

1.3 Who can teach children and youth?

Notes to the trainer: To begin this section, ask the local leaders to gather in small groups and give them paper and pencils. Without allowing them to look at the training manual, ask them to write down all their ideas about who can teach children and youth. Compile the list. If any are controversial, ask those who presented the idea to explain their thinking. Then share these ideas with them. At the conclusion of the lesson, ask them to evaluate which qualities are most important in their culture, both from the list and from this chapter.

There are many people who should be teaching children—fathers and mothers within the family, teachers at school, elders, deacons, catechists or pastors in the church. But in this chapter we want to talk especially about Sunday school teachers. Who should teach children in Sunday school, youth clubs, or other church-sponsored ministries?

What kind of person would make a good children’s or youth teacher? A children’s or youth teacher can be male or female, married or single, as young as 16-18 if the church agrees, or a mature person, if he has the strength to teach. All these considerations—sex, age, etc.—are not very important, but some other considerations are very important. We want to see six characteristics in the lives of those who want to become children’s and youth teachers. If someone shows these characteristics, we believe he can become a good teacher.

This teaching can be of help to church leaders who need to choose or approve children’s and youth teachers. It also can help teachers and those who aspire to become teachers, because it sets up a standard toward which they can strive.

1. THE TEACHER MUST KNOW THAT HE HIMSELF IS SAVED.

Why is it important that every teacher know that he is saved? See Luke 6:39

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What danger do you see if a teacher does not know Jesus personally? Consider 1 John 5:13-14

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What about you? Are you absolutely sure that you know Jesus as your Savior, or would you appreciate help in understanding or coming to assurance in this matter?

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Pretend you are telling someone about your experience. When and how did you receive Jesus as your Savior? What difference has it made in your life?

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ATTENTION: If you would like help so you could know for sure you are saved, just as for help! Your seminar leader or local pastor would be glad to help you.

2. THE TEACHER MUST BE A BAPTIZED BELIEVER IN GOOD STANDING WITH THE LOCAL FELLOWSHIP.

It is very important that the Sunday school teacher be a baptized believer, or at least that he be following teaching that will lead to his baptism. Jesus Himself gave the commandment that the church baptize those who believed (Matthew 28:19). Baptism is the first thing a new believer must fulfill after his conversion. If a teacher refuses to be baptized, how can he expect the children he teaches to obey the Lord in this matter? The teacher must also be a church member in good standing, living in fellowship with the local body of believers. He cannot be someone who is always stirring up trouble between believers, but he should be someone who is living peaceably and happily with others. He cannot be a rebellious person who does not follow the leadership or the rules of the church. He must be someone who is obedient and courteous to leaders.

He must also be someone who can get along with whatever little help the church may be able to give him, without complaining and fussing that he needs a salary. He must be someone who keeps his life clean, who keeps away from sin, who follows closely in God's ways. He must be this kind of person because he will become a model that many people will follow.

What do these verses show about the kind of person a teacher should be? See Romans 2:19-22

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Consider also Matthew 5:18-19

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How could the Apostle Paul be so courageous? Read 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1

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What should every teacher understand? See James 3:1

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What about you? How is your relationship with your local church? What problems do you need to work on in this regard?

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What will you do to work on this problem? What will be your first step? (If there is a problem, we suggest talking it over with church leaders.)

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Have you discussed with church leadership whether you will receive any help from the church for your teaching, and if so, what it will be? If this is an issue with you, discuss it with church leadership now, before you start teaching. Write their answer here:

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Are you in agreement with the answer you received? Remember the parable that says, “You can’t squeeze blood out of an orange.” This parable means that if the church is very poor, you cannot expect it to be able to help its teachers as if it were rich. Are you in agreement with what your church can do for you?

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Remember that Every Child Ministries does not pay Sunday school teachers. We offer only training and the accessibility of teaching materials. Write below two things Every Child Ministries can do for your church and one thing it cannot do.

ECM can help my church with and with

but it cannot help with

3. THE TEACHER’S LEARNING LEVEL MUST BE HIGHER THAN THE CLASS HE IS TEACHING.

If a teacher has not learned to read well, or he reads very, very slowly and laboriously, how will he be able to prepare Bible lessons for teaching? It would be very difficult for him. If he does not know how to write very well, how will he write out his lesson plans or the Sunday school program, or make out reports? It is essential that every teacher know how to read and to write well.

