



part 1 of 2—

Building a Successful Teaching Team

by Verda Rubottom

“Two are better than one, because they have a good (more satisfying) reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!”
(Ecclesiastes 4:9,10, Amplified Bible)

Ask children's pastors what their greatest needs are in children's ministry, and most will say that getting enough qualified workers is among the top three concerns on their list. One reason for this is the hectic society we live in where time is at a premium.

Yet, despite busy schedules, concerned Christians desire to contribute something of their time and resources to expand the kingdom of God. How can we get people involved in Christian education when many feel they are already stretched to the limit? One answer to this modern day dilemma can be found in the team-teaching concept.

Take the example of a mother with several small children who may feel she just doesn't have time to teach a class—that is until you invite her to be part of a

teaching team. A team consists of people who share teaching tasks but are not responsible for the whole program.

There are a number of ways to divide up a teaching team. A class secretary can welcome the children and help them feel at ease upon arrival. She can keep track of birthdays and record



attendance along with other pertinent information. Secretaries can also send cards, make phone calls, put up bulletin boards, and help prepare teaching materials.

Other team contributions include: preparing an interest center, presenting an object lesson or a puppet play, leading worship, preparing pre-session or craft activities, or leading Bible review games. Team members can be part of a drama

team that makes occasional visits to the classroom as Bible or modern-day characters.

Benefits of Team Teaching

Consider the benefits of team teaching when recruiting for your children's department. Some of these are listed below:

- 1 Teaching materials and resources are multiplied through the contributions of various team members.
- 2 Larger classes can be taught more effectively using the team concept.
- 3 Team members can learn new teaching methods from each other.
- 4 Fellowship opportunities are increased as people work together.
- 5 Team teaching helps prevent overload or burnout.
- 6 Team teaching utilizes the natural abilities and spiritual gifts of several people.
- 7 Team teaching provides in-service training for the novice teacher.
- 8 Discipline problems are reduced as more workers attend to the needs of the individual child.

9 Substitute teachers are conveniently built into the system as team members can fill in for the lead teacher. This also provides the children with a sense of stability and continuity when the lead teacher needs to be absent.

10 Workers can rotate responsibilities, allowing them opportunities to develop new teaching or support skills.

Questions for Further Study—

1. What is one of the greatest needs in children's ministry?
2. List some of the ways team teaching might benefit your children's ministries department.



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Recruiting Your Team

Building a teaching team involves thoughtful and prayerful consideration. If decisions are made in haste, and people are mismatched or pressured into teaching, the results will be sadly evident. Better to wait for the right person to fill the gap than to make a hasty decision.

We should also avoid trying to convince people they must teach. It's best to present the need and the opportunity to serve, and then pray for the right decision to be made. Allow the person you're asking adequate time to make a decision.

It's also helpful to have potential workers visit the class. Assisting in a class for two or three weeks can help recruits determine which age group they are best suited for.

Share the Vision

A key element in recruiting is to share with your congregation the vision you have for children's ministries. When recruiting individuals, explain your goals and vision, as well as the responsibilities in the classroom. Teacher guidelines and job descriptions are a good idea—even for small churches. Organization and planning speak well of your ministry and your church's commitment to children.

Choose Role Models

When recruiting, look for people who will be good role models for the children—those who have character, enjoy children, and will be good team players.

Some churches have adopted a policy of requiring anyone who wants to work with children to be



involved in some kind of other church ministry for at least six months before serving in the children's department. This allows time for the leadership to observe the level of Christian commitment, faithfulness in ministry, and suitability of the individual to work with children. It also allows time to check references for those who are new to the community or to your church.

Every church should have safeguards in place to protect the children in its care.

Meet the Need

When considering a new person for your team, be specific about the need you have when recruiting. Do you need a lead teacher? A support person to work with small groups of children? Or someone to plan and prepare craft activities?

If you are recruiting for a lead teacher position, you will need to evaluate a person's readiness to lead a class. Putting new recruits with an excellent, experienced teacher provides a perfect opportunity for growth and in-service training. This method of teacher training gives new teachers the opportunities they need to develop their teaching skills.

When building your class or children's church team, designate one person to serve as the lead teacher. The lead teacher serves as a coordinator, making sure that all team members understand their assignments and the classroom is set up and ready to go.

Communicate

Good communication is important on a team and should take place as often as the need arises. Teachers can keep in touch

with phone calls or fellowship times before or after church in addition to the monthly or quarterly planning meetings.

Monthly planning meetings provide time for workers to receive training and to pray, plan, and fellowship together. This is essential for developing a cohesive teaching unit and for identifying lesson aims, planning

the lesson and application, and dividing up the various responsibilities. Many lasting friendships have grown out of such meetings where people plan and minister together. Giving your teachers the support and resources they need will encourage them to keep growing and developing their teaching gifts.

Consider using team teaching

in your children's department. The concept is biblical and practical. And it's an excellent way to build your Sunday School and to provide some of the workers you've been praying for. Most importantly, it will lead to the spiritual growth and development of the children of your church.

Questions for Further Study—

1. Why is it better to wait for the right person than to fill a position hastily?
2. What is a key element in recruiting?
3. Why should you choose children's workers who have already worked in the church for at least six months?
4. How can you evaluate whether someone is ready to lead a class?



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