

Start or revitalize a ministry in your church

QUICK START GUIDE



SABBATH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT



Quick Start Guide for the Sabbath School Superintendent

Available from:
AdventSource
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402.486.8800
AdventSource.org

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Introduction

Ever since James White organized the first Adventist Sabbath School in Rochester, New York in 1853, Sabbath Schools have played a major role in our church. The mission of Sabbath School is to teach members how to internalize God's grace and truth and successfully share that with others. Sabbath School is not just a program on Sabbath morning. It is a school of Christian living.

According to research from the North American Division Office of Information and Research, three out of four participants come to Sabbath School seeking personal spiritual growth. To facilitate that growth, the Sabbath School activities need to be carefully and systematically planned.

The four specific objectives of the Sabbath School are to:

- Study the Word
- Provide fellowship and nurture
- Develop community outreach
- Support world missions

Each of these objectives is important and can be accomplished through wise planning and implementation.

1. Study of the Word helps students understand the gospel and make a personal commitment to Christ. Bible study also helps Sabbath School members develop a devotional life and teaches them how to interpret and apply the principles of the Scriptures to their lives.
2. Fellowship and nurture foster a sense of community among members by developing friendships through small group interaction. Sabbath School is also a prime means for reclaiming inactive members.
3. Community outreach trains members for service and inspires them to witness. Each class develops projects to involve members in soul-winning activities.

Research and experience show that Sabbath Schools are not really successful unless they include elements of outreach and soul winning. "The Sabbath School should be one of the greatest instrumentalities, and the most effectual, in bringing souls to Christ." (Ellen White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, page 10)

NAD ADULT MINISTRIES
WEBSITE

Are you looking for ideas for your Sabbath School class? Visit the North American Division Adult Ministries website at **NADAdultMinistries.org** to find ideas for Sabbath School, along with Personal and Prison Ministries. Learn about Sabbath School Action Units, simple methods for giving Bible studies, and much more.



4. World mission emphasis presents a clear vision of the global mission of the Adventist church. Sabbath School promotes a personal, systematic, and self-denying commitment for the support of world missions and creates in members a desire to help fulfill the gospel commission.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL CLASS AS A SMALL GROUP FAMILY

The history of Sabbath School includes a time when small groups would gather to study the Word, pray for each other, and provide a safe place for individuals to share the struggles they are dealing with and how the Lord has blessed them.

The Sabbath School “class” is really more of a family or small group experience, so classes are referred to as Small Group Families in this Quick Start Guide. If you are leading one of these Small Group Families, please make sure it is a place where members and visitors can come to grow in their Christian experience.

Job Description

The main role of the Sabbath School superintendent, also known in some churches as the Sabbath School coordinator, is to facilitate the four goals of Sabbath School. Assistants may be chosen to work with the superintendent.

The Sabbath School superintendent chairs the Sabbath School committee (also known as Sabbath School council), which is responsible to the church board. Approval of plans, programs, projects, and implementation of policies are the responsibility of the Sabbath School committee. All assistant division leaders, Small Group Family Sabbath School leaders, musicians, and greeters report to their division.

The Sabbath School superintendent works closely with the Sabbath School secretary in keeping records, and with the Sabbath School committee in recruiting and training teachers, developing programming, managing the finances allocated by the local church for Sabbath School divisions, and organizing itself in such a way that its four purposes are fulfilled (see the list of Recommended Resources for more information on each of these topics).

In some churches the work of the Sabbath School superintendent is accomplished by multiple assistant superintendents working together to fill this role. In those situations there are two main ways for the groups to be organized:

1. Each superintendent is assigned a certain number of programs during the year and plans all activities for those Sabbaths.
2. Each superintendent takes charge of a different aspect of Sabbath School and plans activities within that area of responsibility for the entire year. For example, one person is in charge of world missions emphasis, another is responsible for special music and features, and another coordinates special days such as Thirteenth Sabbath and Community Guest Day.



