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**HOW TO HAVE SUNDAY SCHOOL CAMPAIGNS**

Dr. Mike Wells

Sunday school campaigns are designed to put special focus on increasing our efforts at the Great Commission. You get what you emphasize. If we desire to have a growing church, then we must have definite isolated times to emphasize growth from top to bottom. Two campaigns promoting Sunday school growth should be scheduled each year. The idea is to get total involvement by every member. The results can be savored for weeks and the prospects numerous.

We must learn what produces attendance and then do that which precipitates attendance. Dr. John R. Rice said, “You give me a hundred on soul winning and I will give you a thousand on Sunday.” The problem is that most want the attendance without the sweat that produces the attendance. The input is really of more value to you than the output, because the work ethic of a campaign will not surface until years later. One hundred percent participation by the membership is the foundation that will produce a lifetime growth, not just a year of growth. Our people must become participants instead of spectators. Leadership lives off of a purpose while followship lives off of a goal. You must live and die for a purpose and translate that into goals in a campaign for your workers who will eventually get excited by your purpose.

1. Growth
	1. A program is about growth
	2. Do note that there are three ways a program will produce growth:
		1. Growth of God’s Kingdom (by all the souls that will be added to it)
		2. Growth of the church (by all the new people added)
		3. Growth of the church members (by participating in reaching the lost)
2. As soon as the last Sunday school campaign is over, start brainstorming sessions with your program staff.
3. Decide on the dates of the Sunday school campaign at the annual church calendar meeting.
	1. Although programs have been done for four weeks and also up to eight weeks, you will have to consider the people of your church and choose a time frame that will work for them.
	2. We at Parkside have found four weeks works well for us, for it is long enough to reach many lost, but short enough that people are able to participate enthusiastically for all four weeks.
	3. These dates should be written in the church’s calendar and all planning other activities should plan around this time.
	4. As to the time of year, the Spring and the Fall work best, for the weather is (usually) suitable to going out soul winning, yet many more people are home than there are during the Summer or Winter.
4. The program should have its place in the budget, but that means that any money spent on the program must either be within the confines of the budget, or the extra money must be raised.
5. Brainstorm a theme.
	1. A theme that both excites people and is something to which they can relate is the type that can be used.
	2. We at Parkside have done the following over the years:
		1. Military – church divided into four teams, each being a different branch of the military
		2. Hatfields & McCoys – church divided into two large teams
		3. Chuck Wagon Race – church divided into teams, each trying to get their “cattle” furthest down their trail
		4. Baseball – teams were the old names of teams that are no longer in use; rounding the bases is how we measure soul winning
		5. Football – yardage is how soul winning is measured
		6. Election – each team is a different political party; again, use old names no longer in use; points were tallied as votes
		7. Medieval Times – each team was a royal order of knights, each with its own standard and color; soul winning was measured in reference to slaying the dragon
		8. Men VS the women
	3. Keep in mind that whatever theme is chosen, it should be one that does not excite ill will (which is why we often use out-of-use names for our groups), nor should themes be used that would seem worldly, such as movie themes, latest popular television series, etc.
	4. Also, try to be as true to your theme as you can. For example, don’t use a baseball theme and speak of touchdowns. However, there is only so much that can be done, and the main thing is not to match your theme, but to win souls and get them in church.
6. Leadership qualifications
	1. Because there will be teams, the need arises for leaders. We try to avoid using pastoral staff men as leaders, for they are quite busy. Also, by having various laypeople assume responsibilities, the pastor gets an opportunity to observe his people in a new light.
	2. Qualifications:
		1. Loyal to the preacher
		2. Obviously supportive of the church’s whole program
		3. Already go soul winning
		4. Able to commit extra time for the weeks of the program
		5. Able to, with a little guidance if necessary, to organize and encourage their team members so they will go soul winning
		6. Able to handle the pressure of getting things done with a good spirit
7. Discuss promotion.
	1. Prizes alone are not the answer: the pastor is. To the degree the pastor is excited about the program, it is to that degree the church folks will be excited.
