

*A Quick  
Start*  
GUIDE



PRIMARY  
SABBATH  
SCHOOL

**A Quick Start Guide for the Primary Sabbath School Leader**

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## Introduction

Sabbath school provides a religious education that leads children to Jesus and helps them build a relationship with Him. Primary Sabbath school offers opportunities to help children learn to use the Bible and to know that what is studied comes from God’s Word.

Primary Sabbath school lessons link God’s amazing grace to children’s everyday lives. While in primary Sabbath school, many children will make a decision for Jesus they will later act upon publically. Look for ways to help them make this important decision.

Go to [www.childmin.com](http://www.childmin.com) for leader’s resources, training, information about certification classes and a free newsletter, The Children’s Leader.

This Quick Start Guide contains ideas to help get your primary Sabbath school ministry started. As you read, think about how you can adapt these suggestions for your local church. Use this material as a starting point for your own creativity.

<b>Sabbath School Divisions</b>		
<b>Beginner</b>	birth– age 2	2-Year GraceLink Curriculum
<b>Kindergarten</b>	ages 3– 5	2-Year GraceLink Curriculum
<b>Primary</b>	ages 6– 10 (grades 1– 4)	4-Year GraceLink Curriculum
<b>Junior</b>	ages 10-14 (grades 5– 8)	4-Year GraceLink PowerPoints Curriculum
<b>Earliteen</b> (if classes are divided)	ages 13– 14 (grades 7– 8)	2-Year Real-Time Faith Curriculum

## Primary Sabbath School Division Leader Job Description

Your job description may vary as determined by your children's ministries council or your church. The following information is a general guideline for the primary leader.

**Objective:** Coordinate and lead the primary Sabbath school class

**Time Frame:** One or two years, depending on the practice of your local church

**Accountable To:** Children's ministries coordinator and children's ministries council

### Specific Responsibilities

- Set the goal for your division
- Organize and lead the primary Sabbath school division
- Equip and coordinate the assistant leaders
- Recruit other needed volunteer staff
- Order your curriculum needs through the church secretary
- Prepare and execute weekly programs
- Plan outreach to parents
- Meet with the children's ministries council or other governing church body
- Encourage volunteers to complete children's ministries certification
- Provide opportunities for volunteer training in your church or at conference events
- Encourage volunteers with thank-you notes, gifts or parties

### Primary leaders must be committed to:

- Jesus Christ and a growing relationship with Him
- Christ-centered ministry to children
- The Seventh-day Adventist Church and its beliefs
- A balanced Christian lifestyle
- Teamwork
- Cooperative ministry under the leadership of the pastor, church board or children's ministries council
- Personal growth and learning

**Time Commitment:** Approximately 4-6 hours per week, depending on the size of your department

### Ongoing Leadership Growth Through:

- Basic children's ministries certification (strongly recommended)
- Advanced children's ministries certification (ongoing)
- Leadership training (ongoing)
- Volunteer management seminar (recommended)

## 10 Tasks for Primary Leaders

**Read this Quick Start Guide** (you are already doing this!).

**Get a copy of *Children's Ministries Manual: Ideas and Techniques that Work*.** It is full of great ideas and information that will make your ministry successful. This book is available from AdventSource at [www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org) or 800.328.0525.

**Look at the Sabbath school lessons your church is using.** If you are not using GraceLink (the only curriculum produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church) find out why that decision was made (for more on GraceLink see page 8).

**Call your staff together for an organizational meeting.** With their help, determine the goal of your department. What do you want the children to know and do before they move on to the next level? What do you have to do to help them reach the goal? If you do not have a goal, you are shooting arrows without a target.

**Get an up-to-date picture of your Primary Sabbath school division** – the children’s and departmental needs. Research what has been happening; talk to current and former volunteers. Take an inventory of the supplies already available. Assess what new materials will be needed. Circulate and collect your parent questionnaire (page 5).

**Create a budget for the entire year** (see page 19 for an example).

**Plan a calendar** for the year that includes all division activities. Add appropriate church and conference activities (page 21).

**Consult with the children’s ministries coordinator** concerning expectations, needs, budget, church calendar and areas of concern.

**Share your plans,** calendar, budget and any other pertinent information with the children’s ministries committee.

**Start a program of prayer warriors** who are paired with each leader and teacher.

## **Seven Principles for Excellent Leaders**

As the leader of the primary Sabbath school division you need to commit to setting a high standard. Here are seven principles that will serve you well. Think of them as a guide to a successful ministry.

