



42 REASONS WHY
EVERYONE
SHOULD LOVE
SUNDAY SCHOOL

RODNEY PRY

42 Reasons Why Everyone Should Love
Sunday School

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First edition

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Introduction

Henry J. Heinz, the founder of the Heinz Pickle and Catsup Company once said this, “In my life, it has paid the greatest possible dividend...second only to that of a godly mother.” What was he talking about? Sunday School!

Unfortunately, not many people feel that way about Sunday school today! Does that mean that Sunday school is no longer important? Certainly not! I believe that Sunday school is as important as ever! And, because I believe that Sunday school still is one of the best and most effective ways to teach all persons of all ages about Jesus Christ, the Bible and God’s will for each of our lives, I want to do all that I can to help people see the importance of Sunday school, attend Sunday school each week and share their love for Sunday school with others.

Hopefully, as you participate in the six-week daily devotional journey contained in this booklet, you will become even more aware of the value of Sunday school and see why we should all work to get all persons involved in this very important Christian education program.

Each of the 42 readings in this booklet are related to a reason why Sunday school is important and why you and everyone else should love Sunday school. Each day’s devotional begins with a scripture verse or verses, followed by a reading related to that day’s topic. Following the reading, there are “Questions To Think About,” a “Prayer Suggestion” related to Sunday school, and a “Call To Action.” I sincerely hope that you will take the time to participate in each part of the daily reading

and other activities that we suggest.

By the way, the “Call To Action” items have been included as a way to try to get you actively involved in working to help your Sunday school grow and to make it even better and more effective. Many of the “Call To Action” suggestions involve the use of E-mail, social media and the Internet. I really hope that you will give them a try!

Whether you are using the “42 Reasons...” program on your own or participating in a group study using the material, I hope and pray that you will find this little booklet helpful as you grow in your understanding concerning the importance of Sunday school, and as you then work to share your love for Sunday school with others.

Thank you! And, may God bless you and your Sunday school as you as you continue to work for Him!

In His Service,

Rodney L. Pry, P.S.S.S.A. Executive Director

Reason #1

Sunday School's Primary Purpose Is To Teach All Persons Of All Ages About God, The Bible And God's Will For Our Lives

Call together all the men, women, and children, and the foreigners who live in your towns, so that everyone may hear it and learn to honor the Lord your God and to obey his teachings faithfully. (Deut. 31:12)

* * *

When Robert Raikes started the very first Sunday school in Gloucester, England, way back in 1780, his purpose may have been a little different than the primary purpose that we see for Sunday school today. Raikes was concerned about the children of his community. This was near the start of the Industrial Revolution and children as young as 6 and 8 years of age were working long hours, six days a week in the factories of the London suburb. Sunday was the only day off, and on that day, many of the kids were roaming the streets in gangs, creating all kinds of trouble throughout the community.

Raikes was concerned about these children. He was concerned because of the destruction that they were causing, but he was also

concerned because they were not getting any education. To help remedy both problems, he gathered the kids of his community and brought them together on Sunday – their only day off – to teach them “the 3-R’s” and the Bible. Raikes’ Sunday school was a big success! The idea quickly spread across England, and within a few years, came here to America.

Today our Child Labor Laws keep kids out of the workplace and our public schools teach children all reading, writing and math, plus much more. But, Sunday school is still needed to teach our children, our youth and our adults about the Bible – God’s Word – and how to apply its lessons to our day-to-day lives.

As we begin our 42-day journey to think about the importance of Sunday school, we hope that you will stop and think about the glorious history of Sunday school. But, remember, Sunday school is still very important today! Do you and your family attend Sunday school each week? If not, why not make your plans now to be in Sunday school next week! Hope to see you there!

Questions To Think About: What do you remember about Sunday school from when you were a child? How has Sunday school changed since then? Have these changes been good or bad?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for a friend who does not know Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.

A Call To Action: E-mail, text or talk with several persons that you know who do not attend Sunday school and ask them why they don’t attend. Compare their answers with your own feelings about Sunday school.

Reason #2

Sunday School Is Important Because God's Word Is Being Studied And Taught

But if you keep looking steadily into God's perfect law - the law that sets you free - and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. (James 1:25)

* * *

The American Bible Society says that 90% of all Americans own a Bible. They also say that fewer than 20% read their Bible on a regular basis. And, fewer than 10% have a good working knowledge of the Bible and how to apply its lessons to their day-to-day lives.

It's certainly important for everyone to own a Bible, and it's important to read your Bible. (We think you should read it every day!) But it's really that last statistic – that fewer than 10% of all people in America really understand the Bible and how to apply its messages to their daily lives - that should concern each of us.

The Bible is our “handbook for life” and a roadmap for our daily walk with Jesus Christ. But, if you don't understand what you are reading and if you don't know how to apply its messages and lessons to your daily life, is it really doing you much good?

Even in today's modern translation forms, the Bible is often quite hard to understand. And, often when people start searching for answers to a particular problem or concern in the Bible, they have no idea where to look. That's why it's so important to come together with others in Sunday school to "dig in" to God's Word and to work together to find the answers that are there, waiting for you to discover.

Questions To Think About: Do you read the Bible every day? Do you have a "good working knowledge of the Bible and how to apply its messages to your daily life?"

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the teachers of your Sunday school and church.

A Call To Action: Add a favorite Bible verse to one of the messages that you send today on social media.

Reason #3

Sunday School Helps Lay A Spiritual Foundation In The Lives Of Children And Youth

We will not hide these truths from our children but will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord. We will tell of his power and the mighty miracles he did. (Psalm 78:4)

* * *

Statistics tell us that today's average adult Christian became a Christian by age 13. Why is this important? It reminds us of the importance of reaching our children early in their lives for Jesus Christ. If you turn this statistic around, you can see that if we don't reach our children for Christ by age 13, the odds of them ever becoming a Christian go way down.

From its very beginning over 230 years ago, Sunday school has been primarily aimed at children and youth. Today, Sunday school is for everyone, but there is still a major emphasis on reaching and teaching our kids. We want to see each of our children come to know Jesus as their very own personal Lord and Savior. But, when they do, is that the end of the road? Certainly not! That's just the start of a life-long walk with Jesus Christ.

One of the primary purposes of Sunday school is to teach our children

and youth the lessons of the Bible, and to see them place these lessons in their hearts and in their minds. Then, as they face problems, concerns and temptations later in life, hopefully they will remember these lessons and draw upon their knowledge of what they know God would have them do.

Questions To Think About: How is your church doing in regard to reaching the children and youth of your community for Christ? How could you do better?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the children and youth of your church and Sunday school.

A Call To Action: E-mail, text or talk with one or more of the teachers from the children's department of your Sunday school to thank them for their work and dedication to serving the Lord through this most important ministry.

Reason #4

Sunday School Helps All People Grow Closer To Jesus Christ

It is God who saved us and chose us to live a holy life. He did this not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan long before the world began - to show his love and kindness to us through Christ Jesus. (II Timothy 1:9)

* * *

Here at the Pennsylvania State Sunday School Association, one of the primary things that we do is to provide training for Sunday school teachers and leaders. In just about every one of our training workshops, we start by telling teachers and prospective teachers that the very best thing that they can do to become a better, more effective teacher is to work to deepen their own personal faith and commitment to Jesus Christ. And, this isn't just great advice for Sunday school teachers; this is great advice for each and every person who calls himself a Christian.

Why is this important? Because, as we work to deepen our faith and commitment to Christ, we will also see many other changes taking place in our lives. For example, as we see our commitment to Jesus Christ growing deeper, won't we also have a greater desire to read the

Bible – God’s Word? Won’t we want to pray more? Won’t we want to attend worship, Sunday school and the other services of our church more? Won’t we have a greater desire to share our love for Christ with our friends?

How can you deepen your faith and commitment to Christ? Read your Bible more. Pray more. Develop closer relationships with other Christians. Read Christian books and magazines. Listen to Christian music, radio and TV. And, very important, be in Sunday school...this week and every week!

Questions To Think About: What could you do to deepen your own personal faith and commitment to Christ? What will you do?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for spiritual renewal and revival in your church and community.

A Call To Action: Go to your local Christian bookstore and purchase several Bible message or Sunday school-related tracts. Distribute these tracts by leaving them in public places like restrooms, on the table with your tip at restaurants, and enclose them in letters, birthday cards and with bill payments that you pay my mail. Note: The Pennsylvania State Sunday School Association also has Sunday school related tracts available. Go to our website (www.SundaySchoolHelp.org) and click on the “Sunday School Stuff” button for more information.

