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God is doing great and exciting things at New Hope. In our Sunday School Ministry, it is our prayer that we will know and understand God is doing great works in people’s lives that are beyond our expectations.

Our prayer is that we will all submit ourselves to Christ to become His disciples and to serve our church community together in this connecting ministry at New Hope called Sunday School.

We pray that God will bless us as we serve together and move forward as diligent stewards in the roles He has entrusted to us.

We ask the Lord, that as we seek those who are called and prepared by Him, that He will fill every leadership role in our Sunday School Community. We understand that it is very important that we be prepared and ready for these new opportunities and actions that God is doing in our midst.

Additionally, we desire to continue to act by faith, and believe Him for greater works than we have ever seen. Let us be diligent in prayer about being on mission to reach the lost, make disciples, and expect miracles all for the Glory of God.

We seek God to empower us because the more we grow, the more intentional we must be through our prayer/care groups so that no one is left behind and everyone is cared for and prayed for.

Let us continue to be on missions as never before to our culture and community with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our heart is that we will see souls saved, believers discipled, and leaders developed to live-out our calling under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit to supernaturally impact our community, nation and world.

As we labor together for the Cause of Christ, may we anticipate the miraculous. It is our prayer that as we are going, we anticipate what God is doing beyond what we can dream or imagine all for the Glory of God!

In Him

Tim Woodruff
The New Hope Sunday School ministry exists to provide a community of connection through open groups for fellowship, prayer and care, built around Bible study – all done with a Great Commission focus
Guiding Principles of New Hope Sunday School

We want flexibility in our Sunday School classes. There are some areas that should remain consistent. These are our guiding principles for Sunday School at New Hope.

1. We understand that a primary mission of Sunday School is evangelism – We want to have a balance of fellowship, care/prayer, and Bible study, but the main focus is that we do all this to reach people for Christ and make disciples.

2. Each Sunday School class is to be balanced in the four components of fellowship, care groups/prayer, Bible study, and evangelism.

3. We will have Sunday School open group philosophy and structure including a cluster group support system called Jethro Groups.

4. The teacher will be considered a shepherd/teacher, not just a facilitator. We want quality teaching that inspires discussion and dialogue and spiritual maturity. Anyone who teaches in Sunday School will be a member of New Hope Baptist Church.

5. Each Sunday School class is in essence like a small congregation that has the same attributes of New Hope Baptist Church. The desired structure for Sunday School classes is the ShAPES method.

6. We are committed to starting more classes every year.

7. Most classes will consist of people who are similar in age, marital status, and life situation. While this is the desired norm, we want to be flexible.

8. We will have a standardized curriculum. We will have options, but within an agreed upon curriculum. We want the Jethro groups to be able to discuss options of curriculum with their groups and upon agreement with the Jethro leader and Pastor of Discipleship, we may agree for a class to step out of the curriculum for a period of time to pursue a specific topic or area of study. We only want to know who is teaching what.

9. Sunday School will normally meet on Sunday morning and take advantage of the convenience of meeting on campus prior to or just after our Sunday morning worship service. This does not include a Sunday School class’ men’s or women’s meetings during the week. We want to stay informed of classes that are choosing to meet on a time other than Sunday morning as a Sunday School open group. This may have an affect on the other ministry areas when parents are meeting other than Sunday morning. The Jethros will be the Sunday School first point of contact when requesting to move away from our traditional meeting time of Sunday morning for Sunday School.

10. We are a Southern Baptist church – we will use the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 and Article II of our Church Constitution as a theological guide for our teaching and curriculum.
Overview

Sunday School class leaders are enlisted by the Shepherd/Teacher of an adult Sunday School Class to assist with the total work of the class. Class leaders work in one or more of the five key areas of Sunday School ministry in either a leader-based approach or a team-based approach. The five key areas of work follow.

- **Evangelism:** Create an atmosphere that encourages unsaved people to place their faith in Christ and encourages believers to lead others to Christ. Our evangelism ministry also includes encouraging and recruiting people from Sunday School to be involved in our church-wide follow up process after all major church events.