Sabbath School Teacher Training Course

Created by NAD Adult Ministries

The Sabbath School Teacher Training Course includes eight units that are arranged so the teachers in Sabbath School classes can become more effective. The courses are divided into three segments: Core Units, Essential Skills and Advanced Skills.

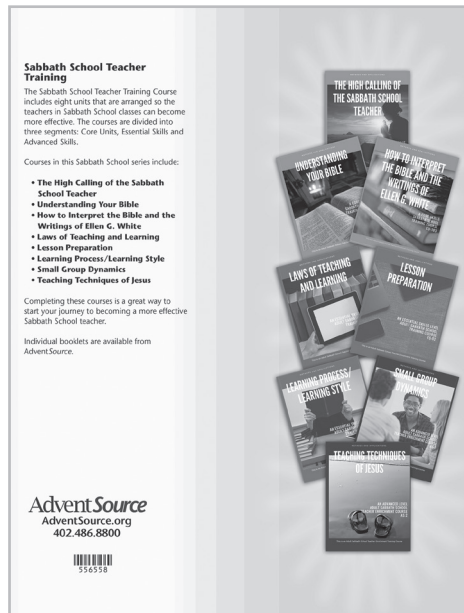
Courses in this Sabbath School series include:

- The High Calling of the Sabbath School Teacher
- Understanding Your Bible
- How to Interpret the Bible and the Writings of Ellen G. White
- Laws of Teaching and Learning
- Lesson Preparation
- Learning Process/Learning Style
- Small Group Dynamics
- Teaching Techniques of Jesus

Completing these courses is a great way to start your journey to becoming a more effective Sabbath School teacher.

Product #556558

Available at AdventSource.org and 402.486.8800.



Time Commitment

Approximately 14 hours a month in addition to Sabbath mornings should be given for this position. The adult division superintendent should plan to spend two to four hours a month in planning, gathering material, and contacting participants. At least two hours a week outside of the Sabbath program should be spent organizing, recruiting, and training. One to two hours a month should be budgeted for meeting with the Sabbath School committee.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the superintendent fall into four main categories:

- Leadership development
- Planning
- Weekly programs
- Communication

Leadership Development

- Recommending names of Small Group Family leaders to the Sabbath
- School committee
- Attending, and encouraging others to attend, Sabbath School workshops and leadership training seminars
- Making available to Small Group Family leaders materials to aid in self-improvement
- Seeing that the church library has the needed resources in the areas of teaching/class leading techniques, program ideas, witnessing, world mission education, and Bible study aids

Planning

- Coordinating division activities with the local church calendar of events
- Together with the personal ministries coordinator, leading out in the development of a yearly plan for community outreach events such as Community Guest Day, friendship evangelism, and Branch Sabbath Schools
- Arranging Small Group Families so there are no more than 12 members per class, if possible
- Chairing the Sabbath School committee
- Presenting requests to the Sabbath School committee for needed supplies, equipment, or personnel



Arranging Weekly Programs

- Promoting the five Sabbath School offerings: weekly mission offering, Thirteenth Sabbath offering, birthday/thank offering, Investment fund, and Sabbath School expense offering
- Scheduling the divisions that will participate in the Thirteenth Sabbath programs
- With the pastor, arranging a Pastor's Bible Class for new members and other interested people
- Preparing a weekly program that engages your audience and helps them learn and grow

Communication

- Informing Sabbath School leaders and officers of conference-sponsored seminars or workshops in their areas of interest
- Promoting special Sabbath School programs and outreach activities through announcements, bulletin inserts, the church's website and social media, and bulletin board notices
- Visiting classes regularly
- Finding a variety of ways to express appreciation and affirmation to the volunteers who staff the Sabbath Schools

Adults Sabbath School Program Formats

The majority of adult Sabbath Schools tend to follow a traditional format similar to the worship service. This, however, is not the best plan. The word "school" suggests active participation and learning activities. We have wise counsel regarding the Sabbath School program:

