaptation ... real wants and needs. $\sqrt{\text{Ellen G. White: CSW 151, TMGW 204, CSW 166.}}$

Counsel from Long ago...







Back to our roots!



V Children are shown in the photos, but we're dealing with adult Sabbath School. The pictures raise a question ... why do kids have so much fun, and we make sure their Sabbath School is fun? ... why do we make it all so "grown up" and dull when we get older? ... children naturally love, and learn, and bless others ... can we do the same as adults? ... maybe we need to go back to our roots as children, as well as back to our roots in the origins of Sabbath School ... "Except you become as little children...."



The unique role of sabbath school

Spiritual development!

- Attracting, training, and nurturing <u>disciples</u>
- Most attendees say they come looking for <u>spiritual</u> growth
- Fellowship ... Bible study ...
 mission-outreach = key
 elements in spiritual growth







Church service

- Worship
- Attentiveness
- Celebration
- Proclamation

• Church service and Sabbath School are not the same! • Yes, there's some crossover, but each of these has a distinctive character and goal. Let's not confuse them!

V When we recognise the distinctive character and goal of the two, we will realise the kind of mistake we have sometimes made, designing adult Sabbath School as if it were another church service. If we were motivated by sensitivity and political correctness, we would not address this reality. But the time has come for courageous acknowledgement. Let's take prayerful action to get back to the original design of Adventist Sabbath School.

Church Service / Sabbath School

Sabbath School

- Learning
- Interaction
- **Nurture**
- **Discovery**



Which did Jesus do more of ... church, or Sabbath School?

stories healing dialogue interaction acts of blessing practical teaching o questions & answers Sounds like:

 $\sqrt{100}$ [Sermonview extended license purchased for this illustration—OK for print; cannot be captured or transferred by other person or entity.]











How much <u>time</u> is needed to meet these goals?

 $\sqrt{1}$ Think about this! Realistically, what amount of time is desirable to make the adult Sabbath School a place of loving, learning, and blessing ... every time?

Review the essential elements

Fellowship > loving **Bible study > learning** Mission—outreach > blessing







Experts agree ... 60-75 minutes is required, at minimum, to realise these goals

So ... how shall we allocate the precious slice of time given to us for Sabbath School?





1. Fellowship time + *prayer* ... 10–20 minutes

past week

2. Bible study time + prayer ... 35-45 minutes Interactive, Word-based, application-focused—prayerful

study and discussion

3. Outreach time + prayer ... 15–20 minutes Plans for practical ministry between now and next time

 $\sqrt{1}$ This simple, three-step format requires a minimum of 1 hour ... it can extend to as much as 1 hour and 25 minutes, depending on how much time is available.

A recommended format

Greeting, a song or two, blessings and challenges from the







V Since the original design of Sabbath School was so clear and simple, why not draw directly from that to re-shape our Sabbath School now? Times have changed, but people have changed little at their core. Today's people love what our forebears loved—relationships, learning, and blessing.



How might each of these look?

1. Fellowship time + *prayer* ... 10–20 minutes

past week

2. Bible study time + prayer ... 35-45 minutes Interactive, Word-based, application-focused—prayerful

study and discussion

3. Outreach time + prayer ... 15–20 minutes Plans for practical ministry between now and next time

 $\sqrt{1}$ Discussion and examples ... how each of these plays out in the Sabbath School time. V The outreach time could consist simply of identifying one or two people in the community who could use some special assistance of some kind ... then follow up in the Sabbath School, or afterward, to designate who might give attention those needs, and how. The next Sabbath, part of the fellowship time could include a brief report on the blessings given and received. Or, the group might discuss how it can co-operate with wider church plans for sharing the Gospel ... or pray about and make its own plans for advancing the Kingdom of God. See the section in this presentation entitled "Mission & outreach".

Greeting, a song or two, blessings and challenges from the



Q1... Why so much prayer?

Prayer is the way in which we include Jesus in our conversation!

You wouldn't want to leave him out, would you?!?

Thanksgiving or request ... prayer transforms ... it makes an application ... it heals ... it opens hearts ... Sabbath School is natural as a place of pray

 $\sqrt{10}$ Provide examples of how prayer can be naturally integrated into all three segments of the Sabbath School time ... fellowship, study, outreach. $\sqrt{10}$ Spontaneous, very short, woven-in, unforced, Scripture-based ... as the Spirit leads.

V Describe and model how this kind of natural, simple-sentence praying can be made non-threatening for all who come to Sabbath School. And, how it can open up a new perspective on the gift of prayer.