- **Discipleship:** Create an atmosphere that encourages believers to grow in maturity in Christ; monitor the discipleship needs of believers and work with the church's Discipleship ministry to provide learning opportunities focused on addressing those needs – “meeting people where they are and helping them take the next step.”

- **Fellowship:** Create an atmosphere conducive to members building relationships with one another as together they build on their relationship with God; and lead actions that help new members be assimilated into the fellowship of the Sunday School class and care-group to which they are assigned.

- **Ministry:** Create an atmosphere in which members and prospects can experience direct care and concern for life’s needs and avenues through which they may identify and implement ministry and missions projects that utilize the gifts and abilities of members; and lead out in intercessory prayer as an integral part of the ministry and missions activities of the class.

- **Worship:** Create a worshipful atmosphere; encourage participation in the church’s corporate worship events; lead small-group worship experiences; and encourage personal worship in home and family settings.
Sunday School FAQs

What’s an Open Group?
An open group is a group of people who meet for fellowship, prayer/care, and Bible Study each week throughout the year. We called it “open” because a closed group is a group that is designed for a specific purpose of completing a particular study or ministry that has a defined beginning and end. Open Groups can be visited and joined by anyone. It’s a group that is intentional and prayerful about connecting, reaching, and helping people become actively involved in the life of the class and the church. Open groups can be any size and are designed to “do life together,” encouraging and preparing members to be involved in ministry within the group, and to step out into ministry within all areas of the church, including birthing new Adult Sunday School classes.

Why do we call it Sunday School?
We have called Sunday School many different names at New Hope – Adult Bible Studies, Adult Bible Fellowships, Small Groups, etc. Each time we change the name, we still hear “Oh, you mean Sunday School.” We have also found that each different name for a group comes with its own presuppositions. So, we have decided to call Sunday School by its most familiar name – Sunday School. Once a group begins to meet, the name of the ministry no longer matters.

Why is it important to join a Sunday School Class?
In any church, getting involved and connecting with a special group of people is important. This is especially true in a larger church. Sunday School classes connect and reconnect with people on a regular basis keeping us from becoming isolated and anonymous in the church. Doing life and ministry together, building life-long friendships and growing in Christ with a group of people is important to a healthy fellowship. Belonging is something everyone seeks. Sunday School helps us do just that.

Do I have to join New Hope to be a member of a Sunday School class?
No. You can join a Sunday School class at anytime. Joining a Sunday School class is different than joining the church. Being a member of the church has a different process. We believe though, that it is very important to belong to a Sunday School class as part of the process for joining the New Hope Church.

How to join a Sunday School class?
Once you find a class, tell the Shepherd/Teacher or class secretary that you would like to join. They will give you a form to complete. That’s it – you’re a member.
So what is ShAPES?

ShAPES represents the roles or functions that must exist in a Sunday School class for health and growth. We know that there are many different ways to establish, strengthen, and grow productive and spiritually successful groups. After looking at many of the methods and practices of small group ministry, we discovered some consistent elements in healthy groups. We have adopted this as our framework to create, grow, and expand our community of Sunday School classes. We have “boiled down” these elements to five:

- **Shepherd/Teacher**
- **Administrative Leader**
- **Prayer/Care**
- **Evangelism**
- **Social/Fellowship**

The **Shepherd/Teacher** is the one who Shepherds and teaches the most in a class (thus the name). The **Administrative Leader** takes the burden of administration and coordination off of the Shepherd/Teacher to help maintain the class. The **Prayer/Care** role ensures everyone in the group gets needed prayer and care and helps organize and support care groups with the class. The **Evangelism** function makes sure that the class stays focused on connecting with those outside the class within the church and community by sharing the Good News of Christ and welcoming them to New Hope and to reconnect with those with the class. The **Social/Fellowship** function keeps the ministry of fellowship alive by keeping the class connected through events.