"The object of the Sabbath School should not be lost sight of in mechanical arrangements, thus occupying time which should be given to other important matters. We should ever be guarded against forms and ceremonies which will eclipse the real object for which we are laboring. There is a danger of carrying system to such an extreme that the Sabbath School will become weariness, when, on the contrary, it should be a rest, a refreshment, and

QUICK TIPS FOR A MORE DYNAMIC SABBATH SCHOOL

- Develop program themes (monthly or quarterly)
- Set goals for attendance, projects, and offerings
- Give the classes names; build enthusiasm and loyalty
- Promote Sabbath School in the church bulletin and on the church website
- Hold a training session to help participants read and speak well in public
- Minimize program time and maximize Small Group Family (class) interaction time



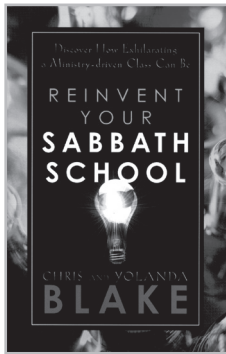
blessing. There is altogether too much dependence placed upon form and machinery, while the life-giving power of God is not manifested for the conversion of souls, for whom Christ died. The order of things must be changed if our Sabbath Schools meet the purpose for which they exist” (Ellen White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 151, 156, 157).

The more participation and interaction that is built into the Sabbath School program and the Small Group Family (class) interaction time, the more learning and personal application takes place. Sabbath School programs that consist mostly of one person doing all the talking from the front (in spite of how good the content might be) have little lasting effect on the students.

The Sabbath School committee, under the leadership of the superintendent, chooses the program format. The following formats are starting points from which each school may develop its own program.

RESOURCE

Reinvent Your Sabbath School (book and DVD)



By Chris and Yolanda Blake

Learn how to start a ministry-driven Sabbath School class.

Product #420435

Available at AdventSource.org or 402.486.8800.

Modified Traditional Program

- 9:15 Song Service (invite different children/youth to help)
- 9:25 Opening Remarks (welcome, prayer)
- 9:30 Keeping on Course (choose one each week)
- Evangelism Emphasis
 - Community Outreach Emphasis
 - World Missions Emphasis
 - Investment
 - Improvement (mini training seminars)
 - Progress Report (make it more than reading numbers)
 - Fellowship/Prayer Time
 - Special Feature



- 9:40 Small Group Family (class) Interaction Time
 - Class Activities (125 minutes)
 - Prayer
 - Reclamation
 - Outreach
 - Fellowship Planning
 - Lesson Study (30 minutes)
- 10:35 Closing Remarks, Prayer, and Preview of Next Week (if possible)

Optional Learning Format

This format uses the same timeframe listed above (approximately 1.5 hours). However, in this format the entire time is devoted to interactive learning that meets student's needs. For example:

- 9:15 Family Fellowship (greeting one another, sharing, praying, and singing)
- 9:25 Group Activity (children go to their divisions; adults spend time focusing on a real-life issue of interest to them)
- 9:40 World Mission Feature
- 9:50 Training Seminar (some aspect of personal ministry or nurture)
- 10:10 Bible Study in Small Groups
- 10:35 Wrap-up and Preview of Next Week

Note: The order of activities can easily be switched. Also, your group may also want to give a little more or less time to particular activities.

Five Adult Sabbath School Audiences

Research has shown that a congregation usually has some combination of five basic audiences who attend Sabbath School. Each is a sociological group based on particular interests or preferences.

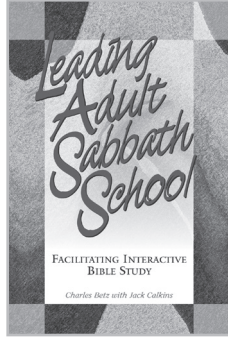
Each of these groups should be organized into classes so as to attract people with similar interests. The result will be that the Sabbath School grows in attendance. Depending on the space available, it is possible to have a number of adult Sabbath Schools built around these audiences.

