
ORGANIZING THE WORKSHOP ROTATION MODEL

Structuring the Model in Your Church

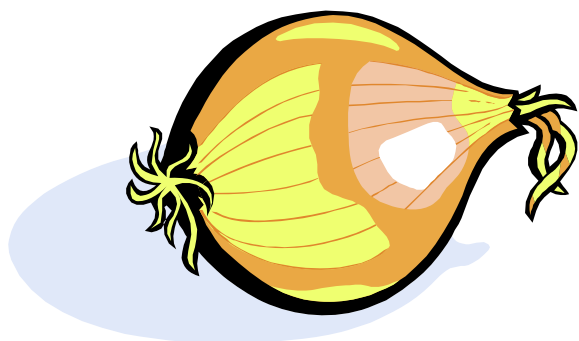
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Did you know that only the center part of the onion smells like an onion? The center part of the onion is responsible for giving the rest of the onion's layers its particular onion smell. The smell permeates from the core through all the other layers. The core affects how all the surrounding layers smell!

The Workshop Rotation Model is like an onion...not that it is smelly, but can be organized like an onion. Think of the Workshop Rotation Model as a "Christ-centered" organization. In today's world, many large corporations have a "Top-Down" management style. Their organizational chart looks like a pyramid, with the CEO at the top. Decisions and directions filter from the top down.

For the Workshop Rotation Model, think of the Lord at the core of your organizational structure.

Like an onion, having Christ in the center means that the Spirit will permeate through all of the other layers surrounding it. The Lord drives the direction of all the decisions and directions your Workshop Rotation Model Sunday School will make and



take. Subsequently, each layer of your "onion" builds on top of the other.

The next layer of your organizational onion contains the mission statement, goals, and objectives for your Sunday School. It is important for any organization to have a purpose. Your mission statement should reflect the "why" of your Sunday School. It will help drive your goals and objectives.

Think of your Sunday School as a beautifully rigged-out sailboat. It's made of the best materials, you have the best crew, and there's optimal sailing weather.

You set sail on your journey with these top resources, but you don't have an end port! If you do not have a destination in mind, you know you will never get there. You could end up on foreign shores or a desert island. You need to determine what your Sunday School's destination is. Ask yourself, "What is my Sunday School's destination? Where do the children need to get to on their faith journey?" Determine the goals you want to reach. These goals could very well be the catechism of your church's denomination.

But first, you need to articulate why you are out there sailing in the first place. The questions to answer as a group of Sunday School educators is "What is that we are trying to do? What is God's charge to us? What is our purpose? What is our mission for this sailboat?" Most would agree that it is not just a pleasure outing!

Likewise, a ship at sea needs maps to get to its destination. Your Sunday School will also need maps or objectives of how you are going to reach your pre-determined goals, all



the while fulfilling your mission statement. Remember to let the Lord guide you and permeate through this layer of the process.

The next layer of your organizational onion is the people. These people are your Christian Education Committee, your pastor, your D.C.E. and representatives of your various teams. Think of this layer as your "Congress." The purpose of this team is to make big or macro decisions concerning your Sunday School. Like congress, each team has a representative. Information flows from the teams through their representative and decisions are relayed to the teams by the representative. This congress keeps all of your teams in communication with each other, as well as with the broader realm of the church. Concerns as well as ideas can be brought to this layer. Once again, this layer is built upon the previous layers.

Everyone should be in sync and have a common purpose and common goals and objectives, knowing that the Lord is leading.

The outer layer of your organizational onion consists of the various teams of people needed to maintain the model. Their actions build upon the other layers – the Mission Statement, goals, and objectives, the macro decisions their representatives made in "congress," and are led by the Lord. They are concerned with the micro issues of running the Workshop Rotation Model:

ENVIRONMENT DESIGN TEAM

- ❑ Plans and creates room and space design
- ❑ Works with church's trustees or property committee
- ❑ Gathers/asks for materials and or decorations
- ❑ Maintains and adapts rooms if needed.

