

# The Five Step Formula for SUNDAY SCHOOL GROWTH

## PRESCHOOL LEADERSHIP TRAINING PLAN

### Preparation

#### Gather items needed:

- Self-adhesive name tags, markers, extra pens or pencils, masking tape, stick pins, or appropriate materials to use to display items on the wall
- Copies of “Flake’s Formula Sheet” (Item 1)
- Pictures of preschoolers and a variety of families
- A *Read-to-Me Bible for Kids* and your personal Bible
- Several copies of *The Five Step Formula for Sunday School Growth* by David Francis
- Samples of LifeWay’s Sunday School curriculum for preschoolers

Place chairs in a semicircle facing the focal wall. You will need tables to display materials used in the conference. Arrange pictures of preschoolers and families on the focal wall. Place a copy of Item 1 and a name tag in each chair. Scatter in the chairs a few markers for conferees to write their names on the name tags.

### Know the Possibilities

1. Cut 10 six-inch squares from colorful construction paper. Number the squares 1 through 10. Place the numbered squares in a column to the right of the pictures on the focal wall. Be sure you have enough room to add a sentence strip next to each numbered square.

2. Gather 10 sentence strips and write each of the following on a strip. (Do not number the sentence strips.) Place the sentence strips under 10 of the chairs.

- Census Data and Primary Ministry Area*
- A Religious Census*
- Telephone Survey with Mail Follow-up*
- Church Membership Roll and Inactive Sunday School Members*
- Worship Service Guests*
- Summer and School Ministries*
- Special Events*
- Newspaper Notices*
- Newcomers*
- FRANs*

3. Gather and display items available to you, such as:

- Census information for your area (www.census.gov)*
- City map*

- Telephone book and/or city directory*
- A copy of church membership roll and/or Sunday School class rolls*
- Newspaper with birth announcements*
- Birth announcement yard sign*
- Picture of a moving truck*
- Newcomer information available from LifeWay (www.lifewaystores.com/prospectservices)*
- Registration tab from a worship service bulletin*
- VBS catalog and enrollment form*
- Information on weekday or child care ministry available in your church*
- First Contact brochure (available from your state office)*
- Calendar with special event days marked*

### Enlarge the Organization

1. Locate a square gift box. Stuff the box with newspaper and seal it securely. Cut a piece of different-colored construction paper to fit each side of the box. Write the numbers 1 through 6, one on each piece of paper. Secure one paper to each side of the box. You may want to cover the box with clear contact paper for durability.

2. Locate six colorful gift bags. Number them 1 through 6. Write each of the following statements on a separate sentence strip, and place the strip in the appropriately numbered bag.

- Prepare for the Possibilities*
- Organize by Age Groups*
- Start New Units*
- Enlarge the Preschool Organization*
- Minister to Babies and Parents*
- Enlarge the Organization for Adults*

### Provide Space and Equipment

1. Gather six tear sheets, and write one of the following topics at the top of each sheet.

- a. *What are ideal space recommendations for Preschool Sunday School?*
- b. *How will multiple Sunday School hours affect Preschool Sunday School?*
- c. *Why are “Preschool & Parking” important to growth in Sunday School?*

- d. How do you handle “unmoveable adults”?
- e. What do you do with preschoolers when adults meet in “home groups”?
- f. Why and how do you reduce clutter and nonessential equipment?

2. Gather six markers.

3. Copies of “Recommended Enrollment” (Item 2).

### *Enlist and Train the Workers*

1. Gather a large gift bag.
2. From 9-by-12-inch sheets of construction paper, make large numbers: 1 through 9.
3. Write each of the following steps on the appropriate number, and place in the gift bag.
  - Where almost 100% will be found
  - No one has asked me!
  - Praying for leaders
  - Don't say no for someone else.
  - Enlist with integrity.
  - The importance of training
  - Training methods
  - The Apprentice
  - The Curriculum Connection
4. Make copies of “Simple Steps to Enlisting Leaders” (Item 3).

### *Go After the People*

1. Gather postcards and note cards; outreach information cards; copies of ParentLife, BabyLife, Journey, Stand Firm; appropriate learner guides; a baby gift bag; a church newsletter; and a witnessing tract.
2. Make copies of “Go After the People” (Item 4) and “Preschool Ministry Contacts” (Item 5).

### *Conference Procedures*

1. Warmly greet the conferees as they enter the room. Guide each conferee to make a name tag and to start to work on “Flake’s Formula Sheet” (Item 1). Encourage the conferees to work together in small groups as they “unlock” the secret formula for Sunday School growth. (The formula is 1=A, 2=B, 3=C, etc.)
2. Thank the conferees for the commitment they have made to teaching preschoolers and to reaching families for Christ. Introduce yourself and share a word about your passion for preschool ministry. Invite the conferees to introduce themselves and share the age of the preschoolers they teach.
3. Introduce the conference topic, “The Five Step Formula for Sunday School Growth.”