Reason #5

Sunday School Shows Us Examples And Models For A Christian Life

Christ, who suffered for you, is your example. Follow in his steps. (I Peter 2:21b)

* * *

Are you familiar with the “W.W.J.D.?” slogan...What Would Jesus Do? Surely there is no greater example or role model for anyone to follow than Jesus Christ, but still, many people have a problem with the whole “W.W.J.D.?” thing. What is their problem? You can’t ask “What Would Jesus Do?” until you know what Jesus did and said! And, quite honestly, the average person out there in the world has very little knowledge about anything that Jesus ever did or said. And, without that knowledge and understanding of who Jesus was and what he did and said, how can you possibly use him as an example to follow in your life

But, there is a way to find out all about Jesus Christ...who he is, what he did and what he said. And where can you find this information? In the Bible! And then to really understand the meaning of the scriptures that tell us about Christ, you also need to gather together with other people of similar age and interests in Sunday school.

Using the Bible as our textbook in Sunday school, we learn about what's right and what's wrong. We see examples of people who followed God and those who rejected his leading. And, we see Jesus Christ, his life, his ministry and the Way of Salvation that is available through him. The lessons are there for each of us to learn, so please join us as, together, we "dig in" to God's Word – the Bible – each week in Sunday school.

Questions To Think About: Do you really have a good knowledge of the things that Jesus did and said? How could you increase your knowledge in this area?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the pastor of your church.

A Call To Action: Use your social media contacts to tell someone why you attend Sunday school.

Reason #6

Sunday School Is Enjoyable And Fun (or it should be)

Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again - rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)

* * *

The story is told about a Sunday school class of seven-year-olds. As the teacher was plodding along with her lesson, one little boy suddenly exclaimed, "Can we hurry up? This is boring!" Immediately the little girl on his left gave him a sharp elbow to the side and rebuked him. "Shut up. It's supposed to be boring!"

Is Sunday school supposed to be boring? Certainly not! And today's best teachers know that it's very possible to make each and every lesson interesting and even fun. Why is this important? Because people – no matter what their age is – don't learn very much when they are bored. But, when they are interested, when the lesson topic is relevant, and when they are enjoying themselves, they are much more likely to learn. And, they are also much more likely to come back week after week.

Many people look at the Bible and think that it is a boring book that has no real relevance to today's modern world. Is that true? Certainly not! The Bible is as relevant and as interesting today as ever. You may not find all of today's modern words, but the principles are there. And,

working together with other members of your Sunday school class to find the answers that you are looking for can be a great experience for everyone involved. It can be interesting, exciting, enjoyable and fun!

Questions To Think About: How are the teachers in your church and Sunday school doing? Are they using modern technologies in their teaching? Are their lessons relevant and interesting?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for persons that you know who were absent from your church and Sunday school last week.

A Call To Action: Have you read any good Christian books lately? If not, plan to go to your local Christian bookstore to find a book that will be both interesting and inspirational.

Reason #7

Sunday School Challenges People To Deepen Their Relationship With Jesus Christ

Turn us again to yourself, O God. Make your face shine down upon us. Only then will we be saved. (Psalm 80:3)

* * *

“Some tell us that Jesus’ earthly life was not very important. They say he wrote no books, composed no songs, drew no pictures, carved no statues, amassed no fortune, commanded no army, ruled no nation. And yet...He who never wrote a line has been made the hero of unnumbered volumes. He who never wrote a song has put music into the hearts of nameless multitudes. He who never established an institution is the foundation of the Church that bears his name. He who refused the kingdoms of this world has become the Lord of millions. Yes, he whose shameful death scarcely produced a ripple on the pool of history in his day has become a mighty current in the vast ocean of the centuries since He died.” (Mack Stokes)

Want to learn more about the history-making and history-changing life of Jesus Christ? Join us this week and every week in Sunday school!

Questions To Think About: How do you think the world today

would be different if Jesus had never come? How would your life be different?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for your own personal spiritual growth.

A Call To Action: Use your social media contacts to share a Bible verse with your friends that talks about the importance of Jesus.

Reason #8

Sunday School Helps To Develop Christian Leadership And Teaching Skills

*Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness.
(Matthew 10:1)*

* * *

S ometime ago a Sunday school teacher from Baltimore celebrated her eightieth birthday. On this special day, her church held a special celebration to observe her very special birthday and her many years of teaching in their Sunday school. Over the years, dozens of students from her Sunday school class went on to become doctors, lawyers, educators, ministers, skilled technicians, nurses and workers in many other honorable professions.

A newspaper got wind of the celebration and sent a reporter to interview the guest of honor. He asked the woman what her secret was for her great success. She said, "Oh, I don't know. When I look back I realize how ill-prepared I was to teach when I started. All I really knew was that God loved me and he expected me to love him and my students. So, that's what I did. I had nothing to give my students ut love, and that's still the most important thing that I try to give each

and every child that comes through my class.”

What should be the qualifications for being a teacher in the church and Sunday school? In many churches it seems that the only thing they are looking for is a warm body. But is that really enough? No! We need teachers who are truly Christians, who live a good, exemplary Christian life, and who truly love the students they are called to teach.

Would you be interested in serving as a teacher or a teacher’s helper in your Sunday school? You don’t need to have great knowledge of the Bible and great teaching skills...those are things you can learn. All you really need is to love the Lord, live a Christ-centered life, and love the students you would be asked to teach. Are you interested? Talk with the leaders of your Sunday school or Christian education committee for more information.

Questions To Think About: What skills and knowledge should a good Sunday school teacher bring to his or her work for the Lord? What can teachers do to increase these things?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the persons who are in leadership positions within your church and Sunday school.

A Call To Action: Search the Internet to find a good, positive site with Christian activities, videos, etc. for children. Share this information with the parents of your church via social media.

Reason #9

Through Sunday School, God's Work And Will Are Being Done

"All of us must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent me, because there is little time left before the night falls and all work comes to an end." (John 9:4)

* * *

Way back in the late 1800's, John Wanamaker, the famous Philadelphia businessman, also served as Postmaster General of the United States. But, the great man always found time each week to run a Sunday school with over 4,000 scholars in the City of Brotherly Love. Someone once asked Mr. Wanamaker how he found time for Sunday school and he immediately replied, "Why, the Sunday school is my business! All other things are just things. Forty-five years ago I decided that God's promise was sure, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'"

Why did Mr. Wanamaker feel the way that he did about Sunday school? He loved Sunday school and he loved the people who were there in Sunday school. But, even more important, he loved Jesus Christ and he realized that God's work and God's will were being done

through the Sunday school.

Do you love Sunday school enough to make it one of the priorities of your week? If you really love Jesus, then hopefully you too will be able to say, like John Wanamaker, “Why, Sunday school is my business!”

Questions To Think About: Is Sunday school a priority in your life? How is this - or should it - be evident?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for God’s leading in your own life.

A Call To Action: Send a “thinking of you” card or social media message to a friend or someone that you know who is facing a major problem or illness.

Reason #10

It Encourages All Persons To Develop A Closer Relationship With Jesus Christ Through Prayer

So humble yourself before God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)

* * *

The story is told of a boy who was watching a holy man praying on the banks of a river in India. When the holy man completed his prayer, the boy went over and asked him, “Will you teach me to pray?” The holy man studied the boy and then gripped the boy’s head with his hands and plunged it forcefully into the water. The boy struggled frantically, trying to free himself in order to breathe. Finally, the holy man released his hold. When the boy was able to get his breath, he gasped, “What did you do that for?” The holy man said, “I just gave you your first lesson.” “What do you mean?” asked the astonished boy. “Well,” said the holy man, “when you long to pray as much as you longed to breathe when your head was underwater, only then will I be able to teach you to pray.” (Mark Link)

Prayer is communication with God. But, why do we pray? Do we pray out of habit? Do we pray because it is the right thing to do? Or, do we pray because we need to pray?

There is power in prayer, but you must learn how to harness that power. You must learn that prayer is about more than just asking God for the things that you want. And, you need to listen as God speaks to you through your prayers.

Prayer is a vital part of Sunday school. Most classes open and close with prayer, as they take specific needs and joys to the Lord. And, through the study of God's Word, they learn what Jesus and others have taught about making the most of prayer.

Questions To Think About: How would you describe your personal prayer life? What do you pray about? Do you take the time to listen as our Lord speaks to you during your time of prayer?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray to thank God for opportunities that we have to come to him in prayer.