### **Personal**

In order to share Jesus with others, you must have a personal connection with Jesus Christ. Personal devotional time, a focus on prayer and openness to the Spirit’s leading are all crucial to being a successful leader.

### **Excel**

Do well what you do. It’s not how much you do, but how well you do it. Show people that you are reliable, accurate and able to anticipate and deal with problems. Eventually they will develop trust, respect and appreciation for what you do. People are more likely to help someone who represents excellence.

**Nurture**

Be supportive of others. Even self-motivated people are encouraged by a supportive atmosphere. Under such conditions people are more likely to open up and share ideas.

**Diversify**

Get to know many different kinds of people (with diverse interests, opinions and backgrounds). The more people you know, the more opportunity for networking – sharing ideas, solutions and support. Expand your network to include coworkers, church members, neighbors and employees of companies where you do business.

**Be Visible**

Participate in groups that share your interests. Do you belong to the Adventist Children's Ministry Association? How about local community groups? Seek out and join other people with similar interests and needs.

**Personalize**

Learn other people's unique qualities. When you meet people, remember more about them than their name. What are their backgrounds, interests, experiences, personalities? The more you know about a person the easier it is to relate to them.

**Organize**

Make a networking plan. How can you best make use of these principles? Who can you add to your network list? Start by going through lists of participants in conferences and workshops you've attended.

In your networking efforts, remember that you must be willing to give at least as much as you receive from networking – whether that be through experience and resources or old fashioned elbow-grease. You must put in in order to take out.

## **Priority #1 – Find Out Who You Are Serving**

From the beginning, a good leader gets to know the primary children and their families. On the next page is a survey to adapt and circulate to the families. The information you collect will help you in planning your programs, training, events and calendar. Another way to get to know your children is to visit in their homes. When you visit, be sure to spend quality time with the child as well as the parents. Help them feel special.

# Primary Sabbath School Survey

Please take a few moments to answer the following questions. The results of this survey will be used to assist us in organizing programs and developing resources for you and your children.

1. Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Parent or guardian's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP/PC \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does your child have special needs (allergies, developmental, physical)? YES NO

What are these needs? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What does your child like to do? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What does your child like to play? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What type of program, other than Sabbath school, would you like us to organize for you or your child? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What type of program or class would you be interested in attending? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Understanding Primary-Age Children

In order to understand primary children, ages six through nine years, it is helpful to note the characteristics of their growth and development.

### Physical

- Show good muscle coordination and balance
- Behave in a boisterous and energetic manner
- Learn eye-hand coordination for fine-muscle skills
- Willingly practice so as to learn new skills
- Are somewhat far-sighted until eight years old
- Are good singers

### Mental

- Like to demonstrate their newly-acquired reading skills; however, many through age nine need help finding and reading Bible texts
- Are literal thinkers; need objects and pictures to help them understand
- Are learning to distinguish between fact and fancy
- Are curious and observant, asking lots of questions
- Learn best from hands-on experience with concrete objects
- Are capable of prolonged interest and concentration
- Apply simple, logical thought to practical situations
- Memorize easily
- Show an interest in the faraway and long ago
- Have limited understanding of time and historical sequence
- Are strongly committed to fairness; want those who break the rules to be punished
- Enjoy discussing experiences and new ideas
- Are fond of stories
- Like using new words

### Emotional

- Appreciate variety within a fairly stable routine; a complete change of program can upset younger primaries
- Are learning to control negative emotions, expressing them in socially acceptable ways
- Need adults to model self-control
- Fear death and divorce
- Are motivated by recognition

### Social/Relational

- Enjoy group games, projects, quizzes and activities
- Are naturally boisterous and energetic
- Like adults and seek relationships with them; want to please them
- Can be “little legalists,” wanting to know the rules and to apply them to other people
- Want to belong to clubs and groups; family and church are important to them



### Spiritual

- Understand some simple religious symbolism
- Have an interest in God
- Willingly believe what the church teaches
- Want to be told what to believe
- Understand enough about sin and salvation to choose Jesus as Savior and best Friend
- Want to please God
- Make prayer a part of daily life if encouraged to do so
- Willingly accept their responsibility as stewards if given the opportunity
- Imitate models of Christian living

### Developmental Needs

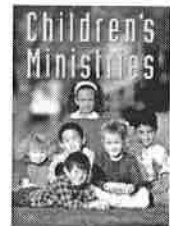
- Develop a sense of responsibility
- Develop a sense of accomplishment
- Grow in self-esteem
- Learn social and academic skills
- Balance personal freedom with parental limits

### Spiritual Needs

- To know God loves and cares for them
- To develop a personal relationship with Jesus and see Him as their Friend
- Ready access to God through prayer
- To experience forgiveness and mercy
- Assurance of acceptance with God – without it, they experience fear and guilt
- To know the law of God; they will apply it as a standard of living
- Help to offer mercy and forgiveness to those who wrong them

For more information about learning read *Children's Ministries Manual: Ideas and Techniques That Work*, chapter 6.

