

Sunday School at Fairview Baptist Church

Philosophy, Purpose, Place, and Teacher Expectations

Philosophy of Sunday School

In order to fulfill the one another commands in Scripture, Christians need equipping and community. They need biblical foundations to grow in the knowledge of God (equipping) so that they can walk in a manner worthy of Him (community). Through these Sunday School classes, we offer a series of courses so Christians can be trained in our discipleship of Jesus Christ by exhibiting a faith that seeks understanding. The Christian faith is not a static one in which we can progress in shallow water. If we only wade in the shallows, we will never be able to swim. By God's grace, the Christian seeks to equip and develop the faith given to them by God's grace.

Furthermore, the apostle Paul instructs Timothy to be a model to the Ephesians by "watching his life and doctrine." It is clear from the teachings of Jesus, and even the structure of the New Testament letters, that biblical doctrine leads to biblical living. Thus, Paul's exhortation to Timothy to watch his life and doctrine.

Purpose of Sunday School

In 1 Corinthians 9:25, Paul uses the analogy of athletic training to demonstrate that training and equipping are vital elements of the Christian life: "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever." (NIV) Similarly, Hebrews 5:14 notes that the mature intake of solid food for training: "But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." (ESV) Finally, Ephesians 4:13 notes the end of the saints' work of ministry: "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness." (CSB) If the standard measure of maturity is Christ Jesus, then we are to devote our entire lives to training and equipping one another in the Christian faith. Therefore, the purpose of these classes is to equip and train Christians in their life and doctrine.

Place of Sunday School in the Life of the Congregation

Sunday School includes classes that are a series of 8-12 week courses designed to train Christians to grow in and make disciples of Jesus Christ. They cover several areas such as biblical theology, systematic theology, and applied theology. The format of each course is designed in such a way that attendees not only receive instruction but also consider the practical implication of the topics by applying biblical truth and principles to each sphere of their lives.

Our desire is not for Sunday School to be privatized education. In other words, we desire for the training and equipping to bear fruit in the lives of the hearers. So, this could look like a small group going to a class on Suffering so that they can better care for the group member(s) who are suffering. This could look like singles in the church going to a class on Dating so that they can live a holy life and honor the Lord in relationships. Or this could look like a few friends going to a class on Theology so that they can better understand the Christian faith and defend the hope within them to their unbelieving neighbors and coworkers.

Additionally, we welcome anyone to attend these Sunday School classes. You do not have to be a member of Fairview to attend these. As these accomplish a wide range of desires (evangelizing, discipling, training, equipping, and hospitality), we are encouraged when members bring friends (non-Christians or non-members) to these classes since they will be hearing the gospel in each class.

Teacher Expectations

Sunday school class teachers are those brothers who are fostering discipling relationships and able to teach biblical content clearly and effectively. With this sort of lay leadership, there are seven expectations we have for Sunday school class teachers.

- 1) A male member in good standing who regularly attends corporate gatherings of Fairview Baptist Church.
- 2) Communicate regularly with an elder of Fairview about the status of your class and if you need any pastoral support.
- 3) A happy disposition to teach biblically, winsomely, and convictionally.
- 4) A happy disposition to receive godly encouragement and criticism.
- 5) Attend the annual Sunday school class teacher training event.
- 6) Identify and disciple a co-teacher in consultation with the elders of Fairview.
- 7) Seek to develop application points to serve the broader congregation.

How are Sunday School Classes Different from Home Groups and Discipleship Groups?

	Home Group	Discipleship Group	Sunday School
Description	A community where you grow in relation to God and others.	A gender specific group that meets weekly to grow in spiritual maturity through study and accountability.	A series of 8-12 week classes designed to train Christians to grow in Bible, theology, and practical living.
Purpose	Create and cultivate a gospel transforming community.	Create and cultivate doing spiritual good to one another.	To equip and train Christians in their life and doctrine.
Make-Up	Open group of new and mature believers of both genders.	Closed group of believers of same gender.	Anyone and everyone
Size	Usually 10-15 people	3-5 people	10-20 people
Dynamic	Fellowship (50%), sermon or study discussion (30%), and prayer (10%).	Study of material (50%) and accountability (50%).	Teaching and study (70%) and interaction (30%).
Next Steps	Leaders disciple and raise up other leaders to form new HG or start a DG.	Multiply and lead their own groups.	Members take the biblical instruction and apply it to their everyday lives.

