

ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL COORDINATOR

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

The purpose of the Sabbath School is to make disciples for Christ. It includes the nurture of spiritual growth in members and prospective members, as well as the unchurched who come to join in the fellowship, study, sharing and service. The Sabbath School exists not only to minister to its members, but to train those members to minister to others. The Sabbath School is a school of Christian living, not just an event on Sabbath mornings. It can include Bible study groups that meet at other times also. Its purpose is evangelistic, not ritualistic.

Every Christian believer is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12). In Acts 2:42-47 the Bible gives us a blueprint for the Sabbath School. Verse 42 outlines the goals of the Sabbath School as "teaching and fellowship," and "breaking bread and prayer." Verses 43-45 illustrate the strong sense of togetherness, caring and support that must be present in the Sabbath School in order to create a proper atmosphere for learning and growth. Verse 46 indicates that this can happen both in church buildings and in home Bible study groups, or what Adventists have called "Branch Sabbath Schools" and verse 47 demonstrates how this is essential to a growing church.

The Sabbath School is a lay ministry. It is run, staffed and funded by church members, not the clergy. God calls every member of the church into ministry, and the Sabbath School is the place of preparation, support and empowerment for ministry. It is, therefore, essential to have lay involvement and leadership in its operation.

Duties of the Sabbath School Coordinator

The ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes general coordinator of the Sabbath School can be described in the following ways:

1. *Developing leadership.* You will supervise all the leaders of the Sabbath School and encourage them to evaluate the effectiveness of their division/class in meeting the goals of the church. You should make arrangements for them to get the training, support, and resources they need.
2. *Chairing the Sabbath School committee.* This group includes the superintendent, assistant superintendents, secretary, assistant secretaries, division leaders, Investment secretary, adult class leaders and an elder (In some churches the personal ministries leader and youth leader are included). The committee should meet monthly to build teamwork.
3. *Building a strong evangelistic agency.* Help your team develop a growing, caring fellowship and an excellent learning environment.
4. *Recruiting volunteers.* There is a constant need to find helpers for every aspect of the Sabbath School. You are the person who must take the initiative to identify potential helpers, personally invite them to get involved, and assist them in getting started.
5. *Planning ahead.* It will be your responsibility to help your Sabbath School leaders plan ahead and to participate in the total planning process of the church board and/or church ministries council. You will want to be familiar with the policies and plans of the North American Division of the General Conference, and your local conference church ministries department.

Resource Materials

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling AdventSource (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-765-6955) or your local Christian bookstore.

Beyond the Edge, by Sarah Kelnhofer. Contains 52 mission stories from the front lines, plus a three-part activity section for children following each story.

Counsels on Sabbath School Work is a compilation from the writings of Ellen G. White on the purpose of the Sabbath School.

Expect Great Things: How to Be a Happy, Growing Christian, by Richard O'Ffill. A template for successful Christian living, with the goal of being like Jesus.

Great Stories and How to Tell Them, by Steven Mosley. Explains how to take profound biblical truths and crystallize them in narrative form; includes a collection of heart-gripping stories which illustrate each of the 27 fundamental beliefs.

Lifestyles of the Remnant, by Keavin Hayden. The author takes another look at church standards, taking it out of the context of legalism or orthodoxy—presents much needed principles.

Reinvent Your Sabbath School, by Chris and Yolanda Blake. Start a ministry-driven class that can transform your Sabbath School into the most delightful hour of the week.

Sabbath School Handbook, by North American Division Adult Ministries. A complete handbook for the organization of Sabbath School.

Sabbath School Leader is a monthly magazine published by Review & Herald to equip Sabbath School leaders with resources.

Visit AdventSource On-Line at www.adventsource.org for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.