A Call To Action: Use your social media contacts to share a prayer request that you have regarding your church, Sunday school or community.

Reason #11

Sunday School Is Important Because It Is Held On The Lord's Day

So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day, having finished his task, God rested from all his work. (Genesis 2:1 & 2)

* * *

Billy Graham was once asked about working on Sunday. In response, the famous evangelist said, "It should not detract from a man's reverence to do what is required. Even Jesus spoke about the ox in the ditch on the Sabbath. But if your ox gets in the ditch every Sabbath, you should either get rid of the ox or fill up the ditch."

To our great-grandfathers, Sunday was the "Holy Sabbath." To our grandfathers it was the "Lord's Day." To our fathers it was just "Sunday." But, to most people today, it is simply the "weekend!"

In the first chapter of Genesis, we read that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. Following his example, God wants each of us to take a break and to have a day of rest each week. Why? Because, in his infinite wisdom, God knew that we all needed to take a break and have some time away from work for our physical, emotional,

mental and spiritual renewal.

In these modern times when Sunday seems to be no different from any other day of the week, it is important for everyone to take a break and make Sunday a day of family, rest and worship. And, certainly there is no better way to spend part of your Sunday than by attending Sunday school with your entire family.

Questions To Think About: Do you try to make Sunday - the Lord's Day - a special day of rest, worship and family? What are you now doing? What more could you do?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for God's leading in your own personal observance of the Lord's Day.

A Call To Action: Use your social media contacts to share a message or quote about the importance of the proper observance of the Lord's Day.

Reason #12

In Sunday School, People Are Taught According To Their Age, Interests And Education

Because the Teacher was wise, he taught the people everything he knew. He collected proverbs and classified them. Indeed, the Teacher taught the plain truth, and he did so in an interesting way. (Ecclesiastes 12:9 & 10)

* * *

Why is it important to teach people according to their age, interests and education? Because pre-school children certainly don't have the same understanding of God, his love, sin, salvation and grace as adults do. And, the problems and concerns that junior high students face are certainly much different from those faced by senior citizens. With these differences in mind, in Sunday school we divide persons into different classes – usually according to either their age or interests – and teach them using the methods and tools that are best suited for that group.

Do you have questions about the Bible and how it can be applied to your day-to-day life? Are there specific topics that interest you? If so, your church probably has a Sunday school class or Bible study group that would be able to help you find the answers that you are looking

for. And, if you would like to see a class or Bible study group tackle a topic or concern that's on your mind, talk to your pastor or other church leaders and suggest that they consider starting such a group.

Sunday school is for everyone! And, it should address the problems and concerns of every member, too.

Questions To Think About: Do the Sunday school classes of your church address the difficult problems and concerns of the members? How could they do better?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the families of your community who do not attend Sunday school or church.

A Call To Action: Send a card or social media message to your Sunday school teacher to thank him or her for their dedication and hard work in preparing and presenting the lessons to your class each week.

Reason #13

Sunday School Gets People Thinking

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. (II Timothy 3:16)

* * *

In 1401, the builders of the cathedral in Seville, Spain, made the following decision about the structure that they were building, “Let us build here a church so great that those who come after us will think us mad for even dreaming of it.”

When you look at your church and Sunday school, can you make such a bold statement of faith about the future? Most of us would probably be very reluctant to make such a statement. Most of us simply cannot even dream of the great possibilities that are there in front of us. Many of us are so consumed with just trying to hold on to what we now have that we can't even begin to imagine what our church and Sunday school could possibly become.

Sunday school should get people thinking. It should get us thinking about the Bible and how to apply the messages of God's word to our day-to-day lives. But, it should also get us thinking about our church and Sunday school. And, each of us – as members – should take ownership

of our church and Sunday school and work to do everything that we possibly can to help these great programs grow, both in attendance and in effectiveness.

What can you do to help your Sunday school grow? Well, first you need to make sure that you and your entire family are there in Sunday school each and every week. You also need to tell you friends and others about Sunday school and how it has positively affected your life. And, very important, you need to invite others to come with you to Sunday school.

Questions To Think About: Would you say that your Sunday school class makes you think? Why is this important?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the youth of your Sunday school and church.

A Call To Action: Talk with the other members of your Sunday school class about starting a “prayer partners program” for the children and youth of your church. In such a program, each child or youth is linked with an adult who promises to pray for that kid on a regular basis.

Reason #14

Sunday School Calls People To Christian Accountability

Of course your former friends are very surprised when you no longer join them in the wicked things they do, and they say evil things about you. But just remember that they will have to face God, who will judge everyone, both the living and the dead. (I Peter 4:4 & 5)

* * *

One of the most thought-provoking and even frightening verses in the entire Bible is found in Romans 14:12. This verse says, "...each of us will have to give a personal account to God."

When you think about your own life and everything that you have done or failed to do, what kind of an account will you have to give to God? Will it be a report that you will be proud to present or one that you will shamefully try to hide and cover up?

The primary reason that all persons should be in Sunday school is to learn about God's Word – the Bible. The Bible is the Christian's handbook. It is our guidebook and a roadmap for daily living. Within its pages we learn what's right and what's wrong, and so much more.

As a person stands before God on Judgment Day, will they be able

to use the excuse that they didn't know what was right or what was wrong? Will they be able to say that they had no ideas about what God wanted them to do? I don't think so! Why? Because the answers and the instructions were right there in front of you all the time - in the Bible. And, whose responsibility is it to seek out those answers and that instruction? It is each person's own responsibility!

The Bible was given to us by a loving God who didn't want a single person to miss out on heaven. He wants to be number one in each person's life...in YOUR life And, he wants you to learn all that you possibly can about himself and his will for your life as you read your Bible and as you come together with other to really "dig in" to His Word in Sunday school!

Question To Think About: If you had to stand before God in judgment today, what do you think he would say?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the members of your Sunday school class.

A Call To Action: Call or contact one of your good friends to thank them for their help and support, and to let them know how much you appreciate their friendship.

Reason #15

Sunday School Calls People To Service To God And Others

*“...and he (God) will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.”
(Matthew 6:33)*

* * *

I’ll go where you want me to go, dear Lord.
Real service is what I desire.
I’ll sing a solo any time, dear Lord.
But don’t ask me to sing in the choir.

I’ll do what you want me to do, dear Lord,
I like to see things come to pass.
But don’t ask me to teach boys and girls, dear Lord.
I’d rather just stay in my class.

I’ll go where you want me to go, dear Lord.
I’ll say what you want me to say.
I’m busy just now with myself, dear Lord
So I’ll help you some other day.

Does this little poem, published in the Bible Crusader News many years ago, describe your approach to serving God and others? I certainly hope not! Service should not be seen as an option, it should be seen as a vital part of one's Christian life.

When Jesus was asked about which of the commandments was most important, he said this, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39) Again, loving and serving God and others is not an option, it is a direct command from Jesus himself!

Each week, here in Pennsylvania, about a quarter of a million people are involved in serving as teachers and leaders in the Sunday schools of the state, and many, many more people are also involve by serving through the Sunday school as a part of work groups, mission projects, and in other ways. So, if you're looking for an opportunity to be of greater service to God and other people, go to Sunday school.

Questions To Think About: Are you serving God and others as you should? What do you think God might be wanting you to do? How can you determine God's will for your life?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray that God will guide you to the areas of service that he has in mind for you.

A Call To Action: Through your social media contacts, share how God has blessed you as you have served Him and others.

Reason #16

Sunday School Helps People Find The Strength To Meet Temptation

So you see, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while punishing the wicked right up until the day of judgment. (II Peter 2:9)

* * *

A Sunday school teacher once asked her class of children how they should resist temptation. One little boy spoke up and said, "I think you should have a little talk with the devil. Tell him, 'Get behind me, Satan...and don't push!'"

Temptation is something that every person faces. In today's world, the temptation to take the easy way out and to do the things that are not right are everywhere. And, no matter how good a Christian you might be, you will still face temptations every day.

Even Jesus faced temptations. Before he started his earthly ministry, Jesus was led out into the desert and tempted three times by the devil. First, the devil tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread to satisfy his hunger. How did Jesus respond? By quoting scripture! He said, "People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every word of God." (Matthew 4:4). In a similar way, Jesus also rebuked the devil and

his temptations by quoting scriptures when he was tempted two more times.

The important thing to note here is that Jesus used the scriptures to answer the devil and overcome his temptations. And – guess what – the same thing will work for you, too. When you know the Bible and the sound teachings that it contains, you can use those Biblical messages to meet and beat any temptation that the world and the devil throw at you.

