



SUNDAY SCHOOL
Make the Connection

Sunday School Ministries Attendance Reporting Guidelines

Why do we count Sunday School Ministries attendance?

Sunday School statistics are collected each month with the following purposes in mind:

- To measure the effectiveness of the church at both local and district levels to reach people with the biblical message. All Sunday School ministry efforts should lead to bringing people into fellowship with Christ by experiencing the new birth and identification with the local church.
- To report growth/decline within our denomination and address those trends.
- To encourage accountability from local churches to the district and from districts to the general SSM office. District leadership should be aware of variances in Sunday School attendance and should help local churches assess current strategies and programs used to reach people for Christ.

Which groups are counted in the Sunday School Ministries attendance?

Sunday School Ministries attendance represents the number of different persons being ministered to by the local church through a regular Sunday School session and other extended (outreach) ministries. It is important to remember that even though some persons may be involved in more than one Sunday School ministry, they shall be counted *only once* in the Sunday School Ministries attendance. Classes and ministries which meet during the week should be included in the following Sunday's attendance.

Use the following guidelines to determine whether a small group should be classified as a Regular Sunday School Session or an Extended (Outreach) Ministry:

1. **Regular Sunday School Session:** A regular Sunday School session is defined as an organized group of people who meet each week at a specified time and place. The purpose of this meeting must be to study Biblical principles, using Sunday School curriculum approved by the local Sunday School Ministries Board, for at least a half hour. Attendance counts shall be closed no later than the halfway point of the session. Those who declare their willingness to attend the regular Sunday School session with some degree of regularity should be enrolled on the Active Responsibility List.

The following should be included in the attendance count for the regular Sunday School session:

- Weekly meetings of Sunday School classes, small groups, cell groups, Bible Studies, nursery, and choir rehearsal, as long as this group engages in a half hour study of approved curriculum materials on a weekly basis.
- Home Department: Any person physically or vocationally unable to attend a regular Sunday School class who actively participates in weekly approved Sunday School curriculum.
- Nursing Home/Convalescent Center/Health Care Facility: Residents who actively participate in a weekly study of the approved Sunday School curriculum.
- Church-Type Missions: Any group sponsored by the local church or district with the goal of becoming an organized church who meets weekly for at least a half hour in another location to study the approved Sunday School curriculum.

- Childcare/Schools: Students who actively participate in a regular weekly study of the approved Sunday School curriculum for at least a half hour.
- Church-sponsored Function: An enrollee in a local Sunday School shall be considered present in his or her local Sunday School when attending on that Sunday a local, zone, district, region, or general church-sponsored function such as a retreat, assembly, camp meeting, etc., as long as he or she is not counted in another local Sunday School where he or she is attending. Such functions shall include at least a half hour of Bible Study or approved Sunday School curriculum.

2. **Extended (Outreach) Ministry:** Extended ministry attendance is defined as persons involved in a study of biblical principles for at least a half hour, but not otherwise meeting the criteria of a regular Sunday School session. Those who attend Extended (Outreach) Ministries but not the regular Sunday School session should be enrolled on the Extended (Outreach) Ministries Responsibility List. Persons who attend a regular Sunday School session shall not be counted again in Extended (Outreach) Ministries.

The following should be included in the attendance count for Extended (Outreach) ministries:

- Home Department: Any person physically or vocationally unable to attend a Sunday School class who is visited and taught biblical principles but not using approved Sunday School curriculum on a weekly basis.
- Nursing Home/Convalescent Center/Health Care Facility: Residents who attend a weekly service but are unable to actively participate, or if the approved Sunday School curriculum is not taught.
- Childcare/Schools: Students who attend a class but the approved Sunday School curriculum is not taught on a weekly basis for at least a half hour.
- Bible Study/Small Groups: Any group assembled under the sponsorship of the local church for the purpose of studying the Bible but not approved Sunday School curriculum. This can include ministries such as Caravan, Vacation Bible School, quizzing, and youth group.

What figures should be reported each month?

Local Sunday School Superintendent: Report separate attendance counts for the regular Sunday School session and the Extended (Outreach) Ministries to the district office each month.

District SSM Chairperson/Statistician: Report the combined total of the attendance counts for the regular Sunday School session and the Extended (Outreach) Ministries to the Sunday School Ministries Department.

What if Sunday School does not meet due to a special event?

- **Unified/Combined Services:** If all Sunday School classes of a local church are cancelled due to a special church function (such as Easter Sunday service or annual meeting), the morning worship attendance for that Sunday shall be reported as the Sunday School attendance rather than a 0. This is referred to as a unified/combined service since Sunday School and morning worship have been unified/combined.
- **Weather or Emergency Cancellation:** If weather conditions or emergency situations prohibit Sunday School sessions or Extended Ministries from meeting, that church's attendance from that week shall be dropped from the monthly average, after approval from the district SSM Board, in consultation with the District Superintendent.

Adapted from Articles I & II of the Sunday School Ministries Bylaws (pp. 71-73 of the *2005-2009 Sunday School Ministries Handbook* or pp. 333-340 in the *Manual*).

These and other reporting guidelines are available at www.nazarene.org/ssm/statistics.