Find more information on reaching primary children in *Children's Ministries Manual: Ideas and Techniques that Work*.



Available from AdventSource. Call 800.328.0525 or visit [www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org). Catalog #021992

## Faith Development for Primary

In Luke 2:52 we read that Jesus grew in wisdom (mental) and stature (physical) and He also grew in favor with God and man. These last two areas suggest both spiritual and social growth.

The key to faith for a primary-age child is a sense of belonging. Children of this age have a keen sense of the order of things. They are also great “joiners.” They want to belong to a church that is bigger than their family and to clubs within the church.

The needs for children at this stage of faith development are:

- A sense of authority. They are satisfied to have their “why” questions answered, “because the Bible” or “because the Adventist Church” says so.
- To hear the story of the community they belong to. Stories of God’s working in Bible times and in the beginnings of their church feed the child’s growing faith.
- Experiences of awe and wonder, which are partly what worship is about.
- To sense that they are wanted at church, they are accepted by their teachers and peers, and they are missed when absent.

What does this mean for your primary Sabbath school class? Foster faith by filling the above needs through stories, drama, art and creative worship experiences in a warm, accepting atmosphere.

For more about faith development see chapter 4 of the *Children’s Ministries Handbook* available from AdventSource.

**You will want to order a teacher’s guide for each adult leader and a student Bible study guide for each child in your Sabbath school class. Don’t forget to order Primary Treasure take-home papers also! Order directly from your Adventist Book Center or ask your church secretary to place an order using the Standing Quarterly Order Form each quarter.**

## Primary Sabbath School Lessons – GraceLink

The primary Sabbath school is part of a spiritual journey for the children in your class. To assist the leaders and teachers in Sabbath schools around the world, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists developed an Adventist curriculum called GraceLink.

The GraceLink curriculum is a Bible-based, Christ-centered series of lessons that leads children to grow spiritually and learn Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. In each lesson you will find age-appropriate activities that are fun and bring the Bible to life. Most importantly, these lessons show children how Bible stories can be applied to their lives.

One important factor for Sabbath school teachers is that

these lessons allow for flexibility in the size of your group and also accommodate the amount of time that you have. This allows for small and large classes to use the lessons effectively.

### Much More Online

Find Sabbath school curriculum resources, puzzles, music, PowerPoint presentations, materials list, discussion and more at [www.gracelink.net](http://www.gracelink.net)

The GraceLink Sabbath school lessons provide total time teaching where every activity focuses on the central message of the Sabbath school lesson for that day. This allows for children to learn the same lesson many different ways (see more on this in How Children Learn on page 12).

The primary curriculum consists of a four-year cycle for children in grades 1-4. The stories are written at a fourth grade reading level. This means parents are expected to study with younger children. Some of the daily study questions will be too difficult for first-graders; it's OK for parents to omit those questions. Because the Sabbath school is activity-based, there will be no problem involving everyone in class.

All of the lessons in the GraceLink curriculum focus on one of the following themes:

- *God loves us and sent His Son to die in our place so we can live forever with Him.*
- *Our response to God's love is that we love Him, too. We show this by worshipping Him.*
- *We love the people around us, too – family, church family and friends.*
- *We serve people who may not know or love Jesus and give them an invitation to be a part of the family of God.*

These four themes are the pillars that will help each child incorporate Seventh-day Adventist beliefs into their lives as they grow in their Christian experience.

### **Why were these Bible stories chosen?**

Some leaders want to know why the lessons are not taught in chronological order. These stories were chosen so children would spend more weeks in the year learning about Jesus and His birth, life, death and resurrection than about any other Bible story. As you review the curriculum, you will see that every year during the Christmas and Easter seasons each Sabbath school division studies the birth and then the death and resurrection of Jesus. While many Adventists choose not to make a big deal of celebrating Christmas or Easter, these seasons present a “teachable moment” when much of society is focused on spiritual things. It means that each year, parents and Sabbath school teachers can take advantage of these times to focus children’s attention on what the Bible says about these all-important events.