	2. Announcements from the pulpit are vital, both from the pastor himself as well as from anyone the preacher has announce upcoming events. Bear in mind that it takes a minimum of four weeks to promote a big day.
8. The principle of trotline fishing is implemented; the more hooks, the more fish.
9. Have campaigns within a campaign
	1. Overall church-wide campaign
	2. Bus ministry campaign
	3. Bus division campaign
	4. Bus route campaign
	5. Sunday school department campaign
	6. Sunday school class campaign
10. Determine when written campaigns are due for all departments. Require written campaigns two Wednesday nights before the beginning Sunday of the campaign.
11. Special guests on the Big Day are a help. Please keep in mind that many special guests are booked out months and even years in advance.
12. Print sign up cards for the Big Day.
13. Set goals for each ministry.
14. Decorate the auditorium and put up a banner.
15. Incentives for the Big Day attendance must be brainstormed.
	1. Airplane ticket to a Bible conference
	2. Bible used by the pastor in his preaching
	3. Picture of a great preacher
	4. Picture of church and staff
	5. Put the number of those signed up to attend on the Big Day on the wall by the baptistery each Sunday night during the campaign.
	6. Plan skits for each Sunday night of the campaign.
	7. Recognize bus captains, Sunday school teachers and Sunday school superintendents each Sunday night of the campaign that hit their weekly goal.
	8. Sign up the people who are there at each service for the big day.
	9. Gift card to local restaurant that matches theme
	10. Gift card to store that matches the theme
		1. Western store for the Chuck Wagon Race
		2. Sporting goods store for a sports theme
	11. Tickets to baseball game
	12. Tour of place associated with theme
		1. Tour of football stadium for the football theme
		2. Tour of closest presidential museum when election was held
	13. Flags flown over the U.S. Capitol (when political theme used)
	14. Stuffed animal
		1. The Hatfield-McCoy feud was, in part, over a pig, so we gave away a stuffed pig to the winning team leader.
	15. Sword – Medieval Times
		1. Metal sword to the winning team leader
		2. Wood swords to the top performers in other areas
	16. Underlying principle here is not so much what is given away, but the fact the soul winner was rewarded for his effort and public recognition of his efforts was done.
16. Presentation of the program
	1. Introduction of the leaders
		1. Two weeks prior to the first Sunday of the program, the leaders of each team is officially announced. Usually this is during the Sunday evening service.
		2. This is done with quite a bit of celebration to encourage the church members to participate.
	2. Splitting up into teams
		1. This is done the night the program kicks off. All present will be told what team they are on for the program.
		2. At Parkside, due to the bus ministry being such an inherent part of our church, we usually split our teams along the lines of the bus ministry.
		3. That stated, there are two different ways to divide our church:
			1. By Sunday School class
			2. By families
		4. There are advantages to both
			1. If done by Sunday School class, all one has to do is take the average attendances for each class and move classes around so each team has about the same number of potential workers.
			2. This does tend to cause families to be split across teams lines, so a home can have two or even three different teams within it.
			3. For some, this is a negative, for they have a hard time fully participating against their own flesh and blood, whereas others will not assist a family member because he is on “the other team.”
			4. For others, this is a positive, for it uses the spirit of competition within the family so they can have fun against each other.
			5. If done by families, then you do have whole family units on the same team, so they can encourage each other.
			6. However, in a growing soul-winning church, this will prove to be much work.
				1. You have to have a complete list of all individuals
				2. You have to make sure there are enough productive soul winners on each team
				3. There will always be people who are so new they have not been listed
				4. There also will be people on a bus captain’s or Sunday School teacher’s list who have not come in quite some time, so their name is unfamiliar to the team leader.
			7. If you do divide by families, we have found it quite efficient and productive to have an alphabetized list (alphabetized by last name) printed out and handed out telling each person on which team he is.
	3. Handout of the program
		1. A handout explaining all the details of the program is printed up and handed out to all the people.
		2. This is done one week prior to the first Sunday of the program. This will kick off the program in full, and all efforts to reach people for the program begin as soon as Preacher closes the service that night.
		3. The handout will be read aloud from the pulpit, and we have found it quite effective to have different men read portions of the handout, so as to keep the minds of the people actively attentive to what is being read.