

YOUNG ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL LEADER

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

God created the church to be a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship, continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of Christ. The New Testament describes the church as “his body, the fullness of him who filleth every thing in every way” (Eph. 1:22).

God calls us into His body for the purpose of establishing a saving relationship with Him and community with one another. The Holy Spirit convicts our minds, leads us to repentance, and plants us within the church.

Thus, the church is a servant body. Created for service, it serves the Lord in praise, serves one another in love, and serves the world in humility. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

God calls every member of the church into ministry. The church is a “kingdom of priests,” and that priesthood is to one another within the church and to the world. A young adult leader, like any other church officer, is a minister or servant of God. Every Christian believer is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

From the record of Christ’s life, we receive an indication of the value He has placed upon the young. He selected young adults among the twelve apostles such as John “the beloved.” Those who would lead young adults today must see them as an important part of today’s church, not the church to come, for these young adults are about the same age as were the founders of Adventism.

Duties of the Young Adult Sabbath School Leader

Although the program varies from church to church, the ministry to which a person is called as the leader of the young adult division of a Sabbath School can best be described in the following ways:

1. *Planning.* You will provide leadership for the young adult Sabbath School by bringing together a team of assistants, young adults who will help plan and implement the group’s activities. This includes overseeing the schedule of leadership, special programs, and teaching. It is vital that this group meet together at least once a quarter to brainstorm, make decisions, and create the calendar for the next few months. Learn to delegate. Find people who can be trusted and let them take responsibility.
2. *Spiritual helper.* Young adults who have spiritual and relational problems will come to you with questions which need to be answered. This may occasionally require that you act as bridge between troubled young adults and their families. If you really care, they will be able to see it. Some are shy and you will want to preserve their dignity by not being too forward yourself. Others are gregarious and want to be asked questions that invite self-disclosing answers. Listening skills are important! As you learn to know more about what makes people tick, you will catch more of the nuances.
3. *Teaching.* Unless you are in a very large church, it will often be your job to teach the Sabbath School lesson. On occasion you should schedule others to teach so that there is more participation. You might even consider setting up a rotation plan in which many of the class members have a turn at leading the discussion. Skills in group process and learning styles are essential to this task.
4. *Building a sense of community.* It will be your work to create an atmosphere that is friendly, comfortable and safe, where God is praised, but where no question need remain unasked. The goal of the young adult Sabbath School leader is to bring together a cluster of strangers and help them become a real fellowship. Relational skills are key in this process. Smiles and expressions of caring are very important! Even the most shy

person warms to a smile. Some of the more gregarious ones benefit from a hug. In most situations, a warm handshake or touch to the shoulder to accompany the warm smile shows you care. You must not be afraid to be vulnerable. Many older adults find young adults intimidating, usually because the young are able to see through facades. Unless you are open and accepting in your manner, your leadership will lose effectiveness. You are not called to lead from a position of strength, as if you had all of the answers, but from a position of weakness. Admit to the group that you, too, struggle with problems and search for answers. It is only through the honest sharing of your struggles and how God has resolved them that others will be able to see Christianity as alive and practical.

5. *Commitment.* Next to your commitment to have God's presence in every aspect of your life, the commitment you make to serve your church body is perhaps the most important one you will make. It is just as important as your vocational and relational commitments. Group members need to know that they can depend on you and that your attendance and participation will be regular.

Resource Materials

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling AdventSource (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-765-6955) or your local Christian bookstore.

Expect Great Things: How to Be a Happy, Growing Christian, by Richard O'Ffill. A template for successful Christian living, with the goal of being like Jesus.

Great Stories and How to Tell Them, by Steven Mosley. Explains how to take profound biblical truths and crystallize them in narrative form; includes a collection of heart-gripping stories which illustrate each of the 27 fundamental beliefs.

Lifestyles of the Remnant, by Keavin Hayden. The author takes another look at church standards, taking them out of the context of legalism or orthodoxy—presents much needed principles.

The World, Love it or Leave It? by Roger Dudley, discusses the Scripture principles related to the many issues raised as young adult Adventists deal with contemporary culture.

Who Cares? A-Zillion Ways You Can Meet the Needs of People Around You by Linnea Torkelsen. Ideas for community involvement.

To help young adults deal with occupational issues, Richard Bolles has written a couple of books filled with exercises to aid self-discovery. They are entitled *What Color Is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers* (which comes out in a new edition each year) and *The Three Boxes of Life And How to Get Out of Them: An Introduction to Life/Work Planning*.

Internet sites

Visit www.saltyfish.com to connect with the Youth Adult Network.

Visit AdventSource On-Line at www.adventsource.org/youth for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.