Q2... Could we use the whole time for study?

You could ... realising you are largely giving up time for fellowship, outreach, and

 $\sqrt{10}$ [Sermonview extended license purchased for this illustration—OK for print; cannot be captured or transferred by other person or entity.] $\sqrt{1}$ This approach could work in some settings. It's a matter of deciding what's best, guided by the Spirit. In the new paradigm, the Sabbath School class becomes a small group. As a small group, it has the opportunity to realise the goals of small group ministry. If the entire time is spent in study, some key aspects will be missing.



If they're only "preliminary", and you have <u>so little</u> precious time to accomplish so much - why have them????

 $\sqrt{1}$ [Sermonview extended license purchased for this illustration—OK for print; cannot be captured or transferred by other person or entity.] $\sqrt{10}$ The "preliminaries" have become so enshrined in some of our Sabbath Schools, that it is difficult to conceive of not having them. But observation in many places shows that when this precious time slot is replaced with something more fulfilling, more useful, there are few if any regrets or complaints. Leaders in the past have acted faithfully with the preliminaries, but Adventist Sabbath Schools in many places around the world have realised the benefits of making a change.

 $\sqrt{10}$ The short answer to "Why drop preliminaries?" is TIME. So little time is available on Sabbath mornings for fulfilling the three original purposes for Sabbath School. The only way those three purposes can be properly met is to use all the time available.







Q4 ... All together or in groups?

- Large Sabbath School > we recommend small groups for all three elements
- Medium Sabbath School > we recommend small groups <u>at least</u> for the study time, preferably the other times too
- Small Sabbath School > might be good to stay together for all three elements

Ideal group size for the Sabbath School elements of fellowship, study, and outreach = 6 to 15

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Q5... How to choose a group leader?

- Understands the purpose of Sabbath School
- Gracious, prayerful, humble
- Leadership skill or potential
- In love with the Word of God
- **Christ-centred**
- Reliable

Consider a training course ... For each group, assign an understudy/backup/co-leader







Do whatever it takes to create face-to-face space!

- contemporary times
- classrooms ... move ... do something!

Pews in rows are <u>never</u> desirable for a successful group in

Reconfigure pews ... replace some pews with chairs ... build



Q7... What about a mission DVD?

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- It's good to find out what's happening in far-away places from time to time
- Consider getting the whole Sabbath
 School together monthly or quarterly,
 to enjoy a video mission report or a
 live testimony
- Be adaptable! Follow the Spirit's leading for your circumstances.

 $\sqrt{}$ [Sermonview extended license purchased for this illustration—OK for print; cannot be captured or transferred by other person or entity.]



Q8... What about the superintendent?

Has less stress, more joy!

No big programme to prepare

Has a new job description

- Spiritual support, prayer
- Co-ordination

 $\sqrt{Accountability includes finances ... expenditures for community action, for example.}$

 $\sqrt{1000}$ Should an offering for missions and/or expenses still be taken up? Discuss this with church leaders, in the context of how giving is handled church-wide.

- Accountability
- Has new responsibilities
 - Oversee leaders & hosts
 - Lead by "walking around"
 - Identify needs, issues
 - Assist with unexpected challenges



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The Sabbath School hosts

- Could be more important than group leaders!
- ♦ More than "greeters"—"<u>hosts</u>" ... what do you think is the difference?
- Carefully selected ... knowledgeable ... kind-hearted ... on hand 20 minutes prior, and throughout the Sabbath School ... working with an assistant, trainee, or backup
 - Lead guests to an appropriate group, and introduce them

 $\sqrt{10}$ [Sermonview extended license purchased for this illustration—OK for print; cannot be captured or transferred by other person or entity.]





- Always pause briefly to welcome and introduce a new or late arriver
- Never comment on someone arriving late
- ♦ Inform ... let the late arriver know what stage you're at right now
- Chat with any guest as soon as the group comes to a close
- **Remember**, it's about relationships!

 $\sqrt{10}$ [Sermonview extended license purchased for this illustration—OK for print; cannot be captured or transferred by other person or entity.] $\sqrt{10}$ Model this ... practice it if need be so it comes easily in the group.

Group leaders are hosts, too!



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The thinker

Great value ... might need
 to be drawn into discussion

The talker

Good to get things started
 ... keep within boundaries

The debater

Good for getting others to
 join in ... direction needed

√ These are somewhat stereotypical, as people are far more complicated and diverse than labels like this imply. But the characteristics described help a facilitator recognise and understand the variety of people in a group.