Having a faith that is firmly rooted in the knowledge of God’s Word is essential for every Christian of every age. That’s why it is so important for everyone to read the Bible each day. And, that’s also why it is so important for everyone to also attend Sunday school...to dig even deeper into God’s word, to memorize important scriptures and to fully understand how to use the messages of the Bible as a shield to fend off temptations and any attack by the devil.

Questions To Think About: Is there a recurring temptation that you face in your life? How can Jesus help you overcome temptation and resist the urge to repeat that sin?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for God’s help to resist temptation.

A Call To Action: Send a card or other message of thanks to the youth leaders of your church. Let them know how much you appreciate their efforts to keep today’s teenagers on the right track for the Lord throughout their lives.

Reason #17

Sunday School Helps People Learn The Importance Of Gathering Together With Others For Worship And Learning

And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)

* * *

Can a person be a Christian without joining or attending a church? Some years ago the Wesleyan Christian Advocate magazine responded to this question with the following answer: “Yes, it is possible. It is something like being:

- A student who will not go to school.
- A soldier who will not join the army.
- A citizen who does not pay taxes or vote
- A salesman with no customers.
- A tuba player without an orchestra.
- A parent without a family.
- A football player without a team.
- A bee without a hive.”

Coming together for fellowship, worship and learning with others in the church and Sunday school should not be seen as an option. It is God's plan for us – his children – and his will for us as we interact with others and with him.

In Deuteronomy 31:12, God gave this command to Moses, "Call them all together – men, women, children, and the foreigners living in your towns – so they may listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully obey all the terms of this law." Why did God issue such a command? Was it only for God's benefit? Certainly not! God wanted the Israelites – and us – to learn about His Word and how to live by it each day. And, that is a message that he wants each of us to hear today!

Questions To Think About: Why do you attend Sunday school? Why do you attend worship? How does the fellowship that you have with other people in these services help you?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the new attendees of your church and Sunday school.

A Call To Action: Use your social media contacts to send a general message of invitation to invite others to come to your church and Sunday school. If your church has any special services or fellowship events coming up, these are also great events to invite your friends and others to attend.

Reason #18

Sunday School Has The Goal Of Developing True
Disciples For Jesus Christ

One day as Jesus was walking along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother, Andrew, fishing with a net, for they were commercial fishermen. Jesus called out to them, “Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!” (Mark 1:16 & 17)

* * *

In the fifth chapter of Luke’s gospel, we read about Jesus calling Simon Peter to follow him and be one of his disciples. Peter was a simple fisherman, with no real knowledge or training necessary to be one of the original Christian leaders, but look at what Jesus says to him: “Don’t be afraid! From now on you’ll be fishing for people.”

What is a disciple? Is it a person who is content to be a “keeper of the fishbowl?” Or, is it someone who has truly become a person who is “fishing for people?” Becoming a disciple is a process. It’s not something that happens instantly when a person asks Jesus to come and live in their heart. Rather, it is like traveling on a road, heading toward a destination – a destination that leads one closer and closer each day to being the person that Jesus Christ wants us to be.

A disciple is a “seeker,” a person who is striving to deepen their faith and commitment to Christ each day. And, what should a disciple do as they try to get closer to Christ each day? We should read the Bible more, pray more, talk with other Christians more, read Christian books and magazines, listen to Christian music, radio and TV, and – very important – be in Sunday school and other Bible study groups as often as possible!

Questions To Think About: Do you consider yourself to be a “true disciple?” What can you do to deepen your personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for spiritual growth and revival within your church and community.

A Call To Action: Use your computer (or have someone else) design and print invitation cards that are customized for your church and Sunday school. Be sure each card has your church name, address and the times of your services.

Reason #19

Sunday School Challenges All Persons Of All Ages To
Accept Jesus Christ As Personal Lord And Savior

Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. (Psalm 51: 1 & 2)

* * *

*I am a Christian, though I'm small; Jesus does not care at all
If we're three years old, or four; Or if we are fifty more.
If we come to Him and say, "Jesus, wash my sins away,"
And His word we then believe, He will gladly us receive.*

(author unknown)

Author and educator Tony Campolo uses the following illustration: He says, "Make a list of the 100 most important things in your life. Then study the list and cross off the one least important thing on the list...leaving you with a list of the 99 most important things in your life. And, again, study the list and cross off the least important thing on the list. Continue doing this...reducing

the list down and down...until you are left with just one thing on your list.” Then Tony asked, “Do you know what that one remaining, most important thing on your list is? That is your ‘god!’ The question is, is it “G” God...meaning Jesus Christ...or “g” god...meaning your home, your car, your family, money, power, etc.?”

If you were to carry out this exercise, what would you discover to be the most important thing in your life? For those of us who call ourselves Christians, doesn't the answer have to be “Jesus Christ?”

When Jesus was asked about which of the commandments was most important, he said, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.” (Luke 10:27). That wasn't a suggestion, that was a command!

Whether you are a young child, a senior citizen or anywhere in between, you need Jesus Christ...and you need to make him the top priority in your life. And – whatever your age – Sunday school is one of the best places to find Jesus Christ and ask him to come into your heart!

Questions To Think About: If you made a list of the most important things in your life as Tony Campolo suggested, what would be your number one most important thing in your life? Do you need to change it? If so, what can you do?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the unsaved persons of your community.

A Call To Action: Do you listen to Christian radio? Find a good Christian radio station in your area and start listening. Share the information about the station with your friends, too.

Reason #20

Sunday School Is The Teaching Arm Of The Church

You must teach these things and encourage your people to do them, correcting them when necessary. You have the authority to do this, so don't let anyone ignore you or disregard what you say. (Titus 2:15)

* * *

One of the big concerns of Christian leaders today is the fact that many individuals and families are attending only the worship service of their church and are not involved in any in-depth Bible study, such as Sunday school. But, you may say, “Well, at least they attend worship. Most people don’t even do that. So, why do they need to do anything more?”

First of all, we need to ask, “What is worship?” Worship – by its very definition – isn’t about getting, it’s about giving! In worship we come together to give God our thanksgiving, our praise, our offerings, our songs, our prayers, etc...that’s what God demands of us. And, if we come away from worship uplifted, inspired and renewed...well, that’s a bonus!

“But,” they might add, “I hear the pastor’s sermon, isn’t that enough?” Sermons are great, but quite honestly, most sermons are “one-size-fits-all.” In other words, one message is presented to the entire

congregation for members to pick and choose things that might be of interest to them and fill a need that that person has today. And, did you ever wish that you could ask the pastor a question right in the middle of his or her sermon? It's not really the thing to do, is it? But, in Sunday school, we can ask questions, we can discuss, and we can share personal experiences and insights as together we "dig in" to God's Word and look for the answers to the specific questions that we might have.

Sunday school and worship are both great! They both have their purpose! But, they are different, and because they are different and have different purposes, every person of every age should be attending both worship and Sunday school! We hope to see you in both services this week and every week!

Questions To Think About: How are the Sunday school and worship services of your church different? How are they the same? Why is it important for all persons of all ages to attend both?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the teachers of your church and Sunday school.

A Call To Action: Visit the Pennsylvania State Sunday School Association's website (www.SundaySchoolHelp.org) and take our "Are You Smarter Than A Sunday School 5th Grader?" Bible quiz. See how many of the questions you can get right. Then challenge your friends to take the quiz and see how you compare.

Reason #21

Sunday School Is Important Because All Persons Need To Know What The Bible - Our “Christian Handbook” - Says For Them

“Study this book of the Law continually. Meditate on it day and night so you may be sure to obey all that is written in it. Only then will you succeed.” (Joshua 1:8)

* * *

Someone once said, “Knowledge is power!” In today’s world, that’s not just a catchy saying, it’s an absolute and a necessity. Can you think of any job or profession in today’s world where you don’t need some major training or education to be a success? To be a success today, you must have the training...you need the knowledge!

When you talk about jobs, we would like you to think about your “job” as a Christian. Certainly the number one priority for every church and every Christian should be to see all persons of all ages come to know Jesus Christ as their own personal Lord and Savior. But, when that happens, is that the end of the road? No! That’s just the start of a life-long walk with Jesus Christ.

Living each day for Jesus Christ and striving to do his will is certainly a full-time job. And - like any other job - it requires some major

training and education if the person is to be a success. Where can you find the education and training that you need to succeed as a Christian? By reading your Bible and then by coming together with others each Sunday morning in Sunday school!

