

Sunday School Enrichment

An Inviting Sunday School - You have probably seen the IHOP being built across the street from the church. I envision many church fellowships and early Sunday morning breakfasts happening there once it opens! Last week while waiting for traffic to clear, I watched some of the workers putting some of the finishing details on the building and grounds. Apparently their goal is to have the building and grounds in perfect order before they open. My guess is that they will train their staff ahead of time so that on their "grand opening" they are ready to efficiently serve 2,000 calorie/plate stacks of pancakes to waiting patrons. So, you may ask... what is so remarkable about this? Nothing really. Most businesses would do the same. They realize that there are a number of restaurants vying for your money and that sometimes the appearance of the restaurant or the friendliness of the wait staff can make the difference in customers returning.

So what does this have to do with Sunday School? Well, there are many things we can learn from the business world that applies to churches. While we are not "marketing" church to religious consumers, we would be naive to think that people do not look at churches with a consumer mentality. Here are a few practical applications:

1. Facilities Appearance - If you walked into a restaurant that was not clean, or looked run-down, you would likely turn around and walk out. Our facilities should be no different. Please report anything to our facilities staff that needs fixed, cleaned, spruced-up. Also, look for ways to make your class seem warm and inviting. Periodically clean out the clutter that sometimes accumulates in classes. You may not notice it anymore, but the first-time guest certainly will.

2. Friendliness - If you walked into a restaurant and no one seated you or came by to take your order, what would you do? You would probably go elsewhere. Church is no different. The number one reason people get involved in a Sunday School class is to build relationships. If this prospect looks poor on their first visit, they will likely go elsewhere. Classes need to be intentional about greeting guests. This is more than just a "hello, what is your name... nice to meet you." Engage guests in meaningful conversation and introduce them to other class members.

3. A Good Value - When you go to a restaurant you are looking for good food at a reasonable price. While church visitors are not "paying" per-se, they are investing time. If they feel like their time in Sunday School was wasted, they will likely not return. Who could blame them? Make sure that every Sunday you offer the best lesson possible, keep distractions to a minimum, and let people feel like it was worth their while to be there. This will bring them back.

Take a critical look at what you are doing in Sunday School. See if there are tangible ways it can be improved. Your "customers" will appreciate it! (Some have already asked if they can move their class over to the IHOP... While this is tempting, it may negatively impact Bible study time as well as your waist lines. So I am doing you a favor by saying no.)

Blessings,

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