The controller

Little value added ... can be a threat

The judge

Negative attitude usually outweighs contributions

The jokester (jester)

Great for comic relief ... typically a good presence




+ The patient

 Emotionally unsettled or dysfunctional person ... can provide for a few moments of learning and ministry ... then best to follow up after

The emergency

Immediate critical need ... stop, adjust, and minister

 \sqrt{An} emergency situation might be someone who confesses suicidal thoughts, or who has just found out about the death of a loved one, or who has just been told his or her spouse is leaving the marriage. On these rare occasions, it's the privilege of the group to follow the Spirit into the need, rather than trying to stick to a planned agenda. \sqrt{An} The contributor ... if you are usually a participant rather than a leader, here's something to aspire to! All people types can make a contribution of some kind ... but "the contributor" is really good at it. \sqrt{An} There are certainly additional people-types we could think of. Examples: the analyser, the peacemaker, the theologian, the sceptic, the defender, the sleeper.

The contributor

 Every facilitator's dream ... spiritual, practical ... makes good, short comments ... understands the focus ... includes some humour ... listens well ... affirms others ... ready to challenge, with a smile ... not afraid to be vulnerable, to self disclose



How to deal with distractions, threats?

- 1) Pray ahead of time for wisdom and courage
- 2) Acknowledge and affirm the person—do not condemn, criticise, or belittle
- 3) **Recognise** if the problem is in you ... e.g. you don't like it when your views are questioned
- 4) **Be gently assertive** ... direct the discussion back on track ... do interrupt a person who's going on too long
- 5) Use some gentle, non-threatening humour ... if you are good at this dynamic ... self-deprecation usually works ... avoid sarcasm
- 6) **Remain calm** and do not debate ... win by example, not by argument
- Invite the person to follow up personally after the group time 7)

 $\sqrt{10}$ Example—a threatening or inappropriate attitude: "Roger, let's make a deal. You and I will have a chat about this later. Right after our group time, let's set up a time when we can talk."



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- V Example—interrupting someone going on too long: "I appreciate your thoughts on this, Jim, but I do want to hear from some who haven't been able to share their thinking yet. Maria, what's swirling around in your

V Example—going off on a tangent: "It's a worthwhile comment, Frank, a bit outside the scope of what we're attempting this morning. So, let's come back to our original question. . . ." $\sqrt{10}$ Example—distracting question or comment: "Suzanne, you have a wonderful way of asking questions that would take a mind like mine at least a week to answer!" mind on this question?"



+ By hearing ... auditory + By seeing ... visual By touching ... tactile



Exodus 3:1-6

• Use a <u>variety</u> of learning approaches. Especially, allow participants to <u>experience</u> (feel and do) something of value during the study time.

 $\sqrt{10}$ The burning bush ... what types of learning appear from this experience of Moses? Read Exodus 3:1–6. Compare the relative impact if God had simply made a theological declaration from the sky.



By thinking ... cognitive

- By feeling ... emotive
- ✦ By doing ... experiential



6) BRING THE BIBLE TO



10 great ways to ruin the study time

- 1. Use a lecture style
- 2. Don't prepare—wing it
- 3. Push a narrow view
- 4. Stay completely theoretical
- 5. Let the discussion drift—or totally control it if you find this easier
- 6. Don't use the Bible much (the quarterly says it all)

 $\sqrt{}$ No. 10—"Prayer is too serious, and humour is too much fun."

- 7. Spend a bunch of time on minor points
- 8. Have everyone sit in pews
- 9. Don't worry about lighting, fresh air, or temperature
- 10. Keep prayer out of it, humour too





10 great ways to <u>revive</u> the study time

- 1. Use a <u>facilitative</u> style
- 2. Come prepared & prayerful
- 3. Value the wisdom of the group
- 4. Relate to everyday life
- 5. Keep the group on track
- 6. Draw extensively from God's Word

 $\sqrt{}$ (The picture is of the Avon River in the Botanic Gardens, Christchurch, New Zealand.) $\sqrt{}$ No. 9—physical setting ... lighting, fresh air, spacing, temperature, cleanliness, attractiveness.

- 7. Stay centred in Christ and the Gospel
- 8. Have best possible seating
- 9. Care for details of the group's physical setting

10. Experience ... integrate prayer ... welcome the Spirit

Which is your

tavourite?





