

CAN SUNDAY SCHOOL REACH A POSTMODERN CULTURE?



Does Sunday School fit the postmodern mindset? Can it minister to those who believe in nothing on one hand and in anything on the other? If we are to go into our culture to make disciples, we need to make sure our ministries fit those we want to reach. How can we know if Sunday School will be effective? The answer is: it depends.

It depends on our willingness to be authentic.

Those who follow postmodernism respect and look for authenticity. Postmodern advocates will listen if pastors, leaders, and Sunday School teachers are willing to share themselves and their Godward journey. Paul wrote, "I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection ... Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" (Philippians 3:10,12). Because postmoderns look for authenticity, we must live what we believe. Yet a surprising number of Christians don't. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* will help make sure your students close the gap between who they are and who God calls them to be.



It depends on our willingness to invest in relationships.

Most of us feel time pressure. We often have more on our to-do list than we have time, energy, or resources to complete. People in a postmodern culture do not respect to-do lists. They are searching for genuine, loving, unconditional relationships. Teachers who want to reach a postmodern generation must be willing to make time for relationship building. Take time to chat with students by phone, e-mail, or over a cup of latte. Slow down for time together outside of class. Set aside time in class for catching up, rejoicing with the happy, or consoling the sad. Jesus always taught relationally. When we truly listen as He did, we can uncover the real issues. Get some practical tips from *Talking about Good and Bad without Getting Ugly*.

In Romans 12:1, Paul described a “spiritual act of worship” as serving

others, teaching others, encouraging others, giving to others, showing kindness, and other Christlike interactions (Romans 12:7-21). This teaching/modeling/mentoring extends beyond the Sunday School hour and becomes effective because of the authentic teaching style used during the weekly Bible studies.

It depends on our willingness to move from knowing to doing.

Those in a postmodern culture are looking for proof in our actions. Are we willing to go beyond preparing for “works of service” (Ephesians 4:12) by doing ministry as a class and as individuals? Those outside the church are watching to see if we inside the church are willing to emerge from our class to joyfully invest ourselves in helping others. Jesus is watching too. On Judgment Day He will reward those who have fed the hungry and visited the sick and imprisoned. Those who have tutored immigrants, coached children, and mentored youth will receive their rewards also. Classes that plan and prepare ministry projects will reach a postmodern generation.

It depends on our willingness to pray and to persist.

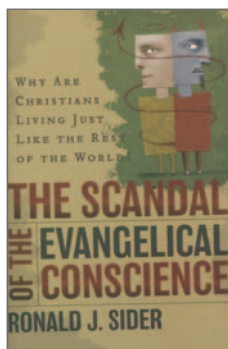
Those who pursue postmodern concepts don’t trust institutions. Some view the church as an institution and

Sunday School as an institutional program. But Christ has promised that all power in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. That is why He commissioned us to make disciples until He returns. Prayer aligns us with Christ’s plan and power for ministry from the Holy Spirit. God promises, “So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11). As teachers persist in helping students study God’s Word each week, they can be confident that God will use His Word to change lives—even in a postmodern culture.

Can Sunday School reach/teach a postmodern culture? It depends on pastors, leaders, and teachers. Are we willing to do whatever it will take to reach them? Are we willing to raise our expectations of what happens in Sunday School? If so, we are following the heart of God, and He will bring the increase. ■

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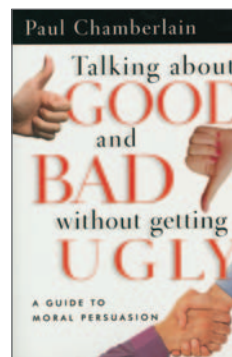
TEACHER’S TOOLBOX



The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience

Why are Christians living just like the rest of the world? From money to sex to racism to personal self-fulfillment, a scandalous percentage of Christians are violating biblical standards with barely a twinge of conviction. Ron Sider takes a painfully honest look at this disconnect to reveal the depth of the problem and contrast it with biblical teaching on the transforming power of genuine faith. When we apply these biblical teachings to our lives, we will be more suited to close the gap between who we are and who God calls us to be.

Paper. 144 pages. 38LK1974 \$12.99



Talking about Good and Bad without Getting Ugly

Abortion, gay marriage, euthanasia. How do we talk about these issues in a pluralistic society without appearing intolerant? Paul Chamberlain offers a way out of this dilemma. He squarely confronts the reality of our culture’s moral relativism by combining keen insight with practical wisdom. Through helpful illustrations and sample conversations, he uncovers the real issues that lie behind these obstacles and gives practical strategies for getting past them without “getting ugly.”

Paper. 128 pages. 38LK1968 \$12.00