A healthy class will exhibit these attributes through their actions. There may be teams that take the responsibility for these functions on a regular or rotating basis. There may even be specialized care groups (sub-groups within a Sunday School class) that “own” a particular ministry area, like parties (Social). Regardless, when groups or teams take on these functions, there is a need for coordination from someone within the class. Another way to manage these functions is to assign ownership to an individual. This takes less initial coordination but runs the risk of burn-out. Still, the best was to ensure ShAPES is for someone to take responsibility for each function. No matter how the function is managed, ShAPES will exist in some way in every healthy Sunday school class. One thing we know for sure is that if you don’t have a method, this one is better than the one you are using now.

Here are the descriptions of the ShAPES functions . . .
**ShAPES – Shepherd/Teacher**

*{Eph. 4:11-12; Hebrews 13:17, Romans 12:7-8; 1 Cor. 12:28, 1 Peter 5:1-3, Acts 20:28}*

New Hope Sunday School Guiding Principles state that a Sunday School class is very similar to a small church. This makes the Shepherd/Teacher role basically a teacher and shepherd, a pastor, of this class. We can even think of this person as a church staff member called to ensure **sustainability, interdependence, and replication** in himself, the participants, and the Sunday School Class. A New Hope Sunday School Shepherd/Teacher is a mature believer, growing in and practicing his/her faith, a member of New Hope, and understands and agrees with the Guiding Principles of New Hope Sunday School and the statements of faith of New Hope Baptist Church. The Shepherd/Teacher is called to equip the participants in the class to do the work of building up the body of Christ to achieve the Great Commission given by our Lord.

The Shepherd/Teacher is responsible for leading people toward faith in Christ and guiding them to serve Christ in discipleship, evangelism, prayer, fellowship, ministry, and worship. In pursuing this mission, a Shepherd/Teacher understands that teaching moves beyond the Sunday School session into the daily living of participants. A teacher must look for opportunities to mentor participants before and after Sunday School sessions; ensure that a positive ministry environment is provided during the session that facilitates the work of the Holy Spirit; investing in building positive relationships with participants; and involve learners in meaningful Sunday School.

**The major responsibilities are to:**

- The Shepherd/Teacher is responsible for leading people toward faith in Christ and guiding them to serve Christ in discipleship, evangelism, prayer, fellowship, ministry, and worship.
- Lead a small group of adults in meaningful Sunday School.
- Build positive relationships with participants and prospects and ensure that they are contacted regularly in order to meet their needs.
- Ensure that follow-up ministry and ongoing care ministry is effective and consistent.
- Understand and support the LIFE Group ministry of New Hope by knowing the discipleship needs of Sunday School participants, what is offered each session, and encouraging participants to ‘take their next step.’
- Ensure the maintenance of attendance records and other participant information that strengthens the class’ pursuit of the overall purpose and mission of Sunday School.
- Inspire and ensure the class organization to effectively support the work and mission of Sunday School.
- Enlist an apprentice from the class for the purpose of teaching a new adult class or working in another age group as a teacher within two to three years.
- Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and being fully involved in the life, ministry, and unity of New Hope.
ShAPES – Administrator Leader

{1 Cor. 12:28; Acts 6:1-7, Romans 12:7; 2 Timothy 1:16-18; 1 Cor. 16:15-16}

An Administrator Leader Coordinator may be enlisted to direct the overall work of the class, relieving the teacher of administrative responsibilities. An Administrator Leader works closely with both the teacher and class team leaders to ensure that all key areas of work are addressed appropriately and that the class is properly organized and mobilized for its mission of leading people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and building Great Commission Christians through involvement in evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship.

The major responsibilities are to:

- Be responsible to the Shepherd/Teacher to organize and administrate the class.
- Work with the teacher in keeping the class on time and on task with the class time structure.
- Discover, enlist, and equip class outreach leaders, care group leaders and class secretary.
- Develop new leaders from the class’ membership for service in the class and the church.
- Attend all class planning meetings and Sunday School team meetings.
- Coordinate with the teacher in planning and conducting the class planning meeting.
- Assist the teacher in effectively reaching and teaching and ministering to people.
- Serve as a shepherd and minister to the care group leaders and secretary.
- Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and being fully involved in the life, ministry, and unity of New Hope.
- Train someone to take your place.

