

Building an Outreach Focused Sunday School

Leader's Guide

**Dr. Elmer Towns
and
Dr. Stan Toler**

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTORS

Dr. Elmer Towns is a college and seminary professor, an author of popular and scholarly works (the editor of two encyclopedias), a popular seminar lecturer, and dedicated worker in Sunday school, and has developed over 20 resource packets for leadership education. He began teaching at Midwest Bible College, St. Louis, Missouri, for three years and was not satisfied with his textbooks so he began writing his own (he has published over 100 books listed in the Library of Congress, 7 listed in the Christian Booksellers Best Selling List; several becoming accepted as college textbooks. He is also the 1995 recipient of the coveted Gold Medallion Award awarded by the Christian Booksellers Association for writing the Book of the Year, i.e., *The Names of the Holy Spirit*.

He was President of Winnipeg Bible College for five years, leading it to receive American Accreditation and Provincial authority to offer degrees (1960-1965). He taught at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in greater Chicago, Illinois, in the field of Religious Education and Evangelism (1965-1971).

He is co-founder of Liberty University, with Jerry Falwell, in 1971, and was the only full-time teacher in the first year of Liberty's existence. Today, the University has over 11,400 students on campus with 39,000 in the Distance Learning Program (now Liberty University Online), and he is the Dean of the School of Religion.

Dr. Towns has given theological lectures and taught intensive seminars at over 50 theological seminaries in America and abroad. He holds visiting professorship rank in five seminaries. He has written over 2,000 reference and/or popular articles and received six honorary doctoral degrees. Four doctoral dissertations have analyzed his contribution to religious education and evangelism.

His personal education includes a B.S. from Northwestern College in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a M.A. from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary also in Dallas, a MRE from Garrett Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, and a D.Min. from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

His wife of 55 years, Ruth teaches a Christian Woman class at Liberty University. They have three children and ten grandchildren and live in Forest, VA

Dr. Stan Toler is a best-selling author, leader, and teacher. A successful pastor for over 40 years in Ohio, Florida, Tennessee, and Oklahoma, he also served as a General Superintendent for the Church of the Nazarene, and was recently named General Superintendent Emeritus by the denomination.

Dr. Toler was vice president for John C. Maxwell's INJOY Leadership Institute for more than a decade, teaching seminars and training church and organization leaders and major corporation leaders, nationally and internationally.

Over one million people have attended his seminars. Renowned motivational speaker Zig Ziglar once said of Toler, "He teaches principles and procedures that will build a church, a home, a business, a community, or a nation."

In addition to his worldwide teaching and speaking, Toler is a best-selling author of nearly 100 books, including *The Five Secrets of an Exceptional Leader*, *Total Quality Living*, *ReThink Your Life*, and his popular *Minute Motivator series*. More than a million copies of his books have been distributed worldwide.

Stan Toler speaks from his vast leadership experience, as well as from his personal experience—overcoming such obstacles as being raised in an impoverished West Virginia community, suffering the loss of his father in an industrial accident, and leading his family through a major health crisis. Toler has been called a "pastor to leaders," but all who know him consider him a "best friend."

Stan and his wife, Linda, an educator and author, reside in Oklahoma City, OK. They have two married sons and four grandchildren.

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To Benefit from Building an Evangelistic Sunday School

1. Introduce yourself to Elmer Towns and Stan Toler.
2. Turn off your phone.
3. Participate in discussions with conference attendees.
4. Take legible notes.
5. Clarify how the ideas in this seminar apply to your current situation.
6. Look for a major breakthrough idea!
7. Spend time working with team leaders when you return home.
8. Stop by the book table after reading the recommended resources.