TEACHERS

- ❑ Commit to teach 4-6 weeks blocks of time to teach one particular workshop
- ❑ Attend teacher training
- ❑ Attend Bible Study/ training for each unit

- ❑ Read through curriculum and prepare for workshop in advance

CURRICULUM TEAM

- ❑ Determines scope, focus, and direction of curriculum for the year
- ❑ Chooses curriculum to purchase or writes curriculum
- ❑ Creatively adapts purchased curriculum if desired to fit needs of church school
- ❑ Acts as a planning team for each curricular unit
- ❑ Recruits shepherds
- ❑ Recruits teachers
- ❑ Conducts yearly Teacher Training on Workshop Rotation Model
- ❑ Conducts Bible Study (with DCE or pastor) before each unit with teachers
- ❑ Gives materials, prop, and set-up list to Preparation Team

MATERIALS TEAM, PROP AND TEACHING TOOLS TEAM, AND ROOM SET-UP TEAM

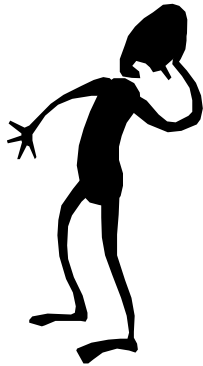
- ❑ Materials team gathers/purchases materials needed for workshops and arranges them in rooms (e.g. scissors, clay, ingredients, videos)
- ❑ Prop and Teaching Tools team makes any props or teaching tools needed for a unit (Golden bull-calf, flip chart with notes, signs)
- ❑ Room set up team makes sure rooms, materials, props and teaching tools are set up to specifications outlined in curriculum

SHEPHERDS

- ❑ Commit to a full year with one grade level or group
- ❑ Provide constant loving contact with the children by rotating with them
- ❑ Assist teacher during classroom activities if needed
- ❑ Address discipline problems if necessary
- ❑ Contact children outside of class (birthday cards, get well cards, etc.)
- ❑ Be "that shoulder to..." for the children

In looking at this suggested organizational structure you will observe that there are lots of people involved. Obviously, you will need to take a look at this suggested

organizational structure and adapt it to your church's situation. In larger churches where many people are involved, the "Congress" layer will be very helpful to communication. In smaller churches, where there are less people involved, the "congress" layer can probably be eliminated, as less people will be serving on one or more teams. In that case, the DCE can act as a director and liaison for communication between the teams.



However, it should not be a one-man band. Too many times, the DCE takes on too much or does not feel comfortable asking for help. The Sunday School then becomes a one-man band, with one person doing all of the work. Burn-out is imminent. Having more people involved helps create ownership of the model

within your church. It helps integrate your Sunday School with the rest of the church's activities.

Successful Sunday Schools using the Workshop Rotation Model have realized that "it takes a village" to operate this model. However, the beauty of the model is that it seeks to understand, develop, and use the God given spiritual gifts, talents, and passions of people in your congregation. No longer are members recruited to fill a spot. They are "called" – called upon to use their specific gifts, talents, and passions to fill needs in a particular area.

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This opens the model to involvement of a wider cross section of the congregation than ever before. The Lord's Spirit works through the model's structure and brings people into a spiritual community. †

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With contributions from...

Joyce Claus, M.Ed.

Joyce has 25 years teaching experience in public education. She has been a leader in developing integrated curriculum at the elementary school level and has taught it at the university level. Joyce brought the integrated curriculum philosophy and the multiple intelligences to the Workshop Rotation Model in its early stages of development in 1989. Joyce is actively involved in developing the model along with her pastor husband, Rev. Dr. J. Robert Claus, at the First Presbyterian Church of Morris, Illinois. Previous to this, Bob and Joyce were among the initial developers of the model in 1989 at Southminster Presbyterian Church in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Joyce develops and writes curriculum for Potter's Publishing. She is also a charter member of CMA.