**Apprentice Teacher**

An apprentice teacher is enlisted from an adult Sunday School class to assist a teacher in his or her major responsibilities and/or to prepare to start a new Sunday School unit within two years. An apprentice serves as a substitute when the teacher is absent and a team teacher throughout the year.
ShAPES – Adult Class Secretary

An Adult Class Secretary provides vital support related to record keeping, reports, and other communications; ordering Sunday School curriculum materials, supplies, and other resources; and coordinating the distribution of resources.

The major responsibilities are to:

- Be responsible to oversee the class recording keeping system.
- Work with the class care group leaders in obtaining the class attendance.
- Ensuring all visitor forms have been properly completed and submitted.
- Inform the class Administrator/Leader of all attending visitors, so they can be properly greeted and welcomed into the class.
- Cooperate with the class Administrator/Leader in assigning new members and visitors to a care group.
- Ensure that everyone wears a name-tag on Sunday mornings.
- Attend class planning meetings and Sunday School team meetings.
- Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and being fully involved in the life, ministry, and unity of New Hope.
- Train someone to take your place.
- Meet regularly with the Sunday School class leadership team.
- Process and maintain general records for the Sunday School class and compile reports as requested, including prospect information.
- Coordinate ordering and distributing Sunday School curriculum materials, supplies, and other resources.
- Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and being fully involved in the life and ministry of the church.
ShAPES Prayer/Care Group Coordinator

{James 5:14-18; Colossians 4:12-13; Acts 12:5; Romans 12:8; Acts 16:33-34; Luke 10:33-35}

The Prayer/Care Group Coordinator can be one or two positions within the class. The Prayer ministry of the class is devoted to ensuring that we are praying for each other on a regular basis. The class prayer ministry must also focus on praying for those outside the class whether a nonbeliever, an unchurched Christian, or someone who has stopped coming to Sunday School. Care groups are the sub-groups of the class designed to insure that no one gets left out. This is the connecting and reconnecting function of the class. Prayer and care work together help the class provide effective ministry to all the Sunday School members.

The primary responsibilities are to:

- Be responsible to develop and maintain a care group and prayer ministry in the class.
- Develop care group leaders who will be responsible to care and minister to 7-12 people in the class.
- Habitually follow-up with “every-one every week” to ensure no one disappears from the class.
- Attend all class planning meetings and Sunday School team meetings.
- Lead the care-group time on Sunday morning by talking attendance, discovering ministry needs, involving others in meeting those needs, assigning contacts and praying for each other.
- Lead your care groups to minister to the needs of those in their care groups.
- Involve the members of the care groups to minister and contact each other throughout the week.
- Actively participate in the church’s community connection (visitation) program.
ShAPES – Evangelism/Outreach Coordinator

{Ephesians 4:11; Luke 14:16-23; Acts 11:19-21; Acts 8:5-6}

The Evangelism Outreach Coordinator is someone who will keep the flame of evangelism burning in each Sunday School class. This person is the communication connection to the Minister of Evangelism. Whether the focus is the Power of 10 or another strategy for reaching out to those who do not believe and are not connected to the church, this position helps keep the Sunday School connected and involved in the church’s evangelism ministry.

**The primary responsibilities are to:**

- Coordinate all evangelism and outreach activities of the class.
- Coordinate prospect-discovery and prospect-enlistment efforts of the class.
- Lead the class to aggressively pursue the lost and unchurched.
- Maintain prospect records for the Sunday School class.
- Participate in the church’s outreach program.
- Be trained in the church’s evangelism strategy and processes.
- Develop a visitation team and process for the class in cooperation with the church’s evangelism leadership.
- Lead members to create an atmosphere that encourages unsaved people to place their faith in Christ and encourages believers to lead others to Christ.
- Attend all class planning meetings and Sunday School team meetings.
- Lead the Sunday morning “class outreach time.”
- Serve as the class greeter and meet people as they enter the class each Sunday.
- Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and being fully involved in the life, ministry, and unity of New Hope.
- Train someone to take your place.
ShAPES – Social/Fellowship Coordinator

{Acts 2:42; Romans 16:23; 3 John 1:5-8}

Every Sunday School class needs to have a ministry of fellowship. This is a critical ministry that helps us get connected and stay connected within our Sunday School class. Parties, get togethers, getting together for lunch after church or just meeting for dinner through the week are all important ways to live out the ministry of fellowship. Each class should set a goal of a monthly time of planned fellowship. If we are to connect and reconnect, parties are a great way to do this.

