

Sunday School and Children's Church

I. The origin of Sunday School.

1. "Sunday schools in England were first set up in the 1780s to provide education to working children. William King (see memorial in Dursley Tabernacle Church) first started a Sunday School in Dursley, Gloucestershire, and suggested to his friend Robert Raikes, that he start a similar school in Gloucester, resulting in Raikes being generally quoted as starting the schools as he was editor of the Gloucester Journal and wrote an article in his Journal resulting in many clergymen supporting it. It aimed to teach the youngsters reading, writing and cyphering and a knowledge of the Bible." (*Sunday School*, [Wikipedia](#), 9-5-17)
2. "Historically Sunday Schools were held in the afternoons in various communities often staffed by workers from varying denominations. Beginning in the United States in the early 1930s and Canada in the 1940s the transition was made to Sunday mornings. Sunday school often takes the form of a one-hour or longer Bible study which can occur before, during, or after a church service. While many Sunday schools are focused on providing instruction for children (especially those occurring during service times), adult Sunday school classes are also popular and widespread (see RCIA). In some traditions, the term "Sunday school" is too strongly associated with children and alternate terms such as "Adult Electives" or "religious education" are used instead of "Adult Sunday school". Some churches only operate Sunday school for children concurrently with the adult worship service. In this case there is typically no adult Sunday school." (*Sunday School*, [Wikipedia](#), 9-5-17)
3. Sunday School usually takes place before or after church, while "Children's Church" takes place during church.
 - A. Both Sunday School and Children's Church segregate children from adults for religious teaching.
 - B. Children's Church is the more erroneous of two because it removes children from the church service.

II. The Bible is the only standard for our faith and practice (**Psa 119:1-3,11; Psa 119:104-105**).

1. God's precepts concerning all things are right (**Psa 119:128**).
2. We must prove all things according to the word of God (**1Th 5:21; Act 17:11**).
3. Anything that deviates from it is wrong (**Isa 8:20**).
4. When determining if a practice is acceptable to God, we must always ask, "what saith the scripture?" (**Rom 4:3; Gal 4:30**).
5. Our feelings, emotions, or ideas are not the standard of truth.
 - A. There is a way that seems right to a man, but is dead wrong (**Pro 16:25**).
 - B. We can be convinced that something is good when it is not (**Act 26:9**).
 - C. God's ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts (**Isa 55:8-9**).
 - D. We must guide our heart with the word of God, not let it guide us (**Pro 4:23; Pro 23:19; Pro 28:26**).
6. The argument from silence must be employed when a practice is not found in the Bible.
 - A. If the Bible doesn't prescribe a practice, it is not biblical.
 - B. Paul used the argument from silence to prove that the tribe of Judah had no right to the priesthood under the law because it was given to the tribe of Levi, and Moses said nothing about the tribe of Judah having it (**Heb 7:12-14**).

- C. Jesus concluded that it was not lawful for David to eat the shewbread because it was only given to the priests (**Mat 12:4 c/w Lev 24:5-9**).
- D. If the Bible says how children are to be taught in the church (and it does), then anything contrary to it is unbiblical.
- E. In that Sunday School and Children's Church are not commanded in the Bible, and are in fact are in contradiction to the scriptures, they are unbiblical.

III. God wants things done His way, and when they aren't, judgment comes.

- 1. Nadab and Abihu were killed for offering strange fire before the LORD which they were not commanded to offer (**Lev 10:1-2**).
- 2. Saul was judged for not fully keeping God's commandment to utterly destroy the Amalekites and their animals (**1Sa 15:18-24**).
- 3. Even if the deviation produces results, God will still judge, as was the case with Moses (**Num 20:7-12**).

