

SUNDAY SCHOOL KICKOFF Banquet Planning and Preparation

The **purpose of the banquet** is to celebrate God's victories through the Sunday School in the year ending and to make/renew commitments to reach, teach, and minister to people in the upcoming year.

The **focus of the banquet** is:

- * Celebration
- * Communication
- * Mobilization

The **target audience for the banquet** is all current and newly enlisted Sunday School leaders and their spouses.

The **best time for the banquet** is:

1. after Sunday School leaders have been enlisted
2. after goals for the coming year have been set
3. as part of a special event to launch the Sunday School year (include leadership training and Sunday morning worship and commissioning service)
4. before the new Sunday School year begins

The Sunday School director (and minister of education if the church has one) typically would initiate planning for the overall Sunday School Launch event, including the banquet. It is best to involve the key Sunday School leaders on the Sunday School Planning Team (Council) in this entire process.

In order to accomplish the purpose, here are important planning decisions and actions to take:

1. Meet with the pastor and any other appropriate church staff to schedule the Sunday School Launch activities on the church calendar
2. Decide on the banquet format—catered, prepared by church personnel; potluck, etc
3. Discuss with the pastor if he will bring the inspirational message or if a guest speaker will be enlisted—if a guest speaker, usually the pastor should make the contact and invite the person to speak
4. Ask the minister of music to select 1-2 songs for all to sing and to arrange needed accompaniment
5. Enlist persons for testimonies (see file on Banquet program for details)

6. Work with the appropriate age-group leaders to select the Sunday School Leader(s) of the Year
7. Decide on who will receive certificates of appreciation—all Sunday School workers or those who are completing their active service at the end of the current year?
8. In order to prepare sufficiently, have persons sign up to attend—be sure to have them indicate whether their spouse will attend with them
9. Consider enlisting students (youth) as servers—talk with student Sunday School leaders about this being a ministry project from their class or department
10. Prepare and print copies of the following items:
 - * Leader(s) of the Year certificates (see PDF files)
 - * Appreciation certificate (see PDF file)
 - * Banquet program—one per person
 - * “My Commitments as a Sunday School Leader” (see PDF file)—one per leader
 - * Sunday School organization and leaders list for the new year—one per person
 - * Sunday School goals for the new year—one per person
 - * Leadership training opportunities (church, association, state convention, SBC)—one per person
11. Have pens/pencils on each table for use in the commitment time
12. Review the commitment sheet with the pastor (and guest speaker if you have one)—it is best if the pastor leads this commitment time, and he can sign his at the same time as the other Sunday School leaders (they can see him make his commitment also)