- Seize moments that prompt a prayer
- Invite or plan ahead for a brief personal testimony related to the subject
- Use a visual or practical aid
- "Tell your neighbour ..."
- Sing a song on the subject

 $\sqrt{3}$ Seize moments that call for prayer ... someone mentions a need going on in his or her life ... someone mentions a country that is in chaos ... someone mentions a wonderful thing that happened recently ... someone brings up an issue hard to understand ... these and many more are opportunities for a sentence prayer of intercession or praise, offered by a member in the group $\sqrt{3}$ Visual or practical aid ... e.g. an emotive picture for discussion—"what do you think or or feel when you look at this?" ... if talking about Moses' staff, bring a staff!

- Read a portion of the Bible aloud—with passion!
- Tell a story that moves
 the heart
 or brings a
 laugh



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- Makes a process easy ... literal meaning
- Provides a good setting in which learning can take place
- Draws out knowledge, insights, and experience from the group, for the benefit of all
- Guides the group toward a defined spiritual and practical goal
- Protects the group from distractions and threats

 $\sqrt{}$ Facilitate is a word from the Latin-Italian-French stream ... facile = "easy".

So, what does a facilitator do?





As the facilitator, you are not there to <u>be</u> wisdom for the group You are there to <u>draw out</u> wisdom from the group ... informed and inspired by the Word of God





10 steps for preparing the study

- 1. Study and pray over the keyScripture text
- 2. Briefly review <u>supporting</u> <u>material</u>
- 3. Select <u>one point of focus</u>
- 4. Back <u>on your knees</u> with the Bible!
- 5. Write a short statement of your goal or outcome

 $\sqrt{}$ These are only suggested, based on experience, feedback, and observation. Each of us is different in our style and approach. But these suggested steps are worth a try! $\sqrt{}$ Supporting material would include the Sabbath School quarterly ... but focus on the Word directly, not on the quarterly! Never, ever, try to "get through the quarterly" in the group study time. People can choose to do this in their own time during the week; but when a group leader tries to "get through the quarterly", there is virtually no chance for an effective group study experience. $\sqrt{}$ (The picture is of Whangapoua Beach on the Coromandel Peninsula, New Zealand.)

- 6. Prepare an <u>introduction</u> and a <u>leading question</u>
- 7. Prepare one, two, or three more leading questions
- 8. Think of one, two, or three meaningful <u>experiences</u>
- 9. Prepare a <u>powerful close</u> ... usually a story or a quote

10. <u>Pray</u> ... pray ... pray!

Which of these is new for you?





- Seize moments that prompt a prayer
- Invite or plan ahead for a brief personal testimony related to the subject
- Use a visual or practical aid
- "Tell your neighbour ..."
- Sing a song on the subject

 $\sqrt{1}$ This slide is a repeat of an earlier slide. It's placed here as a reminder of what's meant by "Think of one, two, or three meaningful experiences."

- Read a portion of the Bible aloud—with passion!
- Tell a story that moves
 the heart
 or brings a
 laugh



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The fine art of the leading question

A question that leads the group into energetic, focused discussion

- It tantalises!
- It creates some tension
- It calls for thought
- It allows for a variety of responses
- It helps drive the group toward one key point of focus, previously chosen by the facilitator





Is this a leading question?

- "Everyone, would you please look up John 5:24?"
- No! But it gets us started....

Is this a leading question?

- "Jesus' teaching here was in the context of a stunning miracle. What was that miracle?"
- No! But it's bringing us a step closer...





Is this a leading question? "Can somebody see an <u>equation</u> here. Like, A + B = C?''

Nearly there!

Is this a leading question?

"A + B = C! ... <u>Really</u>? Is this all it takes to receive complete life, forever in God? Have you experienced it just like that? Or, are you inclined to adjust Jesus' words a little?"

There! Now the stage is set for a discussion toward the goal.





Suggested: A follow-up leading question to advance the discussion toward the goal...

"I like what I'm hearing so far. But wait a moment. I haven't yet heard anyone connect the teaching in John 5:24 to the miracle that took place shortly before. Matt, I'm going to pick on you! **Can you describe any connection** between the man healed dramatically by the pool, and what Jesus said afterward in John 5:24?"

VAs a facilitator you don't have to pick on someone like "Matt". But it's not a bad idea when you know Matt won't be embarrassed and that he will almost certainly have something good to say that will advance the conversation. And ... if you've noticed that Matt is a "quiet thinker"—he's been following closely, but would welcome an invitation to contribute. This is what it means to draw from the group to reach the goal.





Counsel from some who have done it well ...