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SESSION ONE

BARRIERS TO GROWTH

INSTRUCTOR: ELMER TOWNS

A. THE STRENGTHS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

1. Sunday school is the lay ministry of the church. It is not clergy driven.
2. Sunday school is the Bible teaching ministry of the church. It is not just catechism, church membership preparation or a fellowship hour.
3. Sunday school is the family ministry of the church. No other ministry touches all groups of people.
4. Sunday school gives a complete and comprehensive coverage of the Bible, not hit-and-miss Bible exhortations. Today's curriculum is the best in the history of Sunday school.
5. Sunday school gives an open door into the church.
6. Sunday school makes the best use of available time for Bible communication.
7. Sunday school is supported by outstanding resources and facilities, which are already available in most churches.
8. Sunday school gives follow-up to new members, converts and visitors, and keeps marginal members from dropping out because it provides a place for fellowship, belonging and service.

B. TEN REASONS WHY SUNDAY SCHOOL IS STRUGGLING TODAY:

1. Lack of leadership.
2. Poor image.
3. Inadequate instruction.
4. Multiple worship services.
5. Wealth and riches.
6. Growth of privatized Christianity.
7. Declining regular attendance.
8. Small group focus.

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9. Time.
 10. Changing methods.

C. EXTERNAL BARRIERS TO BUILDING A CHURCH.

“The more barriers between a person and Christ, the more difficult it is to win them to Christ” –Donald McGavran

- E-O Internal Barriers, i.e., people in the church that are not saved.
- E-1 Stained glass Barriers, i.e., the outward things that make it difficult to reach people with the gospel.
- E-2 Class and culture Barrier, i.e., when people hear different attitudes and values.
- E-3 Language Barriers. *“Everyone wants to have the gospel in their own heart language.” –Donald McGavran*

D. THREE INTERNAL FACTORS CONTROLLING GROWTH AND HEALTH. “DOING IT ALONE.”

1. “Cork on the bottle” factor.
2. “Limited leaders” factor.
3. “Spiritually blind” factor.

Leadership Barrier One: The cork in the bottle, i.e., “Doing it alone.”

Symptoms:

- Students won’t take responsibility for growth.
- No sense of direction.
- Consistent lack of involvement.

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- Little new or innovative programming.
 - Tolerance of sin.
 - Teacher is excited the pupils are not.

***“When you think you are leading and no one is following
... you are just talking a walk.”***
– Old Chinese Proverb

Leadership Solution

- Sunday school classes rises and falls on leadership.

Howard Hendricks said, *“Leadership is the ability to know where you are going and the ability to convince others to go along with you.”*

John Maxwell says, “Leadership is influence.”

Leadership Barrier Two: Limited leadership factor

Not able to do it. The church cannot grow beyond the ability of the Sunday school teacher.

Leadership Solution

- Godly leadership demands an Ephesians 4 ministry!

Teaching an equipping membership to do ministry themselves. We can no longer settle for growth being totally dependent upon the Sunday school teacher.

Leadership Barrier Three: Spiritually blind factor

Not knowing where you are going. The primary Law of Leadership. When followers buy into your vision, they buy into your leadership.

Leadership must know where
they are going . . . why

they are going . . .
and how to get there.

Leadership Solutions

- Develop God's vision for the class. (see Aim of Sunday School)
- Develop faith-praying.
- Find and develop class helpers.
- Develop a leadership structure that will help grow a class.

Leadership Development Plan

1. I need vision.
2. I need faith.
3. I need to learn how to equip my students.
4. I need organization for outreach.

D. GROWING CLASSES NEED GROWING LEADERSHIP TEAMS.

1. As a class grows in health and numbers, it increases need for training specialized leadership teams to help you.
2. There is a need for a delegation of leadership responsibilities along gifting and talent lines.

▪ Five types of leadership in the growing ministry

1. Visionary leadership.
2. Teaching leadership.
3. Caring leadership.
4. Organizational leadership.
5. Problem-solving leadership.

E. FIVE MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING SUNDAY SCHOOL.

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1. The empty chair problem. One major problem is a “warm body” problem, or an attendance issue.
 2. The empty slot problem of recruiting teachers to fill empty slots when a worker is absent or resigns.