The basic five Sabbath School audiences are:

- Traditionalists
- Adults who are fellowship-oriented
- Adults who desire in-depth Bible study
- Social action groups
- Multiple interest groups



Leading Adult Sabbath School



By Charles Betz with Jack Calkins

Growing, interactive classes have leaders that encourage interaction and learning using proven strategies. Leading Adult Sabbath School is a complete tool you can use to stimulate and inspire member.

Product #550010

Available at AdventSource.org or 402.486.8800.

Organizing a five-audience Sabbath School takes planning and work. Each audience group needs a leadership team composed of a leader, teacher, greeter, and a prayer leader. Each should have the corresponding spiritual gifts and meet regularly for prayer, planning, and evaluation. Each leadership team makes sure the four purposes of Sabbath School are being fulfilled for their group.

The five-audience system will ideally result in a number of Small Group Families meeting throughout the Sabbath School time. Each group will have its own program format and style.

When using this format, the only time the entire adult Sabbath School meets together is periodically as part of an overall plan to report and praise God.

The success of this system depends largely on three things:

- The space available in the building
- The amount of work and planning put into the program
- The quality of the leadership team in each group

Another way to use this grouping system is to organize Sabbath School classes based on each type of group. In this case, the Sabbath School program will be modeled on one of the formats already outlined, but the individual Small Group Families will be designed around these groups. Accordingly, more time must be given for the Small Group Families to carry out their various activities.

Sabbath School Action Units

9:15	Song Service
9:25	Welcome and Prayer
9:30	Special Feature/Music
9:35	World Mission Report
9:45	Action Unit Begins Outreach Time – approx. 25 minutes Bible Study/Lesson – approx. 35 minutes
10:45	Closing Prayer in Classes

Chairing the Sabbath School Committee

As chair of the Sabbath School committee, your first responsibility is to become familiar with the plans for Sabbath School by studying *The Sabbath School Handbook* (see page 13 for resources).

Then, as soon as possible after the election of officers, call the Sabbath School committee together. The committee usually consists of:

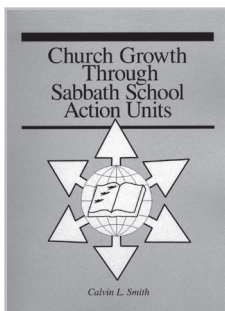
- Sabbath School superintendent
- Assistant superintendents
- Sabbath School secretary
- Assistant Sabbath School secretaries
- Division leaders
- Investment leader
- World missions coordinator
- Vacation Bible School director
- Branch Sabbath School leaders
- The pastor or an elder (advisory position)

As chairperson, you should prepare an agenda for each meeting, leaving room for items from other officers. Everything that has a bearing on the Sabbath School is discussed by the Sabbath School committee.

Selection of Small Group Family Leaders

It is essential to choose carefully the men and women who will be in positions of trust as Sabbath School leaders. You should know something in regard to their past lives and the characters they have developed.

Church Growth Through Sabbath School Action Units



By Calvin Smith

This comprehensive manual contains complete instructions on how to set up, implement, and maintain Action Units in your church. It also includes guidelines, presentations, samples, worksheets, tips on visitation and sharing, and ways to encourage discussion.

Product #601612

Available at AdventSource.org or 402.486.8800.



Leaders need to be able to connect with other people on a personal level, be kind and understanding, and be able to lead spiritual discussions.

“Those who teach in the Sabbath school must have their hearts warmed and invigorated by the truth of God, being not hearers only, but also doers of the Word...Teachers should be diligent students of the Word of God, and ever reveal the fact that they are learning daily lessons in the school of Christ, and are able to communicate to others the light they have received from Him who is the Great Teacher, the Light of the World” (Ellen White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 93, 94).

