

No matter how many people are on staff, chances are a fair share of your classes are led by volunteer teachers. And while you do your best to show appreciation for their hard work, here are five practical ways to support and honor them.



THE Proper Care AND Feeding OF Teachers

1. TRAIN. While it's great to have a group of willing volunteers, you can't throw them into a class without preparation. "We provide round-table discussions to allow our teachers to ask questions and learn from each others' experiences," says Adelita Garza, lead pastor of Puente de Vida in Santa Paula, California. Veteran Sunday School teacher DeWayne Adcock, of Springfield, Missouri agrees. He advises the church to invest in systematically training potential leaders and following through with ongoing growth opportunities.

2. RESOURCE. If Christian education is a priority in your church, put your money where your mouth is. "We have [given our teachers] a monthly budget for resources, curriculum, and any other needs they might have to do effective ministry," says Garza.

3. COMMUNICATE. Leadership should constantly have eyes open to the availability of out-of-the-box market and gifting resources and communicate availability, instead of relying on the same programming and speakers which too often becomes boring templates," says Adcock.

4. NETWORK. Garza's church conducts a quarterly gifts assessment

and uses the results to pair individuals with experienced mentors who have similar gifts. "This allows the volunteer to experience ministry with the needed support and encouragement. This process can multiply volunteers and create an environment of effective ministry."

5. ENCOURAGE. "I meet with key leaders on a monthly basis to listen, pray, and develop strategies to improve their ministry," Garza explains. "I also call them regularly to see how they are doing both personally and in ministry. I send random texts letting them know I appreciate them."

6. REST AND ROTATE. Schoolteachers get a summer break, and the same should go for ministry volunteers. Adcock notes, "Too many times, the church puts a teacher in the classroom for an indefinite amount of time, thus resulting, not only in ineffectiveness, but personal burn-out." Puente de Vida uses a rotation system. Garza explains, "We have two teams that work with our children; therefore, most teachers serve every other week!"

JERILYN OSBORN is assistant editor for Church Multiplication Network. For the complete "Proper Care and Feeding" article and more go to discipleshipideas.com.



Core Disciplemakers

We can gain great insight on the needs of our teachers by seeing how Christ treated His core disciplemakers.

He saw their potential and limitations—Jesus discussed with His disciples the need for workers. He gave them authority and deployed them to minister. But He recognized their specific strengths and limitations. The disciples were encouraged to use Christ's teachings but within the limits of their own ability and experience.



BILLIE DAVIS has served as an educator, writer, and missionary for more than 65 years. For the complete "Core Disciplemakers" article and more go to discipleshipideas.com.



Honor Your Teachers

Teacher Appreciation Day is Sunday, September 26th

The National Division of Church Ministries and Discipleship recognizes one outstanding teacher each year as the Billie Davis Teacher of the Year recipient. Send Teacher of the Year nominations to the national Discipleship Ministries office at 1445 N. Boonville Ave, Springfield, MO 65802, or fax it to 417-862-3299. Along with the nomination form send a letter stating why this teacher deserves national and district recognition. Great prizes will be awarded.

Serving in His Steps gifts



Devotion Book, Pedometer, and Pen Gift Set (38LK2275. \$3.99) set includes a 64-page softcover devotion book

(various Bible translations used), pedometer referencing 2 Corinthians 5:20, coordinating ballpoint pen with black ink and medium tip, all Wrapped and Ready™ to give in a clear bag with a gold stretch bow.



Gift Mug (17LK8001. \$5.99) features 2 Corinthians 5:20 encouragement (11oz). Dishwasher and microwave safe.