We believe that the learning level of the teacher should be above that of the class he is teaching. The leadership of the church must be acquainted with the learning levels of each Sunday school class, and look for a teacher who is at a higher learning level than those he will teach. It will be difficult for the children to properly respect a teacher who does not know much more than they do. It will be hard for them to pay much attention to his teaching.



What about you? Is your learning level adequate to be a Sunday school teacher? _____ What classes do you think you could teach best? Why?

4. THE TEACHER MUST CONSTANTLY BE LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE BIBLE.

It is not necessary that a Sunday school teacher be a pastor, that he know English, or that he be a Bible school graduate or even a Senior Secondary School graduate. He **MAY** have one of these, but he **DOESN'T HAVE TO**. It is, however, very important that he be someone who reads and studies the Bible regularly. He should be someone who takes learning more about the Bible seriously, and makes a real effort to learn more and more.

Why is it important that he know the Bible well? Consider Romans 19:14,17

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Think about Psalms 119:11, 119:97-100

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5. THE TEACHER MUST BE DEDICATED TO GOD'S SERVICE.

The teacher must be willing to work hard in serving God. He must understand that teaching children is real **WORK**. For this job, the church of Jesus Christ is not in need of those who want to serve Him only a little now and then. The church does not need teachers who will serve for a month, but will be quick to quit. It needs those who will serve Jesus faithfully in good times and in hard times alike.

Sometimes school teachers can make good Sunday school teachers. They already understand things like how to prepare a lesson. However, if they are tired of teaching after five days of it, they will not make very good Sunday school teachers. Sometimes Senior Secondary School age youth can also make good teachers.

Why is it important that believers be fully dedicated to God's service? Consider these verses. Romans 12:1

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Matthew 6:24

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Matthew 6:33

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1 Corinthians 15:58

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Think about the word “steadfast” (1 Cor. 15:58). What does it mean?

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How can we tell if a Sunday school teacher is fully dedicated to God’s service?
What do you think?

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For you personally, what do you find the most difficult part of being fully dedi-
cated to God’s service?

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Find another believer who will agree to pray with you about this difficulty.
After you have prayed together about your problem, write the name of your
prayer partner here:

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6. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER MUST HAVE THE GIFT OF TEACHING.

Every believer has received one or more spiritual gifts from God (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). One of the
spiritual gifts is that of teaching (1 Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 4:11). Does this mean that all good
Christians have the gift of teaching? Look at 1 Corinthians 12:29.

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Answer: It is not true that all good Christians are intended to be teachers in the formal sense of teaching
a class or a group. God has given every believer his own gift or gifts. Some have received the gift of
teaching. Those who have received this gift can become good Sunday school teachers. Others are also



just as good Christians, but God has given them other gifts. They will never become good teachers, even though they are very good and faithful Christians.

How can someone know what spiritual gift he has received? Sometimes we can only know that by trying out different spiritual gifts. One good way to help this to happen is to allow faithful believers who want to test their gifts to begin not by teaching a class, but by helping out a good teacher. He can observe how the class is taught, help to maintain order. After awhile, the helper can try teaching very small parts. He might review last week's memory verse with the children, for example. Later on he might try teaching the new verse. After while he might try teaching one very small part of the lesson. In this way, he is learning how to teach, he is getting some practice at a slow rate that is not scary or overwhelming for him, and he is trying out teaching to see whether or not he may have this gift. All the while, he is also a considerable help to the main teacher of the class.

We must understand, of course, that a brand new teacher, even one who indeed has the gift of teaching, will not teach as well as someone who has years of experience. Learning to teach requires a lot of practice. However, if the person does have the gift of teaching, usually we will see many of these things happening:

- He or she will enjoy teaching. His or her heart will draw him/her into it.
- The children will like his teaching and respond to it.
- He will be able to use vocabulary and illustrations that the children can understand.
- He will develop enthusiasm and courage.

The Role of the Teacher's Helper or Aide

So Jehosaphat sent Bible teachers through the land to....." I stopped short in my lesson my Sunday school secretary was standing at the door. My helper was not here today, I had remembered to take attendance, but forgot to mark it down on the secretary's master copy. Now I had to do it in the middle of class. "It was certainly difficult to teach without you." I told my helper the next week.