### **What about the memory verse?**

Remember when children came to Sabbath school and were ready to recite their memory verse and answer questions about the lessons? Now the lesson and memory verse are introduced in Sabbath school and then the parents or guardians review the lesson and memory verse with their children every day during the week. Here is why:

- 1) When children were expected to come prepared, teachers expressed concern that often only one or two children in a class would know the Bible story and others not at all. It was difficult to teach so every child was involved. When the lesson is first taught at church, all the children are at the same place. As you teach the lesson, you can encourage kids to study more about it during the week and to share the things they learn with the whole family.

- 2) This model also challenges parents to personal prayer and Bible study as a way to stay close to Jesus and to model this to their children. Teachers still ask how many times children studied the lesson and record their responses, not in order to reward them, but to chart their progress. After a while children will begin to study for themselves. Encourage them to increase their study.

## When using GraceLink, keep a few things in mind:

More material is provided than you can use in one Sabbath. Choose what you are most comfortable with and don't try to cram it all in.

When the crafts that are suggested don't work for you, change to one that does and still teaches the same lesson point.

If music is a problem, substitute other music that makes the point.

Primary children are six to nine years old. Their interest span is longer than younger children (one minute per year plus one). Keep each part of the program in that time limit.

Use vocabulary they can understand. You can use new, longer words, but explain their meaning.

Few primary students will be good readers. Don't expect them to read long passages or Bible verses. Choose a Bible version that is easy for them to understand. Reading should not be a requirement for being in primary.

Primary students will enjoy more details than younger children, but not too many. They enjoy action in the storyteller and being included by name.

It's OK to be creative and resourceful, but stay with the main points and the Bible lesson the curriculum is using.

We want to teach children about sharing and mission as soon as possible. Primary children are enthusiastic about getting involved in both local and foreign missions. Though their concept of foreign mission may be limited, they love to get involved in local mission such as nursing home visitation, making food baskets, etc. Don't miss the opportunity to teach the children to focus outward during these years.

Experiencing grace is vital to this age group to help them to make a decision for Jesus.

### Last-Minute Planners

We sometimes find ourselves on Friday evening with nothing ready for our Sabbath program. GraceLink has your answer. If you have set up your department in advance with the basic program supplies, all you need to do is grab your teacher's guide and find the parts you can do easily. It's all written out for you – even what to say.

If you can turn yourself into a long-range planner, look ahead to what is needed. Purchase or prepare it at the beginning of the quarter. Then all you need to do is pick it up and go.

If you're not quite that organized yet, ask someone in the church to be your partner. They may not want to get up front but they can have everything ready for you to do. Working two by two is much more fun and efficient.