Questions To Think About: In your life, is living as a Christian a full-time or just a part-time job? What do you need to do to make living for Christ a full-time part of your life?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for your Sunday school teacher.

A Call To Action: Talk to your pastor and encourage him or her to speak about the importance of the Bible and Sunday school.

Reason #22

Sunday School Calls Individuals To Give Thanks And Praise To God

“No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” (I Thessalonians 5:18)

* * *

Eleanor Doan relates the following story in her book, *The Complete Speakers Sourcebook*: “Matthew Henry, the famous Bible scholar, was once accosted by thieves and robbed of his purse. That same day he wrote these words in his diary: ‘Let me be thankful first because I was never robbed before; second, although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because, although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.’”

When a Sunday school teacher once asked her class what they were thankful for, one little boy replied, “My glasses.” He explained, “They keep the other boys from hitting me and the girls from kissing me.”

Thankfulness comes in many different forms for different people. For Matthew Henry, his thankfulness seemed to be unmerited, but for the little boy, it was for the personal benefits his glasses provided.

What are YOU thankful for today? I’m sure you are thankful for the

many blessings that God has granted to you and your family. But, are you also thankful for the unpleasant and bad things that happen to you?

In Romans 8:28, Paul reminds us that “...everything works together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.” Being thankful for all things involves learning to recognize the “good” result that God promises will come from the situation.

Learning to recognize and be thankful for all of God’s blessings... both good and bad...only comes from a deep personal relationship with God and an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the Bible! And, where can you get that knowledge and understanding of the Bible? In Sunday school!

Questions To Think About: What are you thankful for today? Think about the many blessings that God has entrusted to your care. But, also think about some of the bad and unpleasant things that have happened to you. Has there been some “good” that resulted from those situations? Are you now thankful for them?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray to thank God for the Bible.

A Call To Action: Use your social media contacts to remind everyone of God’s continuing love and care. Include a Bible verse or passage, such as the verse at the top of this page.

Reason #23

Sunday School Is Important Because Of HOW We
Study The Bible

“When I am with those who are oppressed, I share their oppression so that I might bring them to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with every-one so that I might bring them to Christ. I do all this to spread the Good News, and in doing so, I enjoy its blessings.” (I Corinthians 9:22 & 23)

* * *

God doesn't change! The Bible doesn't change! The Way of Salvation through Jesus Christ doesn't change! But, the world has changed and people have changed! What does this all mean? It means that we must change the way that we are presenting God's unchanging message of salvation to the people in today's modern world.

Realizing this need to change how they teach people of different ages, today's successful Sunday schools are making greater use of things like computers, TVs, smartphones, the internet, social media and other modern technologies. And, they are utilizing today's most effective teaching methods, including “active-discovery learning.”

Successful Sunday school teachers know that to be their very best, they need to make their lessons relevant to the needs of their students and they must do this in a way that is interesting and effective. But, they also know that they must keep each lesson centered on the Bible and that their number one priority is to help their students come to know Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.

Questions To Think About: What different teaching methods and tools do the teachers of your Sunday school regularly use? Do they use a variety of these methods and tools? Do they use modern technologies like computers in their teaching? How could you get the teachers of your church to do better in this area?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the college students and young adults of

your church and Sunday school.

A Call To Action: Talk to the teachers of your Sunday school. Is there a particular modern technology tool that they could use to help make their lessons better, more effective and more interesting? If so, talk with your Sunday school class or your friends about doing something to raise the money to purchase the equipment needed.

Reason #24

Sunday School Brings Families Together Into A Learning Environment That Can Be Carried On Through The Week In Their Homes

*Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him.
(Psalm 127:3)*

* * *

Writer John Drakeford dedicated one of his books: “To my two sons, Warwick and Brenton, teachers in the art of family living, who in the process have put gray hair in my head, bills in my pocket, illustrations in my sermons, happiness in our home, and pride in my heart!”

I’m sure that just about every parent would echo the sentiment of Pastor Drakeford’s writing. We all love our children and want the very best for each of them. Yet – sadly – many parents fail to give some of the most important elements of life to their children – a foundational faith in Jesus Christ and training from God’s Word, the Bible.

Most parents give their kids just about every material and educational advantage possible. But, if that is all that we are giving our children, are they really going to have the true happiness? True happiness is found in Jesus Christ, and in knowing His Word and how to apply it

to their day-to-day lives.

A firm spiritual foundation for our children begins in the home with personal and family devotions, Bible reading and prayer. But it also should continue each week in worship and in Sunday school.

When you and your family attend Sunday school, it also provides an opportunity for you to continue the learning experience through family discussions about what was learned in the Sunday school classroom.

Questions To Think About: Is your entire family involved in Sunday school and worship? What might you do to invite those who do not attend to come? Also, what do you do through the week to involve your entire family in family devotions, prayer and Bible reading?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the families of your church and Sunday school.

A Call To Action: Go to your Christian bookstore to find greeting cards that carry a message of encouragement for children. Send these cards to the children of your church or Sunday school. You might include a small gift like a pocket cross or Bible stickers.

Reason #25

Sunday School Helps All Persons Of All Ages Have Greater Love For God And For Others

There are three things that will endure - faith, hope, and love - and the greatest of these is love. (I Corinthians 13:13)

* * *

James S. Hewett, in his book “Illustrations Unlimited,” shares the following illustration entitled “Love Adds The Chocolate”...

A house is a house is a house – until love comes through the door.

Money, of course, can build a charming house, but only love can furnish it with a feeling of home.

Duty can pack an adequate sack lunch, but love may decide to tuck a little love note inside.

Money can provide a television set and a computer, but love controls them and cares enough to say no and take the guff that comes with it.

Obligation sends the children to bed on time, but love tucks the covers in around their necks and passes out kisses and hugs (even to teenagers!).

Obligation can cook a meal, but love embellishes the table with a potted ivy trailing around slender candles.

Duty writes letters and E-mails, but love adds a joke or a picture.

Compulsion keeps a sparkling house. But love and prayer stand a better chance of producing a happy family.

Duty gets offended quickly if it isn't appreciated. But love learns to laugh a lot and to work for the sheer joy of doing it.

Obligation can pour a glass of milk, but quite often love will add a little chocolate!

Questions To Think About: Why is love an important part of the Christian life? How does the Christian view of love differ from that of the world in general?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the Lord's help to increase your love for God and other people.

A Call To Action: Make a special effort today to tell your spouse, your children, friends and the other special people in your life how much you love them and to let them know that you are praying for them.

Reason #26

In Sunday School, You Will Find Your Truest Friend,
Jesus Christ

“The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, because the work of the Son brings glory to the Father.” (John 15:12 & 13)

* * *

An old legend is told of a man who became lost and wandered into a bed of quicksand. Confucius saw the man’s predicament and said, “It is evident that men should stay out of places such as this.” Next, Buddha came by and observed, “Let that man’s plight be a lesson to the rest of the world.” Then Muhammad passed by and said, “Alas, it is the will of God.” Finally, Jesus appeared and said, “Take my hand, brother and I will save you.”

How would you define the word “friend?” The dictionary says that a friend is “a person who favors and likes another; someone who favors and supports.” I’m sure that you have a number of persons in your life who fit this definition of what a friend is all about. But, if you are looking for the very truest possible friend, that person is Jesus Christ! And, the way to develop that close, supportive relationship with Jesus Christ is to read the “love letter” that he has sent to you...His word...the Bible! And, one of the best possible places to find that truest of all friends – Jesus Christ? In Sunday school!

Questions To Think About: How would you describe your own personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Can you truly call him your “friend?” What might you do to improve that relationship? Also, why is it important to have close, supportive relationships with other Christians in Sunday school and church? What might you do to improve those relationships?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for your friends.

A Call To Action: Through your social media contacts, thank your friends for their help and support. And be sure to tell them about the other great friend that you have in your life...Jesus Christ!

Reason #27

Sunday School Fills The Spiritual Need That All Persons Have

We have all benefited from the rich blessings he brought to us - one gracious blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:16 & 17)

* * *

Appearances can be misleading! Many people think that today's young adults – persons age 18 to 30 – are not really interested in spiritual things. After all, this seems to be the group that is most often absent from many, many churches. But, statistics would seem to indicate otherwise. A recent survey published in U.S.A. Today indicated that even though fewer than 30% of all young adults in America attend church, 80% say that their religious faith is important to them. The interest in spiritual things is there, but does that always translate into active church and Sunday school attendance?