Answer these questions in your own words:

- Who was Arthur Flake? (See the information in the book.)
  - What was his formula? (Highlight the formula’s five steps, using Item 1.)
  - Why are we going back to a century-old formula? (back to basics, because it works)
  - How can Flake’s Formula help Preschool Sunday School? (We will have those answers in a couple of hours.)
4. Read Matthew 9:37-38 aloud. Say something like: “We often read this passage when we are enlisting teachers. I want us to stop and see that the harvest is plentiful, just like preschoolers and families in our fields. I imagine that within walking distance of every church there are preschoolers who need to know the love of Jesus. There are families who need parenting skills and wisdom from God. We are going to discover how to do that today.” Pray.

### *Know the Possibilities*

1. Call to the conferees’ attention the numbers 1 through 10 displayed on the focal wall. Say: “We are going to have our own ‘Top 10 Ways to Know the Possibilities.’ The ‘possibilities’ have names and faces; hurts and needs; joys and sorrows. The ‘possibilities’ need to know Christ and His abundant love. How can we discover the ‘possibilities’? Under your chair you may have a sentence strip with one of the ways to ‘Know the Possibilities.’”
2. Give the conferees a moment to look under their chairs. Ask the conferees with sentence strips to come up, one at a time, and to place the sentence strip beside the number she thinks the phrase matches. Be prepared to discuss each phrase, sharing tips and resources, as the strip is displayed. As additional sentence strips are displayed, the conferees may decide that strips need to be moved up or down to different numbers.

### *Enlarge the Organization*

1. Introduce this topic by saying: “We are discovering our ‘possibilities.’ The next step is to ‘Enlarge the Organization.’ This sounds like a monumental task, but our God is big enough to accomplish the task. Yes, when we respond to His call, He can!”
2. Show the number cube and say: “We will use this cube to help us continue with Flake’s Formula. We will take turns tossing the cube until someone gets number 1. That person gets to open bag 1 to discover the steps

- to ‘Enlarging the Organization.’” Let volunteers take turns tossing the cube. Continue the same procedure for numbers 2 through 6.
3. Be prepared to discuss each step as it is revealed. Draw from your own experiences and personal testimony as you direct the conversation.

### *Provide Space and Equipment*

1. Read the following quote from Arthur Flake: There is no such thing as building a Sunday School great in numbers in small, cramped quarters. Neither can a Sunday School of the highest efficiency be operated without proper equipment. While good equipment does not necessarily guarantee an efficient Sunday School, at the same time, it is necessary if a Sunday School is to do the best quality of work (*Building a Standard Sunday School*, 31).
2. Place the conferees in six groups. Give each group a marker, and assign them to a different tear sheet. Explain the activity: “Think through these major topics in providing space and equipment. Each group will rotate ‘through’ the tear sheets and list their ideas on each topic. You will have four minutes for the first assignment, three minutes for the second assignment, and two minutes for the third. Every group will not make it around to every tear sheet, but we will get a variety of ideas.” Guide each group to begin brainstorming and then to move at the appropriate time. When the conferees have completed the rotation, call their attention to the highlights of each topic. Be prepared to discuss and to give guidance as needed. Remind the conferees that the recommended number of preschoolers for each age level includes both those on the Sunday School roll and prospects. Encourage the conferees by sharing ideas for making the best use of the space and equipment available, working toward the ideal environment for teaching preschoolers and reaching families for Christ.
3. As you move into the next step, distribute the “Recommended Enrollment” (Item 2).

### *Enlist and Train the Workers*

1. Say: “We are identifying our ‘possibilities.’ We have enlarged our organizations. We are working toward the needed space and equipment. Now where do we find leaders, how do we enlist leaders, and how do we train leaders? These are some of Arthur Flake’s thoughts on the process.”

2. Guide the conferees to draw a number from the bag. Beginning with number 1, discuss each topic, and place the number on the focal wall. Be prepared for to guide the discussion and to address comments as needed.
3. Give the conferees “Simple Steps to Enlisting Leaders” (Item 3).

### *Go After the People*

1. Introduce the final step by saying: “We have spent weeks, even months, getting to this point. If we do not follow through with this final step, all the work was in vain. Now is the time to get serious and Go After the People!”
2. Give each conferee the handout “Go After the People” (Item 4). Lead the conferees in discussion of the topics.
3. Distribute “Preschool Ministry Contacts” (Item 5). Say, “If we do not plan to make these contacts, chances are we won’t.”

### *Conclusion*

1. Say: “You have taken in a lot of information today. What will you do with what you have discovered about a growing Sunday School? Let’s make some goals. We could make church goals, preschool division goals, and preschool department goals; but let’s start with a personal goal. What will yours be?”
2. Read Matthew 8:18-22. Say: “What do you need to do before you can follow Jesus? What do you need to do before you can go into the fields? We are often like that unnamed disciple, saying, ‘Let me do this first and then I will.’ I want to be like Isaiah: ‘Here am I. Send me! Send me now!’ ”
3. Give each conferee an index card. Ask him to write one personal goal, to date the card, and to sign it. Say: “Now, this is a binding agreement, an agreement between you and God. You can fulfill this agreement because God has called you to this ministry and He will continue to equip and empower you.”
4. Close in prayer.