## **A Guide for Evaluating Non-Adventist Resources**

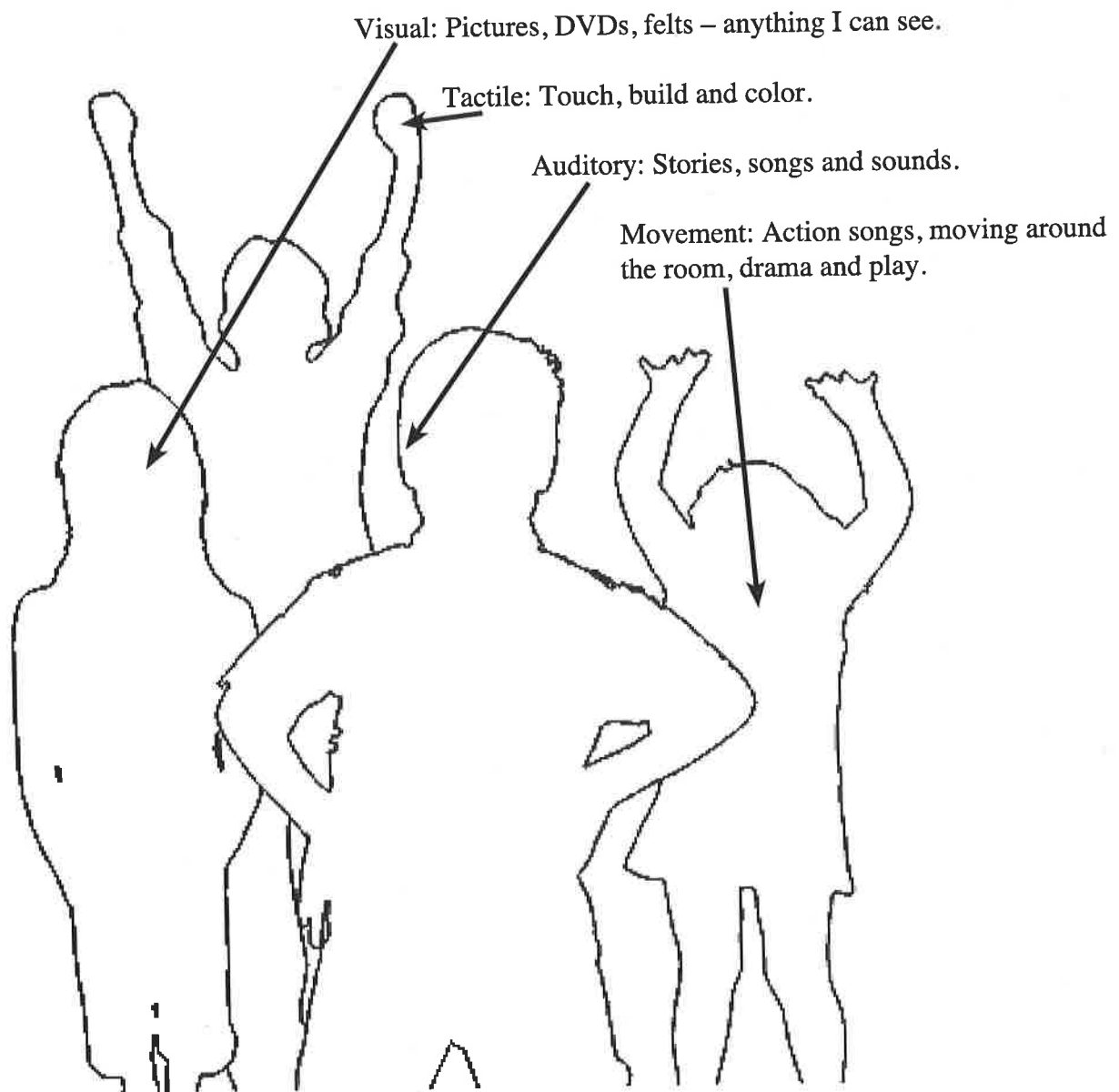
It is recommended that you begin with GraceLink, the only Adventist curriculum for primary, and use other materials to enhance its use. As you examine other materials, here are some questions to consider:

- Is the material Bible-based?
- Is it Christ-centered and doctrinally sound?
- Does it reinforce spiritual growth?
- Is it attractive, fun, and does it make the Bible come alive?
- Can it be applied to a child's life today?
- Is it age appropriate?
- Is it well organized yet flexible?
- Does it actively involve children?
- Is it consistent with Adventist beliefs?

If you are not using GraceLink or are considering a change to a different curriculum, it would be best to get approval from your children's ministries committee or the church board. This will protect you from potential problems that can come from using materials that do not agree with the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## How Children Learn

The children in your primary Sabbath school class learn through exploring and using all of their senses. Here are some ideas that will help you to reach all the children in your class.



For more information about modes of learning read *Children's Ministries Manual: Ideas and Techniques that Work*, chapter 6, page 65.

**Dynamic**

Experiential learner, creative and a leader  
Results-oriented  
Insists on doing it their way; will take risks  
Needs action and involvement  
Lots of ideas on how to do something differently

**Application**

Likes dramatics  
Likes to produce creative projects  
Enjoys real life simulations  
Case studies – reflective thinking

**Innovative**

Needs to know why they need to learn something  
Good imaginations  
People-oriented, likes to be affirmed, likes to talk  
May be the conscience for the group  
Sociable, wants everyone to be happy and win

**Application**

Likes to do arts and crafts  
Enters into small group discussions  
Enjoys role play and drama  
Group work

**Common Sense**

Likes to immediately use what they learn  
Not interested in details  
Likes to make choices  
Wants to get involved  
Good at problem solving

**Application**

Enjoys crafts  
Role playing involving the application of the lesson  
Enjoys debates and experiments  
Likes to write and plan

**Analytic**

Likes to know facts and details  
Likes to have things done in the same order  
Likes things organized  
Likes to study

**Application**

Demonstrations  
Competitions  
Quizzes and puzzles  
Discussions

## Attract Children to Your Room

Sit down and take a good look at your room. If you were a child, would you like to be there? Is it warm and inviting? Is it interesting? Do you feel safe and comfortable or shy and nervous? Do you feel secure? Does it make learning fun? Does it contain positive spiritual messages?