The fact is that many of today's young adults have become disillusioned with the organized church. Many of these persons were forced to attend church and Sunday school when they were younger and that has left a bad taste in many of their mouths. Many see today's church

as being out of touch with modern issues. And, still others point to the failure of most churches to embrace the use of modern technologies.

But, are these valid concerns? In many cases they are, but in other cases they are certainly not. Most churches today realize that their teaching and preaching must be relevant to the needs of each of the members. Most are starting to make greater use of modern technologies. And, today's churches know the importance of community, fellowship and service.

Whether you are looking to deepen your own personal faith and your relationship with Jesus Christ or looking for answers about life itself, one of the best places that you can start your search is in Sunday school. Check it out!

Questions To Think About: Does your Sunday school have classes for young adults (ages 18 to 30)? Do you think these classes are presenting lessons that are relevant to the problems and concerns of today's young adults? Are you finding the answers that you are looking for in your Sunday school class?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for the singles and single parents of your church and community.

A Call To Action: Use your social media contacts to tell someone about how God has blessed you in a special way recently.

Reason #28

Sunday School Encourages People To Share God's Love

“For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes - Jews first and also Gentiles. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.” (Romans 1:16 & 17)

* * *

James Russell Lowell once said, “They who love are but one step from heaven.”

When Jesus was asked about which of the commandments was most important, he said, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all you mind. And, love your neighbor as yourself.” In other words, for those of us who call ourselves Christians, loving God and loving other people should be the highest priorities of our lives.

After Jesus answered the question about the most important commandment, one of the religious leaders tried to justify his own actions by asking Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29) That prompted Jesus to tell the story of the Good Samaritan.

The example of the Good Samaritan – someone who was willing to give his own time, money and genuine concern for another person – should serve as your example, too. In fact, when Jesus completed his parable, he gave the religious leader – and us – this command, “Now go and do the same!”

Sunday school’s primary purpose is about teaching persons of all ages about God, His word – the Bible – and His will for each of our lives. But, Sunday school is also about developing close personal relationships with others and also about working together in service to God and other people. If you are looking for a way to be of greater service to other people and to God, go to Sunday school.

Questions To Think About: If you came upon a situation like that in Jesus' parable of "The Good Samaritan," which of the three passersby would you most be like? Why? How would you respond in a similar situation today?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for those of your church and community who are serving in the military.

A Call To Action: Do you enjoy listening to Christian music (praise songs, contemporary Christian music, gospel music, etc.)? If so, why not get another copy of a CD that you love and share it with one of your friends.

Reason #29

Sunday School Is Important Because Each Person's Life Needs To Be Based On Jesus Christ And The Bible

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do. (II Timothy 3:16 & 17)

* * *

What is life? An anonymous writer penned the following line, based on James 4:14...
Life is a mystery. Life itself is thus. Our earthly life, likewise, is often mysterious.

"Life is a gracious gift from God. There is nothing we count more precious than life.

Life is a race. It involves preparation, struggle and reward.

Life is a journey. This speaks of observations, experiences and destination.

Life is uncertain. This is true as to its content, as well as its length.

Life is brief. It is like a vapor, the flower, the grass, etc.

Life is eternal. Death does not end all."

Harold W. Ruopp observed the following about human life. He said, "Life does not require us to make good; it asks only that we give our best on each new level of experience." And, isn't that what God expects of us, too? None of us is perfect...none of us will ever be perfect, but God does expect that each of us will try to do our very best each day as we strive to live for Him.

But, how can you know what God expects of you and how He wants you to live? Well, there is a book that has all the answers and that book is the Bible! But, is just reading the Bible enough? Even in modern

translation forms, the Bible is not always that easy to understand. That's why it is also important for all persons of all ages to come together with others of similar age and interests in Sunday school. Sunday school...it is real learning for real life! Check it out!

Questions To Think About: Do you truly know what God wants you to be doing for him today? In the future? How can you better discover God's will for your life?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray to thank God for Sunday school.

A Call To Action: Have you ever visited the Pennsylvania State Sunday School Association's Facebook page? There's lots of great information there for Sunday school teachers and leaders. Check it out at www.Facebook.com/SundaySchoolHelp.org and then tell the teachers of your church about the help available.

Reason #30

Sunday School Is Important Because It Encourages People To Do Their Very Best For The Lord

Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two pennies. "I assure you," Jesus said, "this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them. For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has." (Luke 21:2-4)

* * *

When I was 18 years of age, I met a man who had a great impact on my life. It was in the summer after I graduated from high school and I was working part-time at a local radio station. At that time the station had a block of several religious programs early each morning and on Sunday afternoon. And, one of my jobs that summer was to work with local pastors who came into the station to record their programs.

During that summer there was a traveling evangelist who purchased programs on the station during the two weeks that he was in the area. This man's approach was much, much different from that of most of the local preachers. Most of the local ministers were in and out of the station quite quickly...recording their programs right straight through, without stopping...whether they made any mistakes or not. But, this

man was different. He wanted everything about his programs to be perfect. If he stumbled on a word, he wanted to go back and do it over. If music didn't start exactly when he wanted, he asked to record it again.

Many people would probably have found this man to be a little too picky. But, as a young kid, fresh out of high school, I actually found his attention to details interesting and refreshing. Toward the end of the two weeks that he was there, I got up the nerve to ask him why he cared so much about every little detail and he answered me like this. He said, "Some people say that any old thing for God will surely be blessed, but I say, for my Lord, I will give only my best."

Those words really stuck to me, and I have tried to follow them in all that I do, throughout my life. And, I hope that these are words that you might choose to live by, too. "Some people say that any old thing for God will surely be blessed, but I say, for my Lord, I will give only my best."

Giving your best in all that you do for the Lord and in all situations of life is what being a true Christian...a true following of Christ...is all about. Jesus Christ gave his very best for you and he expects nothing less from each of us.

Question To Think About: Can you truly say that you strive to do your very best for God at all times?

Prayer Suggestion: Pray for God's help to always do your best.

A Call To Action: Use your social media contacts to share a favorite Christian quote or Bible verse about always trying to do your best.

Reason #31

It Encourages People To Invite Others To Come To Sunday School

“Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink - even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine and milk - it’s all free!” (Isaiah 55:1)

* * *

Several years ago a man told me how he and his wife started to attend Sunday school. They were a young couple who had just moved into the community and really didn’t know very many people in the area. He said that one Saturday morning there was a knock on their front door. When he answered the door, it was an older woman from down the street. The woman stood there with a big smile on her face as she held a big plate of home-made chocolate chip cookies. The woman had come to welcome them to the neighborhood, but she also came with a second purpose: She invited the young couple to attend her church and Sunday school. The man said that he and his wife were both impressed by the woman’s sincerity and her special efforts in giving them an invitation, so they told her they would come with her the following morning. They went to the woman’s church and Sunday school, they enjoyed both and they continued to attend. Today their entire family is active in the church. The man said there

are many reasons why they attend the church, but it all started with the invitation from that loving, concerned neighbor. And, as the man said, “How can you say ‘no’ to a plate of home-made chocolate chip cookies?”

How does a Sunday school grow? It grows when the members become actively involved in telling others about why they love Sunday school and when they invite their friends, neighbors and others to join them each week in Sunday school. Inviting others to come to Sunday school is not just a job for the pastor, Sunday school superintendent or Sunday school teachers, it every member’s responsibility!

Questions To Think About: Have you ever invited anyone to attend Sunday school with you? If not, why not? If you have, what did you do?

Prayer Suggestions: Pray for opportunities to extend an invitation to others to come to your Sunday school and church.

A Call To Action: Talk to your Sunday school class or some of your friends. Could you get together at the church or someone’s home to bake cookies and then set up a plan to have persons distribute the cookies and a Sunday school invitation to the homes in the area of your church?

Reason #32

It Helps The Church Produce True Disciples

“With my authority, take this message of repentance to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: “There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me.” (Luke 24:47)

* * *

What is a disciple? A follower, a seeker, someone that is striving to live a holy, Christ-like life. One of the best traditional hymns of the church that conveys this message of holiness and discipleship is “Take Time To Be Holy.” The hymn, which was written by William Longstaff back in 1882, carries a simple, straight forward message of what holiness and discipleship meant to him. The first verse of the hymn conveys that message without flowery words and phrases. In the simple words of a man who had experienced firsthand what it meant to be a true disciple, he wrote these words:

*“Take time to be holy,
Speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always,
And feed on His word.
Make friends of God’s children;*

*Help those who are weak:
Forgetting in nothing
His blessing to seek.”*

Disciples are not perfect. They haven't totally “made it” as a Christian. They are seeking God's guidance and His will as they strive to be and do their very best for Him. Would you call yourself a disciple? Remember, one of the best places to grow in your discipleship quest is in Sunday school.

