

# Lecture 1 - High Gain Questions

## Question 1

If you were a "typical" Sunday School servant in your church, what would your expectations for the continuing education program of your church be?

## Discussion

- Note that the question asks about the "program" not just the "servants meeting"
- Educational - Church consecrates more on "pure spiritual topics" - Repentance, Confession, Sacraments... which is great. But in Servants Meeting something more academic
- Friendly atmosphere between the servants (sometimes this may cause someone not to attend the servants meeting)
- "I wanna hear something that's gonna make me serve better..." - something practical. How to do a certain thing in Sunday School... how do I prepare a better or nicer or more engaging lesson?
- More education on the psychosocial aspect of teaching (how to deal with kids who have complex issues, mental health issues, etc.) to have the toolbox to know how to deal with kids of all different mental health situations
- Continuing education for servants should be part of the Church goal, purpose, vision. Church should have a plan for developing the whole congregation and servants are part of that plan. Every church is different and can't have the same plan. An assessment based on the needs of the children and the servants is needed to see what is best for them.
- Continuing education should be integrated with all the other activities of the Church
- Should have a curriculum to build off of, or follow over a certain number of years.
  - How long should that curriculum be?
- Breadth of teaching (Church History, Liturgics, Patristics, etc.)
- Dealing with parents and kids and how to connect parents and kids, deal with family issues, etc.
- Continuation of Pre-servants in the sense that it is the same topics but on a deeper level
- Writing papers, research papers that can serve the rest of the community
- Have the servants take a task themselves of teaching so it is not the same person every time

- In any field of work, they try to keep you up to date with what is happening in the world... we should have the same in the field of service. What are our children being exposed to, being taught, etc. We should be on top of it and teach the servants right away. In touch with Contemporary Issues
- Big gap between old servants and young servants... young servants were raised in a completely different way from older generation. Younger generation is not used to lectures and sitting and listening. We need a vision for the younger generation of servants to help them in a different way
- "typical" is a Sunday School servant that prepares the lesson and gives it. Beyond education, we need to understand the age group that you are serving - how to reach them, connect with them, etc.
- Discipleship - for younger servants to have a mentor to look up to and who can follow up with them
- Servants are too busy? With work, children, etc. Reading, studying, serving, etc. takes a lot of time
  - It is true that adding another hour or two hours per week for continuing education may not be practical for the "average" servant
  - It is good to make the weekly servants meeting that is known to be required, a good use of time
- Is the word program appropriate? Program means clear start and end? Maybe process is better?
- Continuing education should be open-ended as it is needed by everyone
  - It would be nice to have diocese programs for continuing education in the regions centralized and disseminated to all the churches, given by experts at a high quality
- Computer Modules assigned to every servant and they can finish at their convenient time. The job of the coordinator or priest is to follow-up, see the outcomes, discuss in Servants Meetings, gather feedback, etc.
- Self-service, catalog of materials, minimum requirement on a yearly basis (e.g. 3 credits, 4 credits, etc.)
- Hands-on, workshops, how do you deal with this situation, case studies, etc.
- Re-apply and live it - kids see what we are doing as a lecture... why come to Servants Meeting if I'm gonna hear the same thing I heard before? How do I live it? How do I redirect when I'm lost? Etc.
- It needs to be updated on a regular basis. It cannot be the same for 10 years. We cannot be blind to what is going on around us.
- Use the skillset of the servants or congregation more broadly to deliver expertise
- Hybrid Program: Some modules, some in person. Servants retreats have good feedback for bringing servants together
- Continuing Education usually depends on some base knowledge... but in service, Servants nowadays are all over the place. Some servants don't know anything and some know a lot. What is the standard that we build on before talking about continuing education. Is the process of selecting servants part of the continuing education process?
  - People cram and then forget everything
  - Ladder of service - most of what I learned in service is from the experience of serving and learning "on the job"

- May need to emphasize the fact that your preparation is part of your independent learning to fulfill your goal
- In smaller churches, there is no time for pre-servants but servants are needed immediately! And sometimes they are overwhelmed or scared, and may leave the service. We should think "outside the box" for better ways
  - Continuing Education Process may look very different in a large established church, than in a smaller community or new church
- Young servants have the time to gain but don't know that they need to gain; by the time they know, they are too busy!
- Improving the feed - people will willingly come
- Large churches may be able to help small churches (e.g. to send a servant to come and teach the servants and help improve the feed)
- Lesson Preparation and Review can be a big part of identifying someone's areas of improvement or talent
  - Review can be a good chance to teach or to guide
- To take example from the field of Engineering - There is an Engineering Conference every year which was a continuing education for the whole engineering community in the area

## Summary

- Variety in topics (Staying on top of social issues and trends)
- Variety in delivery environments (e.g. retreats, servants meetings, online modules, discipleship)
- Variety in delivery methods (e.g. tailored to groups of servants, tailored to individuals)
- Integrated with the whole service and goal of the Church

## From the Fathers

- If we have a purpose, we will see opportunities and not inconveniences
- Continuous education must be very effective to the point of seeing a true change in the service
- Continuous education needs dedication from all of the servants

## Question 2

As a church servant, how can you overcome the three biggest barriers to your active participation in the continuing education program of your church? What role does the church play in this process?

## Discussion

- Time
- Motivation

- how do you get the servants motivated to come often and not just on their scheduled service day
- Needs interesting topics and more interactive with variety in speakers
- Give a feeling of ownership to the service - feeling of ownership will cause someone to use paid time off, make a priority
- Needs variety in environment - increase the sense of community through social interactions that are outside of the process but knits the service together
- Lack of seriousness in the service in general
- What's in it for me?
- Lack of Communication
- Some churches may have issues with getting husbands in the service
- Don't feel the need to learn
  - I already learned everything I need in Pre-Servants
  - Resources are everywhere... I can learn from YouTube or from anywhere else
- There should be an expectation set for the servants to do their continuous education and have consequences for not
- We live in an age of immediate gratification
- Communication and Reminders
- Move Servants meeting into a conference room around a conference table and starts with "How was Sunday School today" And Servants meeting becomes more like a meeting. Invites engagement
- Child care during the meeting
- Look past Sunday - other days may work better

## Summary

- Time
  - Being sensitive to (and accommodating) the needs of the servants (on a group level or on an individual level)
  - Effective Communication
    - Setting expectations
  - Variety
- Motivation
  - Giving tools to those who are responsible for the service for how to motivate
  - Motivation happens on an individual level
  - Effective Communication
    - Show appreciation
- Resources
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- These ideas are general and solutions should be applied based on the needs of the church and servants

## From the Fathers

- Reiterate to the servants their purpose in the service... you may be the only proclamation of the Lord Jesus Christ in this child's life. There will be sacrifice. There will be a need for patience. This expectation should be set even before servants preparation.

- Acts of Mercy (e.g. visiting children in a hospital, nursing home, battered women shelter, homeless shelter, etc.) will connect what the fruits of service are. The people we are serving will have a desire to go out and serve their community.
  - This can combat the impatience and the need for instant gratification in the service
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