***Teacher recruitment is a time bomb
that can blow apart Sunday School.***

3. The inadequate facilities problem. Many Sunday school classes meet in rooms that are too big, too little, too old or too depressing. The Sunday school facilities do not measure up to public school facilities.
4. The money problem. Most Sunday school workers do not have the funds to do the necessary things required of them.
5. The resource problem. Many Sunday school teachers do not have resources to adequately teach, such as pupil manuals, VCR's, chalkboards, overheads, age-graded furniture, etc.

SESSION TWO

FOCUSING ON EVANGELISM AND OUTREACH

INSTRUCTOR: STAN TOLER

A. EVANGELISM THE FOUNDATION OF SUNDAY SCHOOL.

“Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully observe all the words of this law” (Deut. 31:12).

1. Reaching. Making contact with a person and motivating them to give an honest hearing to the Gospel.
2. Teaching. – Guiding the learning activities that meet human needs.
3. Winning. – Communicating the Gospel in an understandable manner and motivating a person to respond.
4. Maturing/nurturing/caring. – Bring a person to completion.

B. RECASTING THE VISION OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.

1. Sunday school teachers are not just teachers, they are more.
2. Sunday school teachers are shepherd-leaders.
3. Everything the pastor is to the whole flock, the Sunday school teacher is to the Sunday school flock. Therefore a Sunday school teacher is the extension of pastoral care into the Sunday school flock.

Help

Delegate

Team

“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to

shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock . . . Therefore watch” (Acts 20:28-31).

Lead Example
Feed Instruction
Tend Watch Care

C. WHAT MAKES A BIBLE TEACHER GREAT?

1. Calling a great teacher knows he/she is called by God to the task. *“Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it”* (I Thess. 5:24).
 - a. The call of God comes:
 - Gradually or suddenly
 - At salvation or later
 - Younger or older
 - b. The call of God is:
 - 1) Burden.
The burden of the Word of the Lord to Malachi. (Malachi 1:1)
 - 2) Desire.
“Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart” (Jer. 15:16). *“I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome”* (Rom. 1:15).
 - 3) Fruit.
“You did not choose me, But I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and your fruit shall remain” (John 15:16).
2. Character. A great teacher must have biblical character as a foundation for effective teaching. *“A person must journey within, before they can journey without.”*

“Character is habitually doing the right thing in the right way.”
Elmer Towns, Stories On The Front Porch

- a. *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”* (Gal. 5:22-23).
- b. The life of the teacher is still the life of his/her teaching.

3. Spiritual giftedness

- a. Great teachers must know their gifts and use their gifts to accomplish God’s purpose through them. The nine generally recognized spiritual gifts.

	Strong	Average	Weak
Evangelist (get decisions)	10	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
Prophet (issues & negative)	10	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
Teaching (study & share)	10	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
Exhortation (positive & practical)	10	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
Shepherd (group leadership)	10	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
Mercy Showing (empathy & need-oriented)	10	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
Serving (practical)	10	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
Giving (money, time, talent)	10	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
Ruling (management)	10	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	

- b. My three dominant gifts. 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
- c. My three weakest gifts. 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
- d. You can grow in quality and quantity.
“Desire earnestly the best gifts” (I Cor. 12:31).

SESSION THREE

LOOKING PRACTICALLY AT OUTREACH

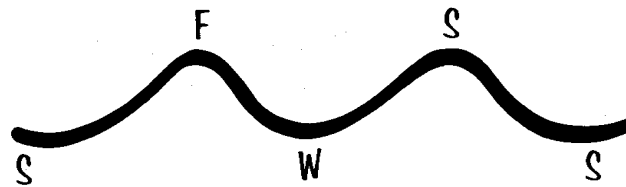
INSTRUCTOR: STAN TOLER

TEN PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Pray specifically for class members.
2. Set quality goals.

The greatest list of prospects is the friends of your members.

3. Know law of two-humped camel.



4. Plan fall and spring outreach events.
5. Communicate plans.
6. Build on your strengths.
7. Recognize the law of the clinched fist.
8. Affirm and recognize.
9. Invite people to serve.
10. Have a dedication service for workers.

WHAT ARE THE THREE STAGES OF EVANGELISM?