Extension Division

The Extension Division is a section of Sabbath School that cares for the needs of members who for some reason cannot regularly attend. This group may include the aged, people who are ill, or others such as humanitarian workers, traveling workers, and military personnel. Larger churches should appoint a separate Extension Division leader, with one assistant for each 10 members needing visitation. If less than four members are in this class, the Sabbath School secretary or adult Sabbath School leader should visit these members to deliver Bible study guides (lesson quarterlies) and CDs or DVDs, when available.

Young Adults

In some larger churches the young adults (generally ages 18-35) function as a separate division. However, in many churches the young adults meet with the adults for the Sabbath school program and then divide into a separate class. The Sabbath School Bible study guides for both groups cover the same topics, though in different formats.

Branch Sabbath Schools

One or more of your Sabbath School classes may want to start a Branch Sabbath School. Branch Schools can meet in any convenient location and on any day of the week. For more information on starting Branch Schools, see *The Sabbath School Handbook* available from AdventSource.

HOW TO HELP YOUR PASTOR BE SUCCESSFUL

1. Pray daily for your pastor's family.
2. Develop a friendship with your pastor that goes beyond church-related items.
3. Publicly support your pastor. Discuss differences of opinion privately.
4. Ensure your pastor is taking regular downtime. No one can operate effectively without a little rest and relaxation.
5. Learn your pastor's strengths and find ways to supplement weak areas. Remember, no one can do everything. The body of Christ functions best when everyone works together.



Sabbath School Program Planner #1-5



By Dorothy Eaton Watts

This series includes Sabbath School program scripts with suggestions for Scripture, responsive reading, special music, and song service, plus ideas for creating your own program.

Book 1 Product #420580

Book 2 Product #420581

Book 3 Product #420582

Book 4 Product #420583

Book 5 Product #420584

Available at AdventSource.org or 402.486.8800.

Sabbath School Supplies

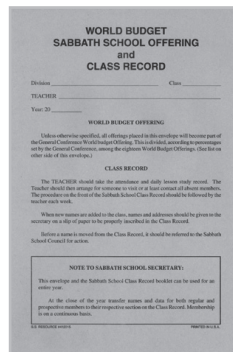
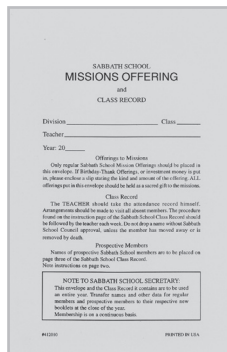
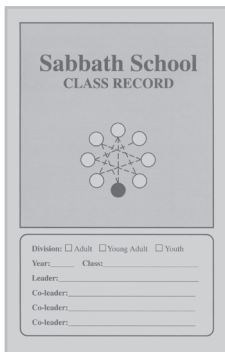
Use these materials to organize the records of offering and attendance in your Sabbath School classes.

Class Record Book Product #413020

Mission Offering Envelope Product #412010

World Budget Envelope Product #412015

Available at AdventSource.org or 402.486.8800.



Special Days

Special days are important outreach tools and should be an integral part of the Sabbath School's annual program. Remember that follow-up contacts are also a vital aspect and should be included in the planning process.

Plan short, enthusiastic, spiritual programs, keeping in mind that the goal of special days is



to capture interest and create a desire to attend future programs. For detailed information on planning special days (such as Community Guest Day), see *The Sabbath School Handbook*.

Keeping Records

Each Small Group Family should have a record listing the names of the members. Anyone who desires may become a member. The Small Group Family leader is authorized to add the names of those wishing to join. The records should be checked regularly so missing members can be visited.

The Small Group Family record keeping system will include a record of the Small Group Family mission offering goal and the weekly amount received. Periodic reports should be given on how the Sabbath School is doing, both in giving and attendance.

Evaluating the Ministry

Leaders of every successful ministry periodically take time for reflection. They think about their successes and failures, and learn from each. They privately seek and accept the counsel and constructive criticism of wise mentors.