The primary responsibilities are to:

☐ Coordinate all social and party planning activities of the class.
☐ Ensure that prospects and guests are included in the social fellowship activities of the class.
☐ Lead the class to create a team of social fellowship planners to share the load and be creative.
☐ Maintain the annual calendar of parties and social activities for the Sunday School class.
☐ Create a welcoming atmosphere in the class that encourages visitors to feel welcome and included.
☐ Serve as the class greeter and meet people as they enter the class each Sunday.
☐ Participate in the church’s outreach program.
☐ Be trained in the church’s evangelism strategy and processes.
☐ Attend all class planning meetings and Sunday School team meetings.
☐ Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and being fully involved in the life, ministry, and unity of New Hope.
☐ Train someone to take your place.
ShAPES -- Participants

Adults who attend Sunday School classes are not merely the intended recipients of Sunday School’s Great Commission ministry. They are the grass roots ministers. Adult Sunday School is all about building Great Commission Christians. All Sunday School class leaders, teachers, directors, and pastoral leaders needed now or in the future may be found on the membership or prospect lists of Sunday School class today. Every participant should receive the opportunity to serve according to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. We can offer those opportunities through Adult Sunday School.

The primary responsibilities are to:

- Participate regularly in personal and Sunday School Bible Study, giving attention to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in one’s life.
- Be receptive to God’s efforts to draw people to faith in Christ through His Word, His Spirit, and His people.
- Actively participate in efforts to lead others toward faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Participate individually and with the Sunday School class to serve Christ through evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship.
- Follow God’s leadership in responding to opportunities to grow spiritually and to serve God’s people in leadership roles.
**Jethro Coach**

A Jethro Coach is the leader and first point of contact for the Jethro Leaders. He works closely with the Pastor of Discipleship to promote the mission of the Sunday School. His primary activities are to sharpen, encourage, energize, and defend the Jethro leaders. A Jethro Coach:

- Promotes good communication to the Jethro leaders.
- Ensures that the group of Jethro Leaders is healthy and fulfilling the purpose of the Jethro Team and Sunday School (*fellowship, care and prayer, built around Bible study – all done with a Great Commission focus*).
- Counsels and assists Jethro Leaders with issues as needed.
- Leads the Jethro group to grow more Sunday School classes.
- Plans and conducts the regular Jethro team meetings, where the Jethro group leaders meet together to discuss communication and issues related to Sunday School.
- Encourages the classes to attend the three annual large Sunday School events: January -- mid-winter teacher training meeting, May -- Sunday School appreciation party, August -- Sunday School fall kick-off event.
- Assists in annual planning for Sunday School.
- Sets a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness for Christ and being fully involved in the life and ministry of New Hope.

The Jethro Coach must not work alone. He will look to the Pastor of Discipleship, other leaders within the church, and the Jethro leaders for support and prayer. Above all, Jethro Coaches, Jethro Leaders and Sunday School class leaders must ultimately depend on the Holy Spirit to guide and direct. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” Philippians 4:6 (NIV).
**Jethro Leader**

A Jethro leader works along side the Sunday School class leaders to sharpen, encourage, energize, and defend. This is the basis of Ecclesiastes 4:12, “...A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” A Jethro Leader:

- Promotes good communication to the class and among the groups.
- Ensures that the groups are healthy and are fulfilling the purpose of Sunday School (*fellowship, care and prayer, built around Bible study – all done with a Great Commission focus*).
- Assists the Shepherd/Teachers in finding a substitute teacher as needed (also helps the Sunday School class solve this problem if on-going).
- Supports the Sunday School class to develop leaders within the class (co-teachers, fellowship leaders, class administrator, etc.)
- Assists the Sunday School class with transitions – new Shepherd/Teacher, restructuring, etc.
- Works with the team of Jethro Leaders and their Jethro group to grow more Sunday School classes each year.
- Attends and participates in regular Jethro team meetings, where the Jethro Leaders meet together.
- Meets regularly with their Jethro groups to discuss communication and training issues based on the four components of fellowship, care-group/prayer, Bible study and evangelism.
- Encourages the classes to attend the three annual large Sunday School events: January – mid-winter teacher training meeting, May – Sunday School appreciation party, August – Sunday School fall kick-off event.
- Assists in annual planning for Sunday School.
- Sets a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness for Christ and being fully involved in the life and ministry of New Hope.