1. Pre-evangelism.
2. Evangelism.
3. Post-evangelism.

WHAT IS PRE-EVANGELISM?

1. Meeting the needs of people.
2. Being sensitive to the needs of people.

WHEN HAVE I REALLY WITNESSED TO SOMEONE?

When I have shared with them:

1. Testimony.
2. Daily walk.

WHEN DO I BEGIN TO DO EVANGELISM?

When I have . . .

1. Built a relationship bridge.
2. Shared my testimony.
3. Shared how to be saved.
4. Asked if they want to receive Christ.
5. Lead them in a sinner's prayer.

The ABC's of a Personal Relationship with Christ.

Admitt that you have sinned. (Romans 3:23)

Believe that Jesus Christ died for you. (John 1:12)

Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life. (Romans 10:9)

The Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I believe that you died for my sins and arose from the grave. I now turn from my sins. Come into my heart and

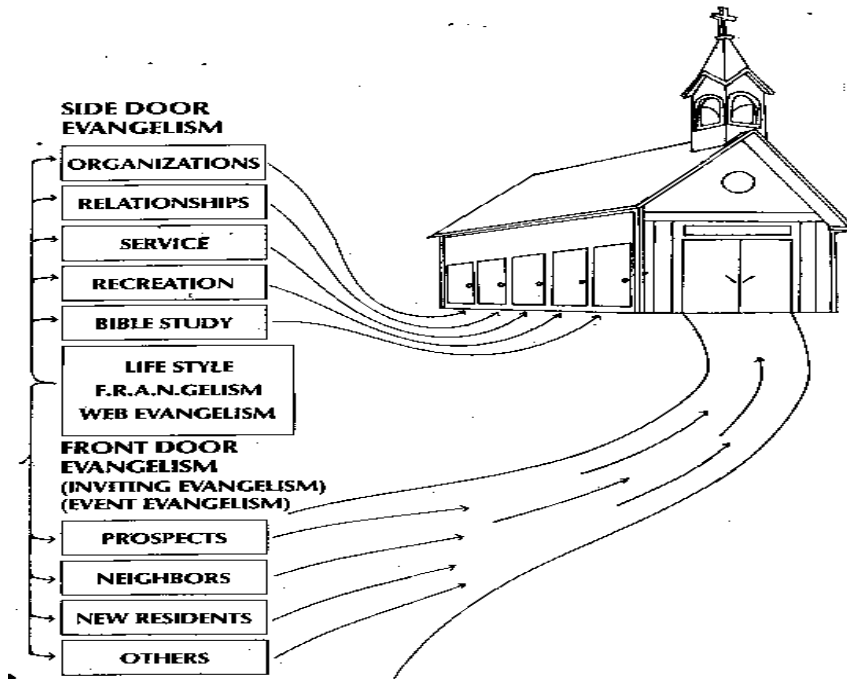
save me. I receive you as my personal Savior and I will follow you as my Lord.
Amen.

SESSION FOUR

KNOWING THE MANY DOORS INTO THE CHURCH

INSTRUCTOR: ELMER TOWNS

KNOWING THE MANY DOORS INTO THE CHURCH



1. What influence leads to salvation?

2% - Advertisement

6% - Pastoral influence

6% - Organized outreach

86% - Friends and relatives

- What is the greatest source of conversions in your church?
- What can my church do to influence more people to salvation?

2. Age Door (the door of entry).

_____ Birth 0-12

_____ Youth 13-17

_____ Young Adult 18-34

_____ Middle Adult 35-59

_____ Senior Adult 60 and up

- What is the dominant age group that visits my church?
- What can my church do to reach more of this age group?

3. Contact Door.

- What is the first contact that the average visitor has with your church? The answer to this question should be gathered for all new church members.
 - a. Newspaper
 - b. Radio
 - c. Saw building
 - d. Invited by a friend
 - e. Child attended
 - f. Denominational heritage
 - g. Special event
 - h. Flyer
 - i. Christian school
 - j. Visited by church
- What is the most effective advertisement to attract people to your church?
- What can my church do to reach more people through this means?

