

33rd Annual Sunday School Teachers' Conference (UAE Zone), St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Dubai (21/04/2017)

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GROUP DISCUSSION TOPICS

GROUP 1

ARARAT GROUP

Is undue emphasis on secular education undermining effective Sunday School Ministry ?

1. Indifference of parents and low enrolment rates.
2. Too much emphasis on entrance coaching and career formations.
3. Deterioration of prayer life in families and unethical craze for money and power.
4. High drop out rates in higher classes.
5. What are your suggestions to make Sunday School more relevant to young adults ?

GROUP 2

CARMEL GROUP

Are our Sunday School Literature and Resource Books effective to fulfil the primary goals of Sunday School teaching ?

1. Are recent modifications good enough ?
2. Is there enough focus on the Bible ?
3. Are church history chapters essential in Sunday School Curriculum ?
4. Along with Liturgical Songs, should we include Christian devotional songs also ?
5. Are our text books adequate to instil orthodoxy into the minds of our youngsters ?
6. Is it possible to print and supply students' handbooks for each zone ?
7. What all are your suggestions for improvement in this area ?

GROUP 3

EPHRAIM GROUP

Are the overuse of internet and addiction to social media weaning away Sunday School children from the word of God ?

1. Are parents adequately aware of the dangers of smart phones, internet etc. ? If not, how can we address this issue ?

2. Did your Sunday School observe 'the cyber fast' proposed by the Church Headquarters on Good Friday ?
3. Are our teachers and pupils suffering from 'Nomophobia' ?
4. How can we help our children get over their addiction to social media ?
5. Are parents and S. S. teachers careful regarding the pornography addiction tendencies of their wards ?
6. Are there instances of alcoholism and substance abuse among our children ?
7. What suggestions do you offer to surmount these challenges ?

GROUP 4

GILEAD GROUP

Are there issues related to medium of instruction in OKR Region Sunday Schools ? Are the English translations of prescribed text books satisfactory ?

1. Do you favour S. S. teaching in Malayalam in order to root our children in our values and ethos ?
2. Are most of the teachers competent to teach Sunday School lessons effectively in English ?
3. Are Malayalam liturgical books in English script (*Manglish*) useful to a great extent ?
4. Is a bilingual approach more acceptable ?
5. What are your suggestions for improvement in this regard ?

GROUP 5

HERMON GROUP

How can Sunday School teaching be made more attractive to students ?

1. Can you suggest some learner – centred teaching methods ?
2. Will the introduction of teaching aids (as in OVBS) boost attentiveness ?
3. Are ICT based teaching strategies (eg. power point presentations, visuals using laptops and projectors etc.) advisable to make classes more interesting ?
4. Can singing sessions invigorate our pupils ?
5. Suggest more methods and strategies to make classes more vibrant ?

GROUP 6

MORIAH GROUP

What are your observations about teacher availability & quality ?

1. Are there qualified teachers in good number who are well – grounded in Orthodox faith, teachings, prayers etc ? Do you notice severe shortages ?

2. Are teachers really serious and committed ? Are they regular ? Or do they adopt a casual attitude to S. S. teaching ?
3. Are most of the teachers good role models ? (In private life, in prayer life, in attending church service regularly ?)
4. Do teachers generally prepare for the classes properly ? Do they prepare lesson plans and link the lessons with the Bible ?
5. Do teachers take care of follow up activities such as checking assignments, visiting parents, making telephonic enquiries etc. ?
6. Do teachers function as 'mentors' ? Do they encourage the pupils' talents, visit them when they are sick, follow up with parents etc. ?
7. Do they give too much importance to short term goals such as high marks, first place in co-curricular competitions etc. ? What are the real long term goals ?

GROUP 7

ZION GROUP

***What are the inherent problems of Sunday School Teaching in Outside Kerala Regions ?
What solutions can you offer to improve the existing situations among diaspora orthodox communities ?***

1. Do vicars & parish committees extend whole – hearted support to S. S. activities ?
2. Do you have enough physical facilities such as class rooms, staff rooms, libraries etc ? Or is the church building the only space available ?
3. What are your problems in resource mobilization ?
4. Do you have some role in curriculum design and development ?
5. Have you got some mechanism to obtain feedback from pupils & parents ?
6. Are vacations in your zone and exam schedules prescribed by the Central Office mismatched ?
7. What all suggestions can you offer to further empower the Sunday School Ministry in your zone ?



Please elect a **Chairperson / Moderator** to properly lead and guide your group's discussions. Also arrange a **Secretary** who will draft a report of the proceedings and present it in the concluding plenary session.