Ten questions Sabbath School superintendents should consider:

1. Do I show immediate and warm interest in every member of the Sabbath School?
2. Do I encourage the teachers/leaders to find value in each member of their groups?
3. Do I stimulate leaders to learn how to solve their own problems, yet at the same time make them feel free to come to me?
4. Do I consistently display a courteous and cheerful attitude toward everyone with whom I work?
5. Do I encourage others to come up with new ideas and suggestions?
6. Do I make needed decisions tactfully, fairly, and promptly?
7. Am I conscientious about keeping my promises?
8. Do I realize that conditions may change and readily accept necessary changes in methods and regulations?
9. Do I refrain from making lengthy speeches and over-managing others?
10. Am I careful to set a right example by my words, habits, and behavior?

MISSION SPOTLIGHT

Mission Spotlight videos feature stories about mission from around the globe, along with a video for each quarter's 13th Sabbath offering. These videos are perfect for use in a Sabbath School class or church service. Visit Adventist Mission's website at **AdventistMission.org** to sign up to receive these free videos via email or DVD.

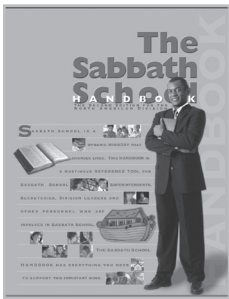


Conclusion

Personal spiritual growth; sharing thoughts, aspirations, and hopes; gathering light, strength, and courage from one another; reclamation; prayer; evangelistic and social outreach – this is what Sabbath School is all about.

Resources

The following resources are available from AdventSource. For a complete list, visit AdventSource.org or call 402.486.8800.



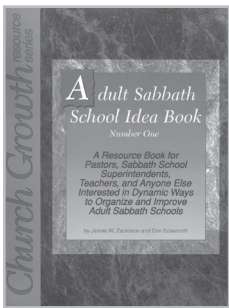
The Sabbath School Handbook

Prepared by NAD Adult Ministries

The Sabbath School Handbook outlines and explains the structures that support this important ministry. This book is a must-have reference tool for Sabbath School superintendents, secretaries, division leaders, and other personnel involved in Sabbath School.

English Product #550000

Spanish Product #550005

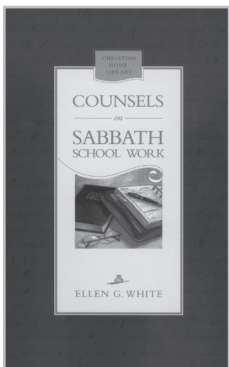


Adult Sabbath School Idea Book #1

By James W. Zackrison

Discover new, effective Sabbath School class formats, alternative lesson study plans, and ideas for increasing attendance in this 55-page resource designed for pastors, Sabbath School superintendents, church officers, teachers, and anyone interested in dynamic ways to organize and improve adult Sabbath School.

Product #416105



Counsels on Sabbath School Work

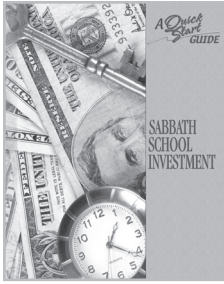
By Ellen G. White

Ellen White provides inspired instruction on the qualifications of a teacher, appropriate attitudes, methods of teaching, discipline, gaining respect, encouraging generosity, meeting controversy, and many other practical topics. Topically divided and indexed.

English Product #416180

Spanish Product #416181





Quick Start Guide for Sabbath School Investment

Prepared by NAD Adult Ministries

If you want to include an Investment program as part of your Sabbath school, this book will help you get started. Learn the origin of Investment, how the funds are used, how to run a year-long program, how to keep people motivated, project ideas, and more.

English Product #556270

Spanish Product #556269



The Sabbath School Superintendent

Prepared by the GC Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department

The Sabbath School Superintendent provides a clear look at the duties and responsibilities of the superintendent, as well as step-by-step examples and guidelines for planning an effective Sabbath School program.

