



SUNDAY SCHOOL  
*Make the Connection*

## Attendance Ministry in the Local Church

### **Student-centered attendance ministry**

Sunday School Ministries seeks to prepare children, youth, and adults for a lifetime of Christian holiness. With the Sunday School as the foundation, Sunday School ministries also include additional Sunday, weekday, and annual opportunities for Christian education and discipleship. Children's caravan, small group Bible studies, and nursing home ministries are just a few of the many opportunities to build the church community through education, accountability, and fostering Christian growth in students.

Sunday School Ministries is committed to sharing the Good News of the gospel with our communities and guiding believers on their journey as disciples of Jesus Christ. One way to measure the progress and effectiveness of these ministries is through regular attendance reporting. The success of a Sunday School ministry is not measured solely by statistics and attendance. However, our ministries benefit from keeping accurate attendance and enrollment records. Regular reporting of these records keeps each level of the church (general, district, local, and even each class) accountable to fulfill their responsibility to enrollees.

The task of keeping attendance and enrollment records should always be student-centered rather than statistic-centered. The following are guidelines for making – and keeping – a student-centered attendance ministry as a vital component of Sunday School Ministries.

### **How to use the Responsibility List in the Attendance Ministry**

Keeping an accurate responsibility list is the first step in having an effective student-centered attendance ministry.

- Include each person in your church on the responsibility list, no matter the degree of frequency he/she attends. Remember the responsibility list is more than a list of names or an enrollment list. Each name represents a person to whom the local church has been given the responsibility for ministering.
- Include accurate contact information for each person. The Sunday School is unable to fulfill its responsibility to the person if a name appears on a list with no contact information. A responsibility list should include as much contact information for each person as the Sunday School will use – name, address, phone number(s), e-mail address. Applicable family information should also be included, such as spouse, children, and names of children's parents'. Keeping dates such as birthday and anniversary are helpful for determining when a child is to be promoted, as well as when to mail greeting cards.
- Dividing the total responsibility list into three sections is a useful way to evaluate the levels of involvement in Sunday School ministries. Each person for whom the church has contact information should appear in one of the following sections of the total responsibility list:
  1. **Active Responsibility List.** This list includes those persons who attend the regular Sunday School session with some degree of regularity. Each teacher is expected to be responsible for the spiritual welfare of those on his or her class responsibility list.
  2. **Extended (Outreach) Ministries List.** Include on this list those persons who regularly attend an extended or outreach ministry of the local church, but not a weekly Sunday School session.
  3. **Prospect List.** This list includes the names of people who have the potential of becoming regular attenders of Sunday School ministries. Each Sunday School class should consistently strive to bring them into regular attendance.

- Once a person is listed on the responsibility list, the local church should actively seek to minister to that person. Use the responsibility list as calling list to follow-up with absentees and a mailing list to send invitations to upcoming class events. Use it as an opportunity to keep in contact with persons who may have no other contact with a local church.
- Removing names from the responsibility list should be done only with the approval of the pastor after every effort to reach the person has been made by the local church. Do not remove persons simply because they have not attended Sunday School. Persons should only be removed from the responsibility list when they move out of town, join another Sunday School, specifically asks to be removed, or dies.

## **How to use Weekly Attendance Records**

Each Sunday School class and extended/outreach ministry should take attendance at each meeting. Appoint a class secretary to take attendance each week. Use the responsibility list as the foundation for taking attendance. If persons are present who are not enrolled, gather contact information from them.

- Avoid taking attendance by a head count. Although you will have the number of persons present, you will not know which persons were present and which were absent.
- Follow up with visitors and absentees with a personal visit, card, or phone call.
- Each class should submit their attendance records to the church office or Sunday School superintendent, who will compile the records for the whole church. When the attendance records from the various classes and ministries are combined, it is important that persons who are present in more than one ministry per week are only counted once in the weekly attendance.

## **How to use numerical statistics as a summary**

A student-centered attendance ministry is essential for each class and local church. Statistical summaries should be used as a summary of numerical growth or decline.

- Use statistical results to identify trends contributing to growth or decline. Assess current strategies and programs used to reach people with the biblical message. What aspects of the Sunday School are working well and which aspects need to be improved? Use statistical summaries of each class when reviewing current classroom assignments, when preparing for Promotion Sunday, and when ordering curriculum resources.
- Regular reporting serves as an accountability tool, making sure that each level of the church – down to each class – regularly practices a student-centered attendance ministry.

These and other reporting guidelines are available at [www.nazarene.org/ssm/statistics](http://www.nazarene.org/ssm/statistics).