The Jethro leader must not work alone. He or she will look to their Jethro coach, other Jethro leaders, and the Pastor of Discipleship for support and prayer. Above all, Jethro Coaches, Jethro Leaders and Sunday School class leaders must ultimately depend on the Holy Spirit to guide and direct. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” Philippians 4:6 (NIV).
Why Do We Have Jethro Leaders

Exodus 18 gives an example of someone who was trying to do everything himself. Moses was spending his entire day trying to handle every request from the people. One day, his father-in-law, Jethro stopped by to see him. “Moses’ father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.” Here’s what Warren Wiersbe says about this situation:

“Moses should organize the camp so that every 10 people had somebody to talk to about their civil problems. If a ruler of 10 couldn't solve the problem, it could be referred to the ruler of 50, then 100, and then 1,000. After that, it would be referred to Moses himself. D.L. Moody may have had this in mind when he said, "I would rather put 10 men to work than do the work of 10 men" (Bible Exposition Commentary).

He encouraged Moses to get some trusted people and divide up with work. This allowed people to get their issues resolved so they could “go home in peace.” We are putting these cluster leaders and clusters in place so we can help each other. This structure also allows us to grow beyond the limited “span of control” of a single leader.

We want to help our classes become sustainable. We are going to help each other. We are not going to “lord over each other.” We are not your supervisor, we are not a person who is going to “get after” you, but Jethros are people, who will sharpen, encourage, energize, and defend the leaders and the classes. This is how we want the Jethros to help us. Our objective is to create interdependent, sustainable, maturing classes that have the four components of Sunday School.

Our Sunday School classes and Jethro groups will become interdependent. A Jethro leader facilitates communication within the Sunday School classes to help them grow and maintain a quality Sunday School experience. They also help facilitate the use of resources – if a teacher is out or if there is a question or problem in the class, there is a Jethro leader to assist the classes to support each other to help us be the best Sunday School class we can be. Jethros also help us find and communicate “best practices” among our Sunday School classes. If we are trying to realize the purposes of Sunday School, there are four things that we need to see happen: Are the classes having fellowship, are they caring for and praying for each other, is there good Bible study going on each week, and are we maintaining our Great Commission focus?

We also want to have Sunday School classes that are replicable. We want to create and maintain a growth focus – growing in our relationships with each other, growing in our desire to become like Christ, and growing classes in size and number. We want to be looking for people to become part of our classes, whether in our church or out in the community. We want people to be a part of our Sunday School community at New Hope. We want to start new classes. It is very important that we keep the mindset that we are about starting new classes. Jethro leaders are the men and women that will help us keep a healthy Sunday School growing.
Why Do We Use A Common Curriculum?

The Sunday School curriculum that we use provides a well rounded study through the scriptures throughout the year. The curriculum consists of the Bible verse and some related commentary. The Explore the Bible Series from LifeWay takes a class through the Bible approximately every seven years.

Using a common curriculum helps us in a number of ways.

- As we study together, we, as a church, can have a common language about what we’re studying in class.
- Topical teaching is also an effective way, but a through Bible approach allows us to have a broader understanding of scripture and application to our lives.
- While you may cover many excellent subjects topically, you will eventually get to more topics by working systematically through scripture.
- The common curriculum approach allows us to assist each other in teaching. If a team teacher or participant is needed to assist with teaching in another class, it is clear what subject is being taught.
- As teachers, we all have our favorite subjects, whether church history, end times or other specific branch of systematic theology, marriage, parenting, finances, etc.
- The discipline of moving through scripture on a regular basis allows us to keep a well rounded study in progress.
- Since we are an “open group” community, it is important that each lesson be complete on a weekly basis. Using specific books or other teaching material that has a 6 or 12 week progressive study, may cause some in the class to feel left out or behind if they miss a week or two.