Questions To Think About: Do you consider yourself to be a true disciple of Christ? How do the words of the hymn above relate to being a true disciple?

Prayer Suggestions: Pray for the general needs of your Sunday school (volunteers, money, etc.).

A Call To Action: Visit your local Christian bookstore to find a good inspirational book or DVD that you can give to a friend.

Reason #33

It Helps People Of All Ages Develop Christian And Moral Character

But let the Lord Jesus Christ take control of you, and don't think of ways to indulge your evil desires. (Romans 13:14)

* * *

The following article appeared some years ago in a Christian magazine:

- People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centered. Love them anyway!

- If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Do good anyway!
- If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.
- Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway!
- The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway!
- The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest minds. Think big

anyway!

- People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs. Fight for some underdogs anyway!
- What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway!

Doing the right thing should not be thought of as an option, it should be the thing that every Christian does without thinking. Why? Because we know it is the right thing to do and it's what Jesus expects us to do as we follow his example. These are things that every person who attends Sunday school should have learned from a very early age!

Questions To Think About: Other than in Sunday school and the church, where are today's children and youth learning how to develop good moral character? Why is it important for them to develop good moral character while they are young?

Prayer Suggestions: Pray for the youth of your church and Sunday school.

A Call To Action: Use your social media contacts to share a word of encouragement with someone who is waiting for an answer to their prayers.

Reason #34

It Helps People Prepare For The Future

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.” (I Corinthians 2:9b)

* * *

The Uncertain Future

*We know not what the future holds
In times like these today;
The castles that we start to build
May crumble and decay,
With all earth's vast uncertainty -
Some poverty, some wealth,
For some the best that heart could wish;
For others failing health.*

*Hold on to God's unchanging hand
No matter where you go;
Relinquish not your trust in Him
Though weakened by the foe.*

*May God's eternal leadership
Our stronghold ever be.
Oh, strengthen, Lord, our faith and hope
For what we cannot see!*

(Author Unknown)

We may not know what the future holds, but in Sunday school, we learn who holds the future. - Jesus Christ!

Questions To Think About: Why is it important for all persons to have a plan and goals for the future? Why is it important to pray for God's help and guidance as you look to the future?

Prayer Suggestions: Pray for God's guidance as you prepare for the future.

A Call To Action: Do you know someone who has had a major change in their life recently (they got married, they moved, they got a new job, they lost a job, they went through a divorce, they had a new baby, etc.)? These people are often the most open to accepting an invitation to come to a church or Sunday school. Give it a try.

Reason #35

It Helps Put The “Great Commission” Into Action

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19 & 20)

* * *

Dr. Elmer Townes, well known Christian author and educator, says that “The Great Commission” is...or should be...what every Sunday school is striving to live by.

When you look at “The Great Commission,” you see four very distinct commands from Jesus. First, he said we are to “go.” We are to get out of the church and go into the world to spread our love for Christ.

Second, we are told to “make disciples.” What is a disciple? It is a seeker, someone who is striving to be like Jesus.

Third, we are told to “baptize.” We usually don’t think of water baptisms taking place in Sunday school, but in this case, Dr. Townes says that it means baptizing individuals with the Holy Spirit and with God’s Word.

And, finally, we are told to “teach.” That’s normally what we think of

when we think of Sunday school. Sunday school is the teaching arm of the church and it continues to be an effective program for helping all persons of all ages learn about Jesus Christ, the Bible and God's will for each person's life.

"The Great Commission" was given by Jesus to his disciples and the Early Church, but it is also for each of us today. Learn more about everything that Jesus did and said by attending Sunday school...this week and every week!

Questions To Think About: Why is it important for a Sunday school to live by "The Great Commission?" Why is it important for individual Christians to also live by "The Great Commission?" How can we do this?

Prayer Suggestions: Pray for those persons who attend worship but do not attend Sunday school.

A Call To Action: Do you have a favorite Christian website where you find inspiration or where you read daily Bible verses or similar information? If so, share this information through your social media contacts today.

Reason #36

It Encourages People To Share Their Love For Jesus With Others

“You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him, you trust him; and even now you are happy with a glorious, inexpressible joy.” (1 Peter 1:8)

* * *

Pastor Don McKenzie shares the following story: “I recall one night very late in the evening when I was called to the hospital. As I was walking down the semi-dark hall, with no people around, a man suddenly ran out of one of the patient rooms. He ran up to me - I had never seen him before - and he said to me with joy in his face, “She’s going to make it.” and then he made his way on down the hall. I have not seen the man since. I do not know who he was or who he was talking about. I assume it was someone very near and dear to him, and he had just received good news. He could not wait to share it. He did not even have to know the person with whom he shared it, it just flowed from him because he had received good news, and good news is to be shared.”

When something good happens to you, I’m sure that you...like the man in the illustration above...just can’t wait to share that news with

your family and friends. It's the natural thing to do.

Hopefully, as a Christian, one of the greatest things that ever happened to you was when you accepted Jesus Christ and asked him to come and live in your heart. That was the greatest of news! But, how often do you share that news with others?

In Sunday school, people of all ages are encouraged to share their love for Christ with others. Each of us has a faith story. Have you told anyone recently about how you came to Christ and why you attend Sunday school? It's a story that you need to share!

Questions To Think About: What "good news" have you shared with your friends, family and others recently? Have you also shared "the good news about Jesus Christ" with anyone recently?

Prayer Suggestions: Pray for courage and boldness as you share your love for Jesus Christ with others.

A Call To Action: Time to get bold! Talk to someone today that you know who does not attend either Sunday school or worship and ask them to come with you this Sunday.

Reason #37

Sunday School Is One Of The Primary Places Through Which People Of All Ages Come To Know Jesus Christ As Personal Lord And Savior

“So we praise God for the wonderful kindness he has poured out on us because we belong to his dearly loved son.” (Ephesians 2:6)

* * *

A twelve-year-old boy became a Christian during a revival service at his church back in the 1960's. The next week at school his friends questioned him about the experience. “Did you see a vision?” asked one of his friends. “Did you hear God speak to you?” asked another. The youngster answered no to all of these questions. “Well, how did you know you were saved?” they asked. The boy searched for an answer and finally said, “It's like when you catch a fish, you can't see the fish or hear the fish, you just feel him tugging on your line. I just felt God tugging on my heart.”

Back in the 1950's and '60's, the number one way that people came to Christ was through revival services and evangelistic crusades, like those held by Dr. Billy Graham. However, we are told that that is no longer the case. Today, the number one way that people come to know Christ as personal Lord and Savior is as a result of Bible study and

prayer...a learned experience.

The emotional experiences resulting from “going forward” in an evangelistic crusade may soon fade away when trials, temptations and challenges come. But, when a person comes to Christ after much Bible study, prayer and serious consideration, the experience is usually deeper and more able to withstand the temptations and challenges of daily life.

Questions To Think About: How did you come to know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? Have you shared your faith story with anyone lately?

Prayer Suggestions: Pray for a family member or friend who does not know Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.

A Call To Action: Give a Bible to a child, teenager or other person who might not have one.

Reason #38

It Helps People Use The Bible To Find Answers To The Specific Problems, Cares And Concerns That They Have

Even when I walk through the dark valley of death, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)

* * *

How much time does it take to read the entire Bible...from Genesis to Revelation? If you would read the Bible at standard pulpit speed (slow enough to be heard and understood) the reading time would be seventy-one hours. If you would break that down into minutes and divide it into the 365 days of the year, you could read the entire Bible...cover to cover...in only twenty minutes a day.

Think about all of the things that you do throughout the day. Think about the time that you spend watching TV, about the amount of time that you spend checking and sending messages on your smartphone, and the time that you spend just sitting around doing nothing. Yes, we are all very busy, but can you honestly say that there is no place in your schedule that you couldn't find just twenty minutes to read God's

Word?

The Bible is God's Holy Word! It is our Christian handbook, our guide and a roadmap for our daily walk with Jesus. And, if you don't know the handbook, how can you possibly live the life as God expects you to live?

Questions To Think About: When you are facing a major problem or concern, where do you turn for help? Do you know how to effectively use the Bible to find answers to the questions and concerns that you have?

Prayer Suggestions: Persons of your church and community who are facing major changes in their life.