Called of God

Helpers in the church are sometimes not appreciated as much as they should be, even though they do a very important job. Helping is listed by Paul as a special ministry, a special gift given by the Holy Spirit: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:28)

Since I teach a large class I know what a difference a good assistant can make.

The teacher of a large class is in a dilemma when they have to teach records of numbers of people, yet need to devote every moment to teaching. To keep everyone's attention a teacher can't take time to make a long roll call.

Also they have more students, visitors, and prospects than anyone can hope to call on, and they want every pupil to feel known, wanted, and loved.

The teacher of a large class is busy with preparation and making large visuals for everyone to see. They also may be involved in several other ministries, all of these things can be considerably lightened by a good assistant.

As I think back over the several assistants I have had I believe I have been in error in not letting them know regularly what I expected of them. I was so busy I always intended to clarify their duties, but often forgot. Later I'd wished that they had come to me and asked, though the responsibility was really mine.

Remind Me

A teacher really appreciates it when the assistant calls and reminds “I don’t know what the memory verse is for next week.” Or asks “Can I help you with the party you are planning?”
I know that I should make your responsibilities clear, dear helper. I know I should keep you informed without you having to ask but teachers are terribly busy people, terribly human, too. I will try but if on occasion I forget will you remind me?

Be On Time

I appreciate an assistant who does the things I ask- on time. I once had an assistant who I had asked to visualize a memory verse. She told me at the last minute on Sunday morning, “Sorry I didn’t get that memory verse done, last night my husband took me out to dinner.” I stifled the reaction I felt rising within and said “Wow, don’t ever leave things to the night before, to many things can come and rob you of your time.”

Be Creative

I appreciate an assistan who goes the extra mile, instead of squeezing by on the barest stint of service. I can tell when an assistant writes down a memory verse in the car on the way to church, or when they really put time, and preparation into something.

Helpers should never think of themselves as low on the totem pole, or unimportant because they are not in an authoritative position. A good helper is a real boon to a teacher. But such teamwork can also help the assistant if they allow it. Most churches place really good helpers in classes of their own after they have had time to learn and to prove themselves. Helping someone else is excellent training ground.

After my first year in Bible College I spent a summer ter as a vacation Bible missionary with Rural Bible Crusade in Wisconsin. I was paired of with an older more experienced teacher. I learned so much from her, I copied her stories, learned her teaching techniques, and watched everything she did. In two weeks the mission sent me out with a teacher as inexperienced as I. For the rest of the summer I thanked God that I was able to learn from an experienced teacher.

Do Your Best

Be determined to be the very best assistant you can be. Call faithfully on the students your teacher assigns you. Prepare thoroughly for any part of the lesson entrusted to you. Take attendance accurately. Keep complete records. Learn to know the children well. Watch your teacher for storytelling, discipline, and song leading techniques. How does the teacher present a memory verse? Lead a student to Christ? Use visuals and projects? Keep you eyes, ears, and mind open, you may soon be a teacher, and you will thank God for letting you learn as an assistant. Until then remember we teachers couldn’t do our jobs nearly as effectively without you!

LET’S REVIEW:

The Sunday school teacher must be a person who:

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....



6.....

LET'S PUT IT INTO PRACTICE.
FOR CHURCH LEADERS WHO MUST CHOOSE CHILDREN'S TEACHERS—

Think about the children's and youth teachers your church has at present. Do they meet the qualities we have discussed? What problems do you see that need to be addressed?

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What will you do to resolve these problems?

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Think about others in your church who are not teaching right now. Whom do you think of who might become good Sunday school teachers? Write their names here:

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Write down what you might say to them to try to get them to test their gift of teaching by becoming teacher's helpers:

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FOR CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH TEACHERS—

How do you measure up against the standards we have discussed? In what area do you need to get stronger?

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What problems do you need to resolve with your local church fellowship?

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Find a prayer partner who will pray with you about your weaknesses and problems. When you have prayed together, write the name of your prayer partner here:

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Do you believe you have the gift of teaching? Or are you trying to find out?

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Why do you believe you have the gift of teaching?

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Has your local church agreed that you have the gift of teaching? When you have talked this over with your local church leadership, write here what the leaders said:

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