Focus on one point per lesson. Jim Ayars

Use the Bible as the one major resource. Ben Carson

Make everything relevant to people's personal lives. Ben Carson

 \sqrt{AII} of these are drawn from a video training programme produced by the Sabbath School Department (General Conference / North American Division of SDA) some years ago.







Practice the art of "structured flexibility". Ruth Tarango

Develop "a fluid collection of things that point to the focus". Jim Ayars

Keep in mind that the lesson study is not a time for preaching. **Ruth Tarango**

Develop open-ended questions. Jim Ayars

 $\sqrt{$ "Structured flexibility." What some trainers for corporations have called "simultaneous loose-tight qualities". There is a structure in the mind of the facilitator, while at the same time there's openness to the leading of the Spirit through the group. The facilitator is constantly adapting, based on what's happening in the group—while at the same time making sure the group keeps moving toward the one point of focus, the goal. $\sqrt{}$ "Open-ended questions." Another way of saying, "leading questions".





Let Jesus be the focus. Jim Ayars

Let the Holy Spirit do what the Holy Spirit wants to do. Jim Ayars

Be non-judgemental. **Ben Carson**

Leave results with God -the Holy Spirit can use even a "down" study. Ruth Tarango

> [Sermonview extended license purchased for this illustration—OK for print; cannot be captured or transferred by other person or entity.]





 Remember that people come hurting—they need to see
Christ. Ruth Tarango

 Let the class members—by the Spirit—help you discover the important truths of the lesson. Dan Matthews

 (\bullet)

Is it possible that the group leader might have more potential for eternal influence than almost any other role in the church?



7) HOW TO CREATE DIALOGSUE









"Facilitation

 $\sqrt{1}$ This is a review slide from earlier in the programme. We've looked at facilitation, and at experience, but not yet at dialogue.



"Dialogue"

- Conversation ... discussion
- Exchange of ideas
- Interplay ... exploration
- Cf music ... "dialogue" and "antiphony"

V A superb discussion in a group is like an orchestra in terms of the interaction, the emotion, the rise and fall of sound, the action and response, the teamwork, the giftedness, the respect for each part, and the joy. Unlike an orchestra, the process is not rehearsed and does not follow a detailed script. But the dynamics and effects can be equally satisfying. $\sqrt{100}$ "Dialogue" is a term in music as well as in ordinary life. "Antiphony" is a term from Christian liturgy, referring to something that is sung or recited alternately between two groups. $\sqrt{}$ "Cacophany"—a harsh, discordant mixture of sounds, unpleasant, dissatisfying, frustrating.







♣ Ask ... Acknowledge ... Affirm ...

 $\sqrt{10}$ For a great illustration from the Bible, see Luke 10:25–37 (using The Message here).

- To the religion scholar: "What's written in God's law? How do you interpret it?" ... ASK
- Upon reply from the scholar: "Good answer! Do it and you'll live." ... ACKNOWLEDGE & AFFIRM

Apply ...

robbers?" ... APPLY

 $\sqrt{Acknowledge}$ and affirm are close in meaning—the first is simple, the second more advanced. Acknowledge: "Thank you, Ruth." Affirm: "I especially appreciate what Ruth has said here about. . . ." The quickest way to discourage people from contributing is to slide on to the next thing you want to say, or someone else wants to say, without a word of acknowledgment for the one who has just spoken ... as if the person never said anything, or as if you did not hear it. Never fail to acknowledge a contribution. It takes three seconds.



- Upon further questioning from the scholar: The story of the good Samaritan, followed by a fantastic leading question—"What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbor to the man attacked by



Simple steps for a successful study

- 1. Introduce the subject—briefly
- 2. Set up and ask your first leading question
- 3. Take the leap! ... let the Spirit work
- 4. Acknowledge ... affirm ... apply ... pray
- 6. Include one or two group experiences
- 7. Present the powerful close ... a story, testimony, or quote

5. Move to additional clarifying and leading questions





Back to our roots!



 $\sqrt{1}$ This slide is a repeat from earlier in the presentation.





 $\sqrt{\text{Counsels on Sabbath School Work, p9.}}$ $\sqrt{1}$ This slide is a repeat from earlier in the presentation.

Ellen G. White



A church must have some service units for identifying and responding to immediate needs among its members and community. This will not normally take place in the worship service.

 $\sqrt{$ [Sermonview extended license purchased for this illustration—OK for print; cannot be captured or transferred by other person or entity.] $\sqrt{$ Even if a church as a number of active small groups apart from Sabbath School, Sabbath School is still an ideal service point for action in Jesus' name ... and it includes many who do not participate in any other small groups.