It's important to assess these questions. For children to learn, they must be in a safe, comfortable, warm and friendly environment.

Number one on the list – is your room clean and orderly? Even the smallest, darkest room in the lowest level of the church can be made attractive with light colors, cleanliness and organization.

What is the height of the illustrations, felt boards and pictures? Sit scrunched down in a child's seat. What do you see without breaking your neck? That's what a child sees, too. Lower everything to the child's comfort level – not yours.

Are your decorations child or adult-oriented? How many messages are you trying to send simultaneously? Think carefully about what your room is saying to the children who come there on Sabbath.

## Simple Discipline Techniques

If you are new to primary leadership, be prepared to be flexible from the very beginning. Don't expect total silence or children only speaking when spoken to. Determine in the beginning how much noise is tolerable. Role play, crafts and activities are going to create a certain amount of noise. It may be wise to invest in a noise patroller. When noise exceeds an acceptable level, a red light flashes. Be reasonable in your limits.

As a leader you need to:

- Stay calm, cool and collected, and carry on. Keep your voice down.
- Remember that some discipline problems may be attributed to maturity level.
- Prepare a short handout of guidelines for helpers to help them to know what to do in trying situations. Encourage them to intervene rather expecting the leader to fix the problem from in front of the group.

### What if you don't have your own Sabbath school room?

Does your class meet in a space that you need to move in and out of each week? Here are a few ideas to make it easier:

- Use plastic boxes that can fit in your vehicle's trunk, if possible. These are for all those handouts and other needed supplies.
- A cardboard display board that folds. Decorate it to fit the season, theme or whatever is appropriated. Keep it in your trunk with the plastic boxes.
- Carpet squares for seats – same storage place.
- A folding tabletop felt board that can also sit on the floor.
- On Sabbath morning, unload storage boxes, display board, felt board and carpet squares and you're ready to go. Use things repeatedly rather than often switching.



- Establish basic rules.
- Physical and verbal attacks are always inappropriate and should never be used as discipline.
- Have helpers keep an eye out for potential situations and deal with them before they escalate.
- Keep the program moving; don't exhaust their attention span; keep them involved.

Children can be aggressive. If you have an aggressive child in your classroom, try the following:

- Act immediately by removing them from the situation as you tell them, "No, that is not acceptable. It (hurts, annoys, disrupts, etc.) the rest of the class."
- Place a gentle hand on the children who is disrupting.
- Empathize with the feelings a child may be experiencing. Say, "You're angry, sad, frustrated, etc."

There are many good books on the market to help you in this area. Consult your local Adventist Book Center.

## Ministering to Parents

By the time kids are in primary, parents no longer stay in their children's classes throughout the Sabbath school hour. However, you can still look for ways to minister to the parents of your students. Here are some ideas to consider:

- Help parents know how to find a few minutes each day to minister to their child spiritually.
- Encourage them to attend a Sabbath school class or small group where they can share with one another and the group and brainstorm how to help in specific situations. (Be sure there's such a class available, led by a loving, accepting, grace-oriented leader.)
- Share a short, encouraging book or article.
- Encourage them to attend a class or study on Jesus and how He met people's needs.
- Plan a class they would be interested in attending during the week. Let them work out the time and place.
- Help them with parenting problems and skills. Offer parenting classes, family night out, etc.

Most importantly, be sure whatever you do interests them and meets their needs. Make sure it encourages them to get through another week and helps them to learn how to rely on Jesus.

### Parenting Newsletter

In each issue of **ADVENTIST PARENTING** you will find addressed issues of family faith and practical advice by age category to help you raise confident, God-centered kids. **ADVENTIST PARENTING** also points you to resources to help answer your questions about topics such as instilling values like honesty and kindness, building your child's self-esteem, developing your child's relationship with Jesus, and discipline, as well as uniquely Adventist topics such as making Sabbath fun for you and your child. Sign up at [www.adventistparenting.org](http://www.adventistparenting.org)

## Volunteers – The Key to Success

### Recruiting Volunteers

- Approach the potential volunteer in an appropriate place at an appropriated time.
  - Never between church services
  - Ask when and where it would be convenient to meet
  - If you choose calling, ask when would be a good time
- Approach prospective volunteers in a kind, positive manner.
- Provide a printed job description.
- Explain the benefits of volunteering in the primary department.
- Pray with the person. They need to feel God has called them and He will bless in the work they do.
- Allow them total freedom in the decision to join your team.