A Call To Action: Use your social media contacts to ask your friends, "Did you read your Bible today?"

Reason #39

It Helps People Develop Close Personal, Supportive Relationships With Other Christians

Continue to love each other with true Christian love. (Hebrews 13:1)

* * *

As a part of an assignment for a doctoral thesis, a college student spent a year with a group of Navajo Indians on a reservation in the Southwest. He lived with one family, sleeping in their hut, eating their food, working with them, and generally living the life that they live each day. The old grandmother of the family spoke no English, yet the two of them developed a very close friendship. They spent a great deal of time together and they learned to share the common language of love and understanding. Over the months, he learned a few phrases of Navajo and she picked up a little English. As the year came to an end and he prepared to leave, the whole village came out to wish him well. As he prepared to get up into the pickup truck and leave, the old grandmother came to tell him goodbye. With tears streaming from her eyes, she placed hands on either side of his face, looked directly into his eyes and said, "I like me best when I'm with you."

Isn't that the way we should all feel when we're in the presence of

Jesus? He brings out the best in all of us. We learn to see ourselves as worthy and valuable when we are in his presence. The hurts, the cares, the disappointments of our lives are behind us when we realize the depth of his love. To be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ is to generate in other people the Indian grandmother's simple statement: "I like me best when I'm with you."

There are close, supportive, Christ-like relationships and friendships waiting for you and they are waiting for you to discover in Sunday school!

Questions To Think About: How would you describe the word "love?" What does the word mean to you? Who or what do you love? Who should you try to love even more?

Prayer Suggestions: Pray for a friend who is facing personal problems or illness.

A Call To Action: Through your social media contacts, tell your friends how much you appreciate their love, care and concern. Tell them that you are praying for them!

Reason #40

It Follows Jesus' Command To "Let The Little Children Come To Me!"

But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these." And he put his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left. (Matthew 19:14 & 15)

* * *

During the Christmas season, a little three-year-old girl was excitedly watching the pile of presents under the family Christmas tree growing day after day. Caught up in the spirit and excitement of the gifts and giving as only three-year-olds can be, one morning she was picking up, examining, shaking and guessing what was inside each package. Then, in a burst of inspiration, she picked up a big red bow that had fallen off one of the presents and held it on her own head. She looked up excitedly with a twinkle in her eyes and smiled brightly as she said, "Look at me, Daddy, I'm a present!"

That little girl's words were more true than she realized! Our children are indeed the most wonderful gifts that God gives us. We may appreciate the gifts of talents and skills, either God-given or acquired, but do we consider our children as divine gifts - presents from God? What is more unique and special than our children?

REASON #40

And, to help us understand the kind of God that we have, he went so far as to send us his own Son...the most remarkable present of all!

Questions To Think About: Do you think of children as a “gift from God?” Why is it important for every church to have a good, relevant children’s ministry?

Prayer Suggestions: Pray for the parents of your church and Sunday school.

A Call To Action: Go to your local Christian bookstore to purchase a number of small gifts that children would appreciate (such as candies that have Bible verses printed on the wrapper) and give the items out to the kids who attend your worship service. If they don’t attend Sunday school, be sure to give them an invitation.

Reason #41

It Calls People To Put The Lessons Of The Classroom
Into Action In Their Day-To-Day Lives

“Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you? And he will answer, ‘I assure you, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’”
(Matthew 25:44 & 45)

* * *

Arnold Billie is a rural mail carrier in southern New Jersey. For the last quarter century, his daily route has taken him sixty-three miles through two counties and five municipalities. Mr. Billie not only delivers mail, he brings personal service. Anything you can get at the post office you can get from Mr. Billie - stamps, money orders, and pickup service. All the customer has to do is leave the flag up on their mailbox. One elderly woman has trouble starting her lawn mower, so when she wants to use it, she leaves it by her mailbox and Mr. Billie starts it for her when he arrives. Who says personal service is no more?

Sadly, the care and concern that people like Arnold Billie show is the exception instead of the rule in today’s world. Today, everyone seems to be in such a hurry - there’s no time to stop and do anything for anyone but themselves. Is that the way we are supposed to live? Thinking only of ourselves? No! The Bible says that we are to love, be concerned and serve others. In fact, Jesus showed us an example of this, in John chapter 13, when he washed his disciples’ feet.

In Sunday school we learn what the Bible says about serving both God and other people, but Sunday school people also take service to the next level by actually getting out of the classroom and going out into the community to help and serve others through community service organizations, church-sponsored work teams and as individuals.

Questions To Think About: What have you done lately to be of

service to God and other people? What have you done within or through your church? What have you done on your own?

Prayer Suggestions: Pray for the continued growth and effectiveness of your local church and Sunday school.

A Call To Action: Talk to some of your friends or your Sunday school class about starting a work team that could go out into the community to do simple fix-up work for shut-ins, the elderly and others.

Reason #42

It Helps Students Build Their Personal Self-Worth

For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we will share his treasures - for everything God gives to his Son, Christ, is ours, too. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.
(Romans 8:16 & 17)

* * *

Many of those who have risen from failure to real achievement have rejected the rejection of this world. In 1902, the poetry editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* returned a sheaf of poems to a twenty-eight-year-old poet with this curt note: "Our magazine has no room for your vigorous verse." The poet was Robert Frost, who rejected rejection. In 1905, the University of Bern turned down a Ph.D. dissertation as being irrelevant and fanciful. The young physics student who wrote the dissertation was Albert Einstein, who rejected the rejection. And, in 1894, the rhetoric teacher at Harrow in England wrote on the sixteen-year-old's report card, "a conspicuous lack of success." The sixteen-year-old was Winston Churchill, who rejected the rejection.

At one time or another, we will all face rejection. When that happens

to you, how will you respond? Will you become defeated, depressed and simply give up? Or, will you reject rejection?

The Bible contains powerful messages about the worth that each of us should see in ourselves. We were each made in the image of God Himself. Before we were each born, God put his stamp of approval on us and set out his plan for our lives.

A Christian friend has a small poster hanging in his office. The poster has a drawing of a child and this simple message, “God don’t make no junk!” That’s a message we all need to remember!

Questions To Think About: How do you view the past failures and rejections of your life? Do they limit who you are and what you do today? Or, have you rejected rejection?

Prayer Suggestions: Pray for God’s guidance and leading as you strive to set an example for your children, grandchildren and others.

A Call To Action: Through your social media contacts, encourage your friends to share how God has blessed them recently.

Where Do You Go From Here?

In Sunday school our purpose is to learn about God, His Word and His will. But, Sunday school is not just about getting, it's also about giving!

Each of us – Sunday school teachers, leaders and individual members – adults, youth and children – not only should be going to Sunday school to learn but also to give - give back to God and to others. In fact, I believe that there are at least seven different areas where every member should be involved in this giving...

1. We should all tell others about the importance of the Bible and Sunday school. When something good happens to you, don't you want to tell others? Hopefully, the very best thing to ever happen to you was when Jesus Christ came into your heart. If you really love Jesus, won't you want to learn more about Him by reading His Word and by going to Sunday school? And, won't you want to invite your friends and neighbors to share your excitement by telling them about Jesus and Sunday school?

2. We should make visitors and new attendees feel welcome. Surveys show that one of the big determining factors as to whether or not visitors return to a church is the welcome that they feel. As you greet visitors in your Sunday school, don't just ask their names, show genuine interest.

3. We should be friends to other people in our Sunday school. It is said that if a person is to really become a part of a church, he or

she must have at least two friends within that church, other than the pastor. Making friends requires special, continuing effort throughout the week.

4. We should share our understanding and experiences related to the Bible. Good Sunday school teachers will appreciate the participation of class members. As opportunities arise, add your understanding of the scriptures and share personal experiences and insights to help others in their understanding of God's Word.

5. We should offer help and encouragement to others. Having the care, support, love and prayers of fellow Christians can mean so much during times of trouble. Whether it's a card, a phone call, a personal contact or other message, your offer of help and encouragement can mean so much. And it can also give you an opportunity to witness about Jesus Christ and the value of Sunday school.

6. We should tell Sunday school absentees and dropouts that they are missed. You should do all that you can to invite these persons back to Sunday school. Whether you use a personal contact, a phone call or a personal note written in a card, your concern and invitation might be the spark to get these persons to come back to your Sunday school.

7. We should pray for our Sunday school. There is power in prayer! Pray often for your Sunday school, your Sunday school teachers, the children and youth of your Sunday school, and all others involved in your church's program of Christian education.