Product #556278

Keys to Sabbath School Booklets

Prepared by the GC Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department

Would you like to create the ideal Sabbath School class—one with a warm and caring atmosphere, where members and visitors alike feel welcome and cared for? This set of 13 booklets outlines simple plans for organizing and equipping your church's Sabbath School. This set is a must-read for all Sabbath School superintendents, secretaries, leaders, and teachers.

This set includes:

- Adult Sabbath School Teacher
- Branch Sabbath Schools
- Community Friendly Sabbath School
- Decision Days
- Extension Division
- Investment Secretary
- Sabbath School Action Units
- Sabbath School Organization
- Sabbath School Secretary
- Sabbath School Superintendent
- Sabbath School Teaching
- Sabbath School Welcoming and Ushering
- Visitation in the Sabbath School

Product #556325



Adult Sabbath School Coordinator Ministry Description

Introduction

The purpose of the Sabbath School is to make disciples for Christ. It includes the nurture of spiritual growth in members and prospective members, as well as the unchurched who come to join in the fellowship, study, sharing, and service. The Sabbath School exists not only to minister to its members, but to train those members to minister to others. The Sabbath School is a school of Christian living, not just an event on Sabbath mornings. It can include Bible study groups that meet at other times also. Its purpose is evangelistic, not ritualistic.

Every Christian believer is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). In Acts 2:42-47, the Bible gives us a blueprint for the Sabbath School. Verse 42 outlines the goals of the Sabbath School as “teaching and fellowship” and “breaking bread and prayer.” Verses 43-45 illustrate the strong sense of togetherness, caring, and support that must be present in the Sabbath School in order to create a proper atmosphere for learning and growth. Verse 46 indicates that this can happen both in church buildings and in home Bible study groups, or what Adventists have called “Branch Sabbath Schools,” and verse 47 demonstrates how this is essential to a growing church.

The Sabbath School is a member-driven ministry. It is run, staffed, and funded by church members. God calls every member of the church into ministry, and the Sabbath School is the place of preparation, support, and empowerment for ministry. It is, therefore, essential to have a broad spectrum of the membership involved in its operation.

Duties of the Sabbath School Coordinator

The ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes general coordinator of the Sabbath School can be described in the following ways:

- 1. Developing leadership.** You will supervise all the leaders of the Sabbath School and encourage them to evaluate the effectiveness of their division/class in meeting the goals of the church. You should make arrangements for them to get the training, support, and resources they need.
- 2. Chairing the Sabbath School Committee.** This group includes the superintendent, assistant superintendents, secretary, assistant secretaries, division leaders, Investment secretary, adult class leaders and an elder. (In some churches the personal ministries leader and youth leader are included.) The committee should meet monthly to build teamwork.
- 3. Building a strong evangelistic agency.** Help your team develop a growing, caring fellowship and an excellent learning environment.
- 4. Recruiting volunteers.** There is a constant need to find helpers for every aspect of the Sabbath School. You are the person who must take the initiative to identify potential helpers, personally invite them to get involved, and assist them in getting started.

5. Planning ahead. It will be your responsibility to help your Sabbath School leaders plan ahead and to participate in the total planning process of the church board and/or church ministries council. You will want to be familiar with the policies and plans of the North American Division of the General Conference and your local conference church ministries department.

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Sabbath School Superintendent

This Quick Start Guide for the Sabbath School Superintendent is full of important information to help you fulfill your responsibilities to your church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or an experienced volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your local church.

Other titles in the Quick Start Guide series:

- Children's Ministries Coordinator
- Beginner Sabbath School Leader
- Kindergarten Sabbath School Leader
- Primary Sabbath School Leader
- Junior Sabbath School Leader
- Earliteen Sabbath School Leader

For a complete list of Quick Start Guide titles visit AdventSource.org



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