### Who Do You Recruit?

- Find members who have children's work at heart. Ask them to pray for your department.
- Select people who have had experience working with children. Ask them to pray for your search and then with a specific volunteer.
- Encourage current workers to recruit helpers who love working with children. Groom them as future volunteers.
- Inspire adult Sabbath school classes to adopt or sponsor "missionaries" to the children's division.
- Be creative in your search. Don't forget youth and seniors.
- Ask the nominating committee to consult the children's division leader before appointing leaders in the department.

Join the Adventist Children's  
Ministries Association for  
networking, ideas and a  
members-only newsletter.  
[www.acma-online.org](http://www.acma-online.org)



### Retaining Volunteers

Retaining volunteers doesn't happen by accident. You must plan carefully. Show workers that you care about their efforts.

- Ask how things are going and what needs they have.
- Hold a dedication service that includes both volunteers and their prayer partners.
- Find substitute leaders and teachers who will work in an emergency so volunteers won't have to worry if they need to be absent.
- Visit volunteers at home so they know you really care. Do a kind deed.
- Put up a bulletin board in the hall and display pictures of volunteers.

In-service education also helps hold volunteers. People like to feel that they're growing. Here are a few suggestions:

- Volunteers expect that meetings will benefit them, and want to be involved in the planning.
- Be respectful of their time by beginning on time, ending on time and keeping it relevant.
- Use humor, energy, creative touches and involvement.
- Begin programs with ice-breaker techniques to relax those who attend.
- Make it spiritual in nature as well as educational.
- Present methods that will improve skills.
- Teach them how to meet the needs of children.
- Retain the church's shared vision as the center of child training.

Recruiting and holding volunteers in the children's division is an all-year effort. Build a program that makes your volunteers proud and they'll tell others. Then when recruiting time comes, those who have worked want to stay, and others will count it a privilege to join.

## Guidelines for Volunteers and Caregivers

Because our society is filled with pain, problems and litigation caused by improper conduct of adults working with children and youth, it is imperative that those working with children at church have meaningful guidelines for conduct – to protect both themselves and those under their care. As a ministry volunteer, you want parents and others to feel comfortable and confident with you. Photocopy the following page for each helper in your division. Make it into a poster to display in your classroom.

Be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse; be aware of the legal requirements in your locality for reporting child abuse. In nearly all places, a caregiver can be held legally responsible for failing to report suspected or actual child abuse. Working with children and youth at church is not only a privilege; it is also a deep responsibility that must be handled with utmost care. If you suspect a problem, consult with the children's ministries coordinator before moving forward.

## 12 Tips for Keeping Volunteers

- Start them slow – immerse them in your vision
- Be a model – be real and transparent
- Build trust – believe in them
- Invest your time in them – be a coach – encourage them
- Ask for commitment – check on them systematically
- Set goals for growth
- Supply the tools they need – conduct regular equipping meetings
- Communicate on a regular basis
- Care enough to confront
- Ask for ideas and opinions when appropriate
- Thank them
- Give them someone to work with

Adapted from "Volunteers that Stick" by Jim Wideman, *Ministry Today*, Jan./Feb. 2008

## *An Important Message for Adults in Primary Sabbath School*

Never leave children you are responsible for unattended. Provide adequate supervision at all times, no matter what.

Never be the only adult serving as a caregiver. Always have at least one other person present.

Always ask a child's permission before touching him or her anywhere, even when responding to an injury or problem. This is especially true for any area that would normally be covered by a t-shirt and shorts. If an injury is within this area, make sure another adult works with you as you provide care.

Kids need to be touched appropriately. However, keep hugs brief and shoulder-to-shoulder or side-to-side. Always keep your hands at (not below) the shoulder level. A caregiver kiss is to the forehead or cheek only. For small children who like to sit on laps, encourage them to sit or stand next to you with your arm around them in an appropriate manner.

When taking small children to the bathroom take another adult along or leave the door open.

If the door to the classroom does not have glass in or around it, the door should be left open so the teacher is in full view.

## **Planning Your Budget**

The budget is your ministry vision expressed in money. A budget is, at best, an estimate as to the amount of money you think you will need to spend during a specific time. It is better to estimate too high than too low.