4. Agency Door.

- What is the first event that visitors usually attend at your church? The answer to this question should be gathered from all new church members.
 - a. Sunday school
 - b. Worship
 - c. Children's activity
 - d. Youth activity
 - e. Special Event

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- f. Christian school
 - g. Revival/conference
 - h. Music Concert

5. Five Friendship Doors.

1. Relationship/friendship.
2. Need/help.
3. Topic.
4. Teacher.
5. Method of teaching.

6. Planning a 21st century strategy.

**The Sunday school of the future must
be the foundation of the church,
not the steeple.**

Prior to 1971, usually visitors attended Sunday school, not the worship service. However, today visitors rarely attend Sunday school first. They usually attend the worship service.

ROLE-REVERSAL

Today visitors rarely attend Sunday school.

They usually attend the worship service first.

- a. Recognize that the door of entry is the worship service.
- b. Make the worship service the main fishing pool for prospects and new members for the Sunday school.
- c. Recognize that the platform attracts visitors and new members, while small groups bond them to the local church.

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- d. Organize outreach through the Sunday school, but recognize that visitors will first attend the worship service.
 - e. Develop a strategy to bond all new members through the Sunday school.

SESSION FIVE

MAKE EVERY SUNDAY FRIEND DAY

INSTRUCTOR: ELMER TOWNS

FRIEND DAY SINCE . . .

- Visitors come on the arm of a friend.
- 86% of new comers are influenced by a friend or relative.

FRIEND DAY:

1. An enlistment campaign.
2. A networking campaign.
3. A follow up campaign.
4. Stair-stepping campaign.

FRANS

F riends

R elatives

A ssociates

N eighbors

**The people in your neighborhood
who are the best prospects.**

The Law of Three Hearings

A person will make a decision and become bonded to the church after attending the church three or four times.

The Law of Seven Touches

A person will make a bondable decision to a church after he/she has had seven meaningful contacts from the church.

Suggested Seven Touches

1. Personal letter.
2. Phone call.
3. Secretary letter.
4. Re-conformation phone call.
5. Visit.
6. Personal letter calling attention to visit.
7. General phone call.

Strategy for Friend Day

1. First week, pastor's letter.
2. Second week, board letter.
3. Third week, teacher's card.
4. Fourth week, everyone card.
5. Follow-up, seven times.

SESSION SIX

A NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL PARADIGM

INSTRUCTOR: STAN TOLER

STEP ONE: PROVIDE MULTIPLE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.

1. Multiple times.
2. Multiple options.
3. Multiple locations.

STEP TWO: PROVIDE PASTORAL LEADERSHIP AND CARE FOR THE CHURCH FAMILY.

Four Key Words That Describe The Process

1. Caring

Quality Goals for Our Church

- We will always seek to speak an encouraging word to our guests.
- We will focus on our strengths and seek to improve our weaknesses.
- We will strive to build quality ministry action teams.
- We will be thoughtful and Christlike in every relationship.
- We will cultivate physical, mental and spiritual growth.
- We will treat others as we hope others will treat us.
- We will ask, listen and hear--to determine the felt needs and potential of each newcomer.
- We will seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in every decision-making opportunity.

2. Preparing.

“Visions are born of care and are given form and substance though added preparation.”

–Paul S. Rees

3. Sharing.

“There is no better exercise for strengthening the heart than reaching down and lifting people up!”
–L. B. Hicks

4. Daring

“There was once a man who threw a great dinner party and invited many. When it was time for dinner, he sent out his servants to the invited guest, saying ‘come on in; the food’s on the table’”

(from Luke 14:16-23, *The Message*).

A. Let’s invite the unchurched

B. Let’s instruct workers

“Quickly, get out into the city streets and alleys. Collect all who look like they need a square meal, all the misfits and homeless and wretched you can lay your hands on, and bring them here.”

C Let’s involve everyone

“I want My house full” (Luke 14:16-23).

**If we give up on Sunday school our churches
will be as weak to influence society as British
and European churches.**

I will not give up on Sunday school!

–Elmer Towns