IV. Sunday School and Children's Church are not found in the Bible.

- 1. There is no commandment given to set up such programs.
- 2. There is no example of such programs being used by the apostles.
- 3. We should keep the commandments and ordinances as they were delivered (**Mat 28:20; 1Co 11:2**).
- 4. Adding Sunday School to our church meeting like other religions do would be adding to the word of God which is forbidden (**Deu 12:29-32**).
- 5. God is not pleased with good intentions that deviate from how He has said that He wants things done (**1Ch 15:13**).
- 6. Sunday School and Children's Church are traditions of men (**Mar 7:8-9,13**).
 - A. They are certainly not apostolic traditions in that they are less than 300 years old.
 - B. They make the word of God of none effect because they change the way that children are to be taught in the church.

V. The Bible stipulates that children are to be taught with the adults in the assembly.

- 1. In the OT, the whole family assembled together for religious worship and instruction.
 - A. Little children were present when Israel assembled together to make a covenant with God (**Deu 29:10-13**).
 - B. Every seven years all Israel, including children, would assemble together to hear the law of Moses read aloud (**Deu 31:10-13**).
 - C. After Joshua defeated Ai, he read the entire law of Moses to the whole congregation including the little children (**Jos 8:34-35**).
 - D. When king Josiah found the scripture which had been lost for a long time, he read it to all the people, both small and great (**2Ki 23:2**).
 - E. Children were present in the assembly when a great congregation in Israel confessed their sins to God with Ezra (**Ezr 10:1**).
 - F. Even nursing babies were to be present when a solemn assembly was called in Israel (**Joe 2:15-16**).
 - G. Everyone was taught together and then the parents were to teach their children afterward (**Deu 4:10; Deu 6:4-8; Psa 78:4-6**).
- 2. The same principle still holds true in the NT church.

- A. Under the NT, God's people are commanded to assemble together for worship (**Act 11:26; Heb 10:25**).
- B. The preacher is supposed to preach to the congregation (**2Ti 4:2**).
 - i. The pastor is supposed to feed ALL the flock (**Act 20:28; 1Pe 5:1-2; Eph 4:11-12**).
 - ii. Jesus ministered to little children (**Mat 18:1-6; Mar 10:14-16**).
 - iii. Peter, an elder (**1Pe 5:1**), fed both young and old (**Joh 21:15-17**).
 - iv. John, an elder (**3Jo 1:1**), wrote to little children, young men, and old men alike (**1Jo 2:12-13**).
 - v. Paul gave instruction to children when he wrote to the churches (**Eph 6:1-3; Col 3:20**).
 - vi. Children were present when the brethren at Tyre prayed with Paul and bid him farewell (**Act 21:4-6**).
- C. No provision is made for children to be absent from the assembly in the NT.
- D. Therefore, the practice of children being present during public worship is still in effect in the NT.

VI. The bulk of the spiritual and religious education that young children receive should be from their parents.

- 1. Fathers, not Sunday School teachers, are supposed to provide their children with religious education (**Eph 6:4**).
 - A. Nurture *n.* - 1. Breeding, upbringing, training, education (received or possessed by one). b. Moral training or discipline.
 - B. Admonition - 1. The action of admonishing; authoritative counsel; warning, implied reproof.
 - C. Admonish *v.* - 1. To put (a person) in mind of duties; to counsel against wrong practices; to give authoritative or warning advice; to exhort, to warn.
 - D. An integral part of bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the LORD is taking them to church to hear the word of God preached by the man of God who teaches and admonishes the church (**Act 20:28; 1Th 5:12**).
- 2. Fathers, not Sunday School teachers, are supposed to make the scriptures known to their children (**Isa 38:19**).
- 3. Parents, not Sunday School teachers, are to train up their children in the way they should go (**Pro 22:6**).

VII. The benefits of children being in church.

- 1. Though young children won't understand everything that is preached, they do pick up things that would surprise the skeptics.
- 2. They learn to discipline themselves to sit still and quiet for long periods of time.
- 3. They learn to listen to an instructor, to acquire information through listening, and to think logically as they connect the thoughts and concepts that are being communicated.
- 4. They learn that church is important and solemn.
- 5. They get to observe the church keeping the ordinances and learn that there is something very special about them.
- 6. The Sunday School or Children's Church teachers get to hear the sermon instead of babysitting.