

When Teachers Grow, So Do Learners...

For Directors and Instructors

Sunday School Ministry is about growth. The children, the teachers, the helpers, and the directors are all growing in knowledge of God and His Word! It is absolutely imperative that we also grow as teachers and guide our subordinates, our teachers, to do the same.

To make this happen, the instructors and directors need to do their job right. I work as an administrator in a school – full time. I know that you never have time. I know that you are always putting fires out – dealing with parents, with students, with teachers. Nevertheless, your job is to help the children grow spiritually – this cannot happen effectively, if the teachers are not doing their jobs thoroughly. But, how can you know how they are doing their job, unless you are in the classrooms observing?

Put all your tasks aside, delegate them to someone else (I'm sure someone else could help make copies, or look for the stapler), and get into the classrooms. Make it a priority for yourself to regularly watch your teachers. Take notes. Give feedback. When you notice a need, bring in resources to help your teachers.

Often, when teachers are expressing themselves, I hear comments like, “The director has no clue what the classrooms are like.” Another statement from a teacher is, “We feel like we are each on

our own island.” Ask yourself, “What kind of words would my teachers, my subordinates choose when describing me as their director or leader?”



Finally, be a true support to them. Know their lives, know the children in the classes. Be a regular face in the classrooms. Most likely, you once were in the classroom and can remember the joys and disappointments of teaching. God has now put you into a role of leadership, not to stand over, but to stand with your team. Only with God, can we lead, not only the children, but also the teachers to a strong relationship with God which will produce fruit for His Kingdom and His glory!

Observations? What are those like? How do I start?

First of all, please remember that you are observing to help – not criticize. Look for awesome things. Brag during your morning prayers to other teachers about something amazing you saw in their peer’s classrooms. Encourage!

Secondly, use a rubric to strategically look for things teachers can improve on. The Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching Smart Card has been adapted below to fit a typical Sunday School class.

<p style="text-align: center;">Domain 1: Planning and Preparation</p> <p>1a: Teacher knows the content - Scriptural knowledge obvious 1b: Knows the students: development, learning process, needs and abilities 1c: Uses resources well – curriculum, technology, etc. 1d: Designs a coherent lesson - 5 parts included - Each part is effectively prepared 1e: Student assesment is prepared - How the teacher checks student understanding of lesson</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Domain 2: The Classroom Environment</p> <p>2a: The classroom has a feeling of respect and understanding 2b: The classroom has a culture of learning- students are expected to learn 2c: Classroom procedures established and well managed - Classroom routines followed - Transitions are smooth - All helpers know their role - Materials and supplies used smoothly 2d: Manages student behavior by setting expectations, monitoring, and responding</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities</p> <p>4a: Reflects on own progress – responds to previous remarks 4b: Communicates with parents 4c: Participates in conferences, seminars, etc. 4d: Shows proffesionalism – takes the ministry seriously 4e: Grows spiritually – is in church, has daily devotions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Domain 3: Instruction (Teaching)</p> <p>3a: Communicates lesson well 3b: Uses questions and discussions – students are involved 3c: Enganes students in the learning – students are interested 3d: Checks with students for understanding 3e: Is flexible based on student response- adjusts the lesson if students don’t undrstand</p>

Practically? How?

When you walk into a classroom – just watch. The first few times may be awkward, but as the teachers and students get used to seeing you come in, they will learn to just ignore you.

Be familiar with the rubric so that you know what you are looking for. Have the rubric printed on a small sheet of paper for reference. Choose one or two domains to focus on. Try to either take mental notes, or just a few written ones. Please don't write pages – it will stress the teacher out.

Ok, observed, what now?

- After the observation, record your thoughts into a sheet similar to the one shown on the next page. If possible use electronic versions such as Google docs so that you can continue adding notes with time, and can easily share with the teachers. Try to write specific things. Find something, or a few things which are positive in the lesson.
- Train your teachers on the use of the rubric, and give them access to it. In your notes refer to specific domains and components.
- Always follow up with a conversation with the teacher face to face. Praise them for their work. Speak to them about improvement. Choose two to three areas that need work and explain them. Be specific. The more specific you are, the more useful the information will be. Finish on a positive note. Follow up on your expectations. Look for improvement. Continue working with the teachers.

I pray that you take this need seriously. Very few Sunday Schools have any sort of expectations and observations by the directors and instructors. Those that do though, are able to grow and bring glory to the Lord.

"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."

-Colossians 3:23-24

Sample Observation Sheet – Fake Teacher –room # 0

Date	Observations	Domain
12/02/17	<i>Classroom is clean- student supplies neatly on desks. Projector with PPT on - prepared</i>	1a, 1c
	<i>Students greeted at the door individually. F.T. asks Tony about her dog. Nice! Shows he cares. F.T. asks uses hand to get students to be quiet, correct Alex when he speaks out</i>	2a 2c, 2d
	<i>F.T. uses a visual to demonstrate God's love. Students copy the visual and teach each other in pairs. Classroom becomes loud – some done too soon and begin to play. F.T. struggle to bring them back in</i>	3a, 3b, 3c Work on 2d
	<p><i>Great job! Your lesson was well prepared. You knew your content and I can tell you spent time on this. You have great relationships with students and your lesson is engaging and has variety. Pair-share is great, but you need to give them more specific directions. Tell them ahead of time what volume of voice is ok. Give them an activity if they finish early.</i></p>	

Lesson Observation

Name _____ Grade Level _____

Lesson Title _____

Scripture _____

	Observations	Points
PREPARATION	Instructor's Overall Appearance	<i>/10</i>
	Preparation of necessary materials/supplies	<i>/10</i>
CLASS/ ENVIRONMENT	Instructor voice & volume	<i>/10</i>
	Classroom Procedures	<i>/10</i>
	Classroom Management	<i>/10</i>
INSTRUCTION	Introduction and Lesson connection	<i>/10</i>
	Knowledge of the Material/ Lesson/ Bible Story	<i>/10</i>
	Application to the student's life (<i>strength, age, applicability</i>)	<i>/10</i>
ADD'L. COMMENTS		
Total Points		<i>/80</i>