

SABBATH SCHOOL COORDINATOR

The purpose of the Sabbath School is to make disciples for Christ. It includes the nurture of spiritual growth in members and prospective members, as well as the unchurched who come to join in the fellowship, study, sharing and service. The Sabbath School exists not only to minister to its members, but to train those members to minister to others. The Sabbath School is a school of Christian living, not just an event on Sabbath mornings. It can include Bible study groups that meet at other times also. Its purpose is evangelistic, not ritualistic.

Every Christian believer is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). In Acts 2:42-47 the Bible gives us a blueprint for the Sabbath School. Verse 42 outlines the goals of the Sabbath School as “teaching and fellowship,” and “breaking bread and prayer.” Verses 43-45 illustrate the strong sense of togetherness, caring and support that must be present in the Sabbath School in order to create a proper atmosphere for learning and growth. Verse 46 indicates that this can happen both in church buildings and in home Bible study groups, or what Adventists have called “Branch Sabbath Schools.” And verse 47 demonstrates how this is essential to a growing church.

The Sabbath School is a lay ministry. It is run, staffed and funded by church members, not the clergy. God calls every member of the church into ministry, and the Sabbath School is the place of preparation, support and empowerment for ministry. It is, therefore, essential to have lay involvement and leadership in its operation.

Duties of the Sabbath School Coordinator

The ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes general coordinator of the Sabbath School can be described in the following ways:

1. *Developing Leadership.* You will supervise all the leaders of the Sabbath School and encourage them to evaluate the effectiveness of their division/class in meeting the goals of the church. You should make arrangements for them to get the training, support, and resources they need.
2. *Chairing the Sabbath School Committee.* This group includes the superintendent, assistant superintendents, secretary, assistant secretaries, division leaders, Investment secretary, adult class leaders and an elder. (In some churches the personal ministries leader and youth leader are included.) The committee should meet monthly to build teamwork.
3. *Building a Strong Evangelistic Agency.* Help your team develop a growing, caring fellowship and an excellent learning environment.
4. *Recruiting Volunteers.* There is a constant need to find helpers for every aspect of the Sabbath School. You are the person who must take the initiative to identify potential helpers, personally invite them to get involved, and assist them in getting started.

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5. *Planning Ahead.* It will be your responsibility to help your Sabbath School leaders plan ahead and to participate in the total planning process of the church board and/or church ministries council. You will want to be familiar with the policies and plans of the North American Division of the General Conference, and your local conference church ministries department.

Resource Materials

You may want to set up a resource library for your Sabbath School where teachers and leaders could go for help. Some suggestions of items you may want to include in a resource center for your church are:

Counsels on Sabbath School Work is a compilation from the writings of Ellen G. White on the purpose of the Sabbath School.

Sabbath School Leader is a monthly magazine published by Review & Herald to equip Sabbath School leaders with resources. Orders can be placed through your local ABC.

Sabbath School Resource Catalog, and *Children's Ministries Resource Catalog*, available through AdventSource lists all the currently available materials for Sabbath Schools and their suppliers. Call 1-800-328-0525.

Information about additional resources and answers to your questions can be obtained through the denomination's "help desk" by calling (800) SDA-PLUS. A number of helpful fact sheets can also be obtained on the Adventist Forum on CompuServe or through the Fax Plus automated fax-back system. Dial (800) 474-4SDA.

MINISTRY DESCRIPTION #33

SABBATH SCHOOL SECRETARY

God asks the church to be a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship, continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God.

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." (Eph. 2:10)

The Sabbath School secretary, like every other church officer, is a ministering 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)

Duties of the Sabbath School Secretary

The ministry to which a person is called when they are appointed church ministries secretary involves the following duties:

1. *Communication.* You will send out announcements or phone to remind people of the meetings of the Sabbath School committee. You will check with the leaders of the adult Sabbath School classes and other divisions each week to review their membership list, gather their offerings, provide them with supplies, as well as listen for their suggestions and needs. You will communicate these needs to the pastor or other appropriate leader. You are the contact person for the conference Church Ministries Department and will be sent bulletins, and other items of information which needs to be routed to the right person in your congregation. You are the link in the chain through which most communication will travel.
2. *Records and Statistics.* The minutes of the Church Ministries Council and perhaps other committees may be kept by the Sabbath school secretary, and copies promptly sent to each of the committee members as a reminder of decisions and assignments and as a way to inform absent members. Each Sabbath School teacher and division leader is to be supplied with a membership record folder and encouraged to keep a list of people in the group. On the second Sabbath of each quarter, attendance counts are to be collected both during Sabbath School and the worship hour. These form the basis for filling out the Sabbath School Profile (Form A-300) which is the official statistical report of the Sabbath School, in your church.
3. *Supplies.* A number of Sabbath School supplies and materials are needed in each local Adventist Church. The Sabbath School must have quarterlies, helps for teachers and leaders, and many other items in order to function. It is the responsibility of the Sabbath School secretary to see that these items are ordered in advance of the need, received, stored carefully and distributed on time. You are the supply agent upon which all of the other Sabbath School leaders depend.

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4. *Secretarial Assistance.* Unless you are in a large church which hires an office secretary, the leaders of your congregation will need you to help provide secretarial work necessary to carry on the business of the Sabbath School. This may include general correspondence, mailings, filing, setting up and maintaining mailing lists, preparing announcements and agendas. You may need additional help when major projects require lots of work.
5. *Meetings.* At meetings of the Sabbath School Council, you will need to be secretary of the group. Depending on the size and organization of your local church, you may also be a member of various other committees.
6. *Money.* The Sabbath School secretary and his or her assistants collect the offerings taken in Sabbath School classes and divisions, count them and turn the money over to the church treasurer. Special donations may also be given to you from time to time to be deposited in specific accounts with the church treasurer. You will need to get regular monthly financial statements from the treasurer so you can monitor the funds in the various accounts of the Sabbath School as you order supplies. The treasurer should not pay any bill from the Adventist Book Center or other supplier until you have checked and approved it. You are an important link in the management of the church's funds.

Resource Materials

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