If it does not take place in the Sabbath **School**—and if there are few if any other small groups operating in this way-then where will it take place?



<u>This</u> is Sabbath School!

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer....All the believers were together and ... gave to anyone as he had need."

Acts 2:42–45, NIV



- 1. Ask about any immediate challenges or
- 2. If indicated, plan for follow-up to a challenge or opportunity
- 3. Examples of follow up: a phone call ... a visit ... a gift ... an email ... a helping hand
- or a mission in another city or country

Suggestions to start ...

opportunities ... and give a prayer, right then

4. As a group, consider partnering with a local agency,



Great resources for mission-outreach

1. Center for Creative Ministry ... (\bullet) creativeministry.org 2. Adventist Mission ... adventistmission.org 3. AdventSource ... adventsource.org ... enter "Sabbath School" in the Search field

 $\sqrt{10}$ Information on the Mission DVD can be found on the Adventist Mission website. The Mission DVD can usually be ordered through your local or Union Conference.







 $\sqrt{}$ Monarch butterfly ... a North American species that has been found in New Zealand and Australia since the 19th century. "The monarch is famous for its southward migration and northward return in summer from Canada to Mexico and Baja California which spans the life of three to four generations of the butterfly... no single individual makes the entire round trip. Female monarchs deposit eggs for the next generation during these migrations... Monarch butterflies are one of the few insects capable of making trans-Atlantic crossings." Their life cycle is amazing—from eggs, to larvae or caterpillars, to the pupa or chrysalis stage, then to the mature butterfly. Talk about change!



"I've come to start a fire on this earth—how I wish it were blazing right now! I've come to change everything, turn everything rightside up—how I long for it to be finished! Do you think I came to smooth things over and make everything nice? Not so. I've come to disrupt and confront!"

Luke 12:49–51, The Message





"A great many people from the Gerasene countryside got together and asked Jesus to leave—too much change, too fast, and they were scared." Luke 8:37, The Message "Jesus doesn't change—yesterday, today, tomorrow, he's always totally himself." Hebrews 13:8, The Message

 $\sqrt{10}$ He is both our challenge and our comfort: Jesus changes everything, and we must go with his changes. But Jesus himself does not change.





Fearful people desire only to make it to the



grave safely. Day by day, they suffer through a perpetual "near-life" experience.

-Chris Blake



How to make changes

Prayerfully!

Not impulsively, proudly, or irresponsibly

Co-operatively!

up as a possibility, how would you relate to it?"

Philosophically!

 $\sqrt{1}$ It's a good idea to ask the prayer team to include proposed changes in their intercession. A day of prayer and fasting before a big change is worth considering.





"Would you give us permission to try?" "If we bring this

Explain the background, the reasons ... admit concerns

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Incrementally!

Patiently!

Get feedback ... make mid-course corrections ... plan on 6–12 months for the change to work and be properly evaluated

With local ownership! Work for buy-in and ownership from key people who are respected

V Story ... A lady named Barb, a Sabbath School superintendent in a fairly conservative church, a senior person, who just couldn't wait! She made the change virtually overnight, as a trial run. The impact was immediate. Over a few months, attendance at the adult Sabbath School came up from about 50 per cent of the worship service attendance, to about 80 per cent of the worship service attendance. She adopted the simple 1-2-3 format of fellowship, Bible study, and mission-outreach. All the leaders found it easier, more enjoyable, and much more productive. Several years later, this format is still going strong in that congregation.

Verhaps the worst method for change in a local congregation is to say, "OK, people, the Conference wants us to make this change!" ... This approach spells disaster from the start. All genuine, lasting change must be generated from within the local setting, driven by prayer and adapted for the local context.

In most cases, plan small steps from "here" to "there ... but sometimes, one big step is the best way to go







1. Empowering leadership

2. Gift-oriented ministry

3. Passionate spirituality

4. Dynamic structures



 $\sqrt{1}$ The 8 characteristics come from Christian Schwarz, Natural Church Development.

8 characteristics of a healthy church

- 5. Inspiring worship service
- 6. Whole-life (holistic) small group ministry
- 7. Need-oriented evangelism

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8. Loving relationships





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 $\sqrt{1}$ The pdf file of this on-screen presentation is available with all slides included. Go to nnzc.org.nz/sabbath-school. $\sqrt{100}$ The on-screen presentation can be requested. Its original format is Keynote-Mac. We have limited ability to pass this on as a presentation file, because of copyright restrictions on artwork.

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