### **Steps to Creating Your Budget**

1. Consider the needs.

Look at departments' goals

Inventory what you already have

Determine your additional needs

Consult your GraceLink teacher's guide supply list for help

Prioritize your immediate and long-range needs

Identify your categories of needs:

- Curriculum
- Books and other resources
- Printing and photocopying
- Supplies and other materials
- Equipment

3. Discuss the budget with the children's ministries coordinator and committee.

4. If you need to reduce your budget, ask yourself these questions:

Can we accomplish the same goal less expensively?

Is this purchase vital to our ministry vision?

Is the timing right for this purchase or expense?

Have we done all we can to justify this expense?

Are you willing to bend on this purchase?

How might we raise additional money to accomplish our vision?

5. Evaluate and adjust your budget on a regular basis.



## Building a Primary Calendar

Communication is important to the success of your primary department. Keeping everyone informed helps avoid conflict between other church programs, leaders and parents. A monthly calendar keeps everyone informed of what is going to happen, when and where.

When planning your calendar, consider other events in your church or conference that may impact your division. Include these in your finished calendar. Consider the following possibilities:

<b>January</b>  Craft day	<b>February</b>  TV Turnoff Week	<b>March</b>  Worldwide Day of Prayer for Children at Risk
<b>April</b>  Training seminars – in-house and conference sponsored	<b>May</b>  Children’s church	<b>June</b>  Camp meeting
<b>July</b>  Family nature camp/retreat	<b>August</b>  Children’s prayer group	<b>September</b>  Community projects Church evangelistic meetings
<b>October</b>  Children’s Sabbath	<b>November</b>  Parenting seminar	<b>December</b>  Holiday programs

Add your division events to the calendar. You may also want to include the lesson theme or memory verse for each week along with techniques for parents to help their children assimilate the lesson into their lives.

Permission to adapt and copy for local church use.

## Get Started!

We hope this Quick Start Guide has provided you with a good starting point for your primary Sabbath school class. You are part of the Master's plan! Remember that God has a plan for you and each of the primary students that will be touched by your ministry.

## Recommended Resources

***Children's Ministries Manual: Ideas and Techniques that Work*** (also available in Spanish and French). Quantity discounts are available (*catalog #021992*). For a complete listing of children's ministries resources visit *AdventSource* at [www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org). You can place your order or request a catalog by calling 800.328.0525.

The Adventist Book Center offers magazines, **GraceLink materials**, books and much more. Visit [www.adventistbookcenter.com](http://www.adventistbookcenter.com) or call 800.765.6955 to reach the ABC that is closest to you.

Join the **Adventist Children's Ministry Association** and receive benefits such as a newsletter, special deals on Children's Sabbath school materials and online training. A lifetime membership only costs US\$50. To sign up go to [www.acma-online.org](http://www.acma-online.org).

Find Sabbath school programs online, answers to your questions, podcasts and everything you need to know about the GraceLink curriculum at **[www.GraceLink.net](http://www.GraceLink.net)**.

Sign up for the free quarterly **Children's Leader** newsletter at [www.childmin.com](http://www.childmin.com). You'll also find a lot of great ideas on this site.

**Kid's Ministry Ideas**, a quarterly magazine with lots of ideas for children's Sabbath school, is available as a standing order from the Adventist Book Center or from Review and Herald at [www.reviewandherald.com](http://www.reviewandherald.com).

Visit the General Conference Children's Ministries website at [www.childrensministries.gc.adventist.org](http://www.childrensministries.gc.adventist.org). Its goal is to serve those who work with children by providing ideas, resources and information. There is also a section called "**Just for Kids**" with devotionals, activities and craft ideas for children.

To see events and programs that help **children with special needs** visit [www.NathanielsHope.org](http://www.NathanielsHope.org).

The **National Children's Ministries Agency** exists to serve the local church, its pastors and laity in their pursuit of excellent ministry to the children of their church and their communities. Visit [www.4kids.ag.org](http://www.4kids.ag.org).

**[www.kidology.org](http://www.kidology.org)** aims to equip and encourage those who minister to children by providing practical training, creative teaching resources and personal consultation.





## Primary Sabbath School

This Quick Start Guide for Primary Sabbath School is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry at your local church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or a seasoned volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your local church.

Other Children's Ministry titles in the Quick Start Guide Series

- Children's Ministries Coordinator
- Beginner Sabbath School Leader
- Kindergarten Sabbath School Leader
- Junior Sabbath School Leader
- Earliteen Sabbath School Leader

For a complete listing of Quick Start Guide titles visit [www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org)



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