

Options for Adult Sunday School Classes

Although many Sunday Schools fall into ruts of sameness, the literature for adults from DiscipleGuide Church Resources is flexible enough to give you a surprising number of options. **If you have bogged down in dull routine, this article may give you an idea for making a fresh change.** If you are looking for a better way to conduct Sunday School than your usual pattern, see if the ideas below can lead to improved Bible study in your church.

Option 1: Follow the quarterly

One of the most common procedures for Sunday School — but not the one most highly recommended — is to talk through or (worse) read through the lesson in *Compass*, the student quarterly.

Though often derided, this approach does have its strengths. *Compass* is written by competent Bible teachers and presents information worth sharing with a class. If Sunday School teachers are not knowledgeable or skilled in their own right, dependence on the student quarterly keeps the class from being nothing more than a sharing of ignorance. And years of following the quarterly in countless Sunday Schools has demonstrated that learning can and does take place when both students and teachers enter into the lessons with sincere hearts.

The downside to following the quarterly, of course, is the boredom factor. Only highly motivated students will discipline themselves to listen to someone else paraphrase or read aloud from a textbook for any length of time. The more learned the class, the less effective this style of teaching is.

Ordering: If following the quarterly is the class routine you choose for your Sunday School, you will need to order one copy of *Compass* for each student and one for the teacher.

Option 2: Use a teacher's guide

The *Compass Teacher* provides complete lesson plans that will enable adult Sunday School teachers to map out and conduct teacher-centered lessons with student participation. Even teachers without extensive skills or experience in the classroom can follow the directions in *Compass Teacher* to advance their classes far beyond “just following the quarterly.”

Typically *Compass Teacher* provides:

- Information to help teachers focus on the goals a lesson should meet

- A suggestion for beginning a lesson in a way that gains and focuses student attention

- A pattern for developing a study of the Bible text

- Discussion and/or lecture notes that are complete enough to enable any conscientious teacher to make use of them. These notes will closely parallel, but not duplicate the content in the *Compass* student quarterly.

- A reproducible handout that supplies students with needed information or involves them in thought, discussion, or application of the lesson

- A specific way to close the lesson with a view toward application

Instructions for using preprinted visuals packaged in the kit of *Compass Resources* and for making additional visuals

Ordering: If you choose to equip adult teachers with ready-to-use teaching plans, order one *Compass* for each student to read on his own and one copy of *Compass Teacher* for the leader's guidance. For still better results, equip the teacher with the *Compass Resources* as well.

Option 3: Teach with an emphasis on new technology

The *Compass E-Kit* is a CD containing digitized files that equip you to use your computer and video equipment in teaching the Bible. With this CD (and the essential equipment) you can:

Show visuals from the *Compass Resources* in a PowerPoint presentation. The visuals are already converted to PowerPoint slides and adapted for video presentation. You can edit the PowerPoint file by adding slides displaying your own teaching points, discussion questions, visuals of your own design, etc.

Print the handouts from *Compass Teacher* from your computer

Print visuals from *Compass Resources* as letter-size handouts

Print these visuals onto transparencies for an overhead projector

Copy and paste excerpts from *Compass* and *Compass Teacher* into your teaching notes and/or PowerPoint slides

View *Compass* and *Compass Teacher* lessons on your computer monitor

Ordering: For digitized versions of the adult Sunday School publications, order one *E-Kit* for each teacher who desires it. Each teacher who requests an *E-Kit* will also need one *Compass* quarterly and one *Compass Teacher*. He will not need a *Compass Resources* kit unless he wants printed visuals in addition to PowerPoint files. If he wants to refer to the discovery questions in *Compass Discovery*, ordering this publication separately will be the only way to access them, since they are not included on the *E-Kit*.

Option 4: Conduct a discovery group

In group discovery learning everyone comes to class knowing that he shares equally with all others in the group the responsibility for finding God's truth in Scripture. Rather than being planned and directed by a teacher, the group is led by a facilitator, a group member who keeps discussion balanced and on track.

As a tool for discovery learning DiscipleGuide offers *Compass Discovery* (which will be replaced in fall 2008 by *Compass Point*, a young-adult publication also emphasizing discovery learning). For each lesson in the adult curriculum, *Compass Discovery* contains a set of questions on the Bible text, with space for writing answers. Group members work together during class time to look up and share with one another the Bible's answers to these questions. Some of the questions seek to build factual knowledge, but more often they probe for insight and application from Scripture.

Ordering: To equip a class for discovery learning, order one *Compass Discovery* for each student and a *Compass Teacher* and *Compass Resources* kit for the discussion facilitator.

Option 5: Blend all Sunday School publications in a design of your own

Perhaps the best option — certainly the one allowing for the most personal ministry — is to research the *Compass* quarterly, the *Compass Teacher*, the *Compass Resources*, and *Compass Discovery* and then create your own lessons. The fact that all of these publications follow a common curriculum but meet varying needs makes this option a fruitful one.

In making use of all these Sunday School publications, utilize whatever you find in them that best meets the needs of your students at a given time. Add to this mix the truths and teaching ideas the Lord gives you from your own knowledge and research. As you blend all these materials together, you may sometimes choose a quarterly-centered presentation, sometimes a teacher-centered lesson, sometimes a class discussion, sometimes a discovery session. The variety in itself will promote interest and learning.

Ordering: To equip your adult Sunday School to blend all these tools creatively, order one *Compass* quarterly and one *Compass Discovery* for each student. For the teacher, order one *Compass*, one *Compass Teacher*, and one *Compass Resources*. (Or, if the teacher prefers, substitute one *Compass E-Kit* and one *Compass Discovery* for his *Compass Resources*.)

Option 6: Choose electives

You can add still more variety and more choices to your Sunday School by occasionally selecting courses from the undated *Christian Living* publications. These materials are designed for Christian Growth Ministry, but if your church is not already using them in that setting, you can use them in Sunday School as you choose. One of the many available titles may meet a particular need or give a healthy change of pace in your Sunday School. Each course includes a student quarterly and a teacher's guide.

In deciding how you will apply all of the above options, keep one principle uppermost: *Your higher goal in Sunday School is to study the Bible, not the literature.* Devote yourself above all to finding God's truth in His Word, and then use the tools available from DiscipleGuide however they will best equip you to meet that goal.

To order literature [click here](#).

For descriptions of adult Sunday School publications, [click here](#).

For descriptions of *Christian Living* products, [click here](#).