

## 3D Sunday School Model Means Substance

Have you noticed that the “3D” phenomenon is starting to show up again in our entertainment industry? I remember when 3D movies were the “in thing”. When you bought your ticket you received a pair of cardboard glasses with one red lens and one green lens. As you watched the movie, feeling a little bit silly wearing the glasses, several scenes would literally jump out at you, No matter where you sat in the theater, the 3D image always seem to come within inches of your face. After the movie, you and your friends had very animated discussions, each trying to top the other with the best description of each 3D scene.

In 2006, the LifeWay National Sunday School Director and his staff created a “three dimension” focus for the members of Sunday School classes. Research tells us that in today’s culture, people are seeking something to do with their life that has relevance and significance. Believers want to live out their faith in relevant and significant ways that impact the Kingdom of God. Most church members, if given the chance, want to Be the church, not just Do church. The 3D Sunday School offers this possibility and more. In the past, Sunday School leaders used the terms Reach, Teach, and Minister to create a balanced Sunday School. The 3D strategy is targeted to the class members, not the leaders. This strategy gives the opportunity, through the Sunday School, to Be the church!

The three dimensions of a balanced Sunday School are Invite, Discover, and Connect. The author of *“The 3D Sunday School”* states that class members “...enter into a kingdom ‘conspiracy’ to work together...” to fulfill The Great Commission (David Francis, 2006, LifeWay Press, page 5). The concept that Sunday School classes work together to accomplish the Great Commission involves every class member, not just class leaders. The 3D concept is strategic in nature, progressive in action, and has predictable results.

The Invite dimension of the 3D strategy involves making sure the class environment is “guest friendly”; a place where guests will feel welcome, comfortable, and valued. The class must be an open group that is intentionally seeking to involve and connect with the lost and unchurched. The open group is ongoing by design, allowing individuals to enter the class at any time. Enrollment in the class is offered at any time to any prospect that has given permission to enroll them in your class, is **unchurched**, and has provided their name, address, phone number. The Sunday School class must be intentional in their pursuit of the lost and unchurched in their church mission field.

The Discover dimension is focused on helping people discover the great truths of the Bible and the powerful faith stories of believers. The discovery process also helps believers and guests identify the Biblical principles in the lesson and how to apply them to daily living. Biblical

principles and concepts form the foundation for a Biblical worldview. Teaching for transformed lives is the goal and this is accomplished through both individual and group experiences.

The Connect dimension is focused on the assimilation process in the Sunday School class. Both believers and guests find connection and relationship to each other through fellowships and ministry actions that the class is involved in on a regular basis. The 3D Sunday School class understands the power of creating an environment where all people, and especially guests, can connect and be cared for as someone special. First impressions are important in the connection process. A church and Sunday School class must do everything possible to create a favorable first impression. I recommend the following resources to help you with your first impressions. The first is *High Expectations: "The Remarkable Secret for Keeping People in Your Church"* by Thom S. Rainer (Broadman & Holman, 1999) and *"First Impressions: Creating Wow Experiences in Your Church"* by Mark L. Waltz (Group, 2005).

The 3D Sunday School strategy will be used by LifeWay for the next three years. Each dimension will be highlighted for a one-year period. From September 2007 to August 2008 is the Invite strategy. From September 2008 to August 2009 is the Discover dimension and from September 2009 to August 2010 is the Connect dimension.

Two booklets are available for free download from the LifeWay web site ([www.lifeway.com/sundayschool](http://www.lifeway.com/sundayschool)). The first is the *"3D Sunday School"* by David Francis. The second book is *"I-6: A Six-Lane Strategy Toward An Inviting Sunday School"* by David Francis. These and other resources will assist you in planning your 2007-2008 Sunday School year. I encourage you to look at these resources and plan an equipping event for your Sunday School before the new Sunday School year begins. If I can be of assistance, contact me at [bmorrison@mobaptist.org](mailto:bmorrison@mobaptist.org) or by calling 1-800-736-6227, extension 410.

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