We want to be flexible. The Guiding Principles of Sunday School provides this explanation.

We will have a standardized curriculum. We will have options, but within an agreed upon curriculum. We want the Jethro groups to be able to discuss options of curriculum with their classes and upon agreement with the Jethro leader and Pastor of Discipleship, we may agree for a class to step out of the curriculum for a period of time to pursue a specific topic or area of study. We only want to know who is teaching what.

We believe the common progressive curriculum is a good way to move through the scripture together. Regardless, we want to work and pray with you as you seek to teach and equip your class throughout the year.
How Do I Access And Use LifeWay Lessons?

There are two ways to access LifeWay Lessons:

1) Go to New Hope’s website [www.newhopebc.org](http://www.newhopebc.org) and follow these directions:
   i) Under Ministries, click Adult
   ii) Click Adult Small Groups
   iii) Click Bible Leader Resources
   iv) User name: teacher   Password: lifechange
   v) Click on lesson you want
   vi) Scroll down first page to Contents/Quicklinks. There you will be able to access:
      (a) Teaching Plan
      (b) Learner Handouts
      (c) Commentary

2) Go to [www.lifewaylessons.com](http://www.lifewaylessons.com) and follow these directions:
   i) If you are not already signed up on LifeWay, you can use melody for username and password.
   
      ii) Click on the unit you are looking for and then lesson. You will then have the option to view or download the lesson.
Insert Explore the Bible Series passages and titles here
Insert Explore the Bible Series 2007-2015 plan here
LIFE – A LIFE Group is a small group that studies a set course over a set period of time. These groups usually meet on Wednesday evening – some LIFE Groups meet at various times throughout the week. All of our discipleship offerings are designed to make disciples by meeting people where they are and helping them take the next step. These offerings include: **Stewardship Ministry, Marriage Ministry, Parenting Ministry, and Bible Studies**

We also have equipping opportunities focusing on progressive spiritual development:

**Establishing Faith**—the necessary first step for anyone to become a disciple of Christ is to repent of his sins and former way of life and to trust in Christ as his savior. This event is referred to in Scripture as being born again (John 3). Regardless of whether a person comes to faith at age eight or 88, he becomes a newborn “babe” in Christ.

**Laying Foundations**—the focus of this early phase in the life of the believer is gaining a better understanding of who Christ is and how to follow Him. As the new Christian learns more of Christ’s nature and character, He learns to trust Him not only for salvation but for other things as well. During this phase, Jesus invited His disciples to spend more time with Him so that He could reveal Himself more fully to them.

**Equipping for Ministry**—In this phase, the disciple learns to serve others and engages in ministry opportunities under the guidance of more mature believers. Jesus’ call to His disciples “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” indicates that He was moving them to the next phase of growth. Jesus took His disciples with Him as He went about teaching and ministering to people.

**The New Hope Leadership Institute** – This is an excellent opportunity for both emerging and mature leaders to gain insight in servant leadership principles and practice.

**Developing New Leaders**—As the believer progresses to this phase, he is ready to take responsibility for the spiritual well being of others. Jesus’ time during this phase with His disciples was characterized by teaching about how to live in His Kingdom. Also, He designated 12 of His closest disciples as apostles and sent them out on their own to preach the Kingdom of God and to minister to people’s needs.

**Developing Mature Leaders**—In this final phase of the training, Jesus gave His disciples increasing responsibilities for leadership. In addition He instructed them regarding the priority of becoming servants, even if it meant sacrificing their lives for others. Ultimately, He commissioned them to go to the whole world with the Good News and disciple others in the same way they had been equipped.
How To Join New Hope Baptist Church

To become a member of New Hope:

- You must know Jesus Christ as your personal savior.

  How do I become a Christian?

  1. Realize you are a sinner. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).
     Because you are a sinner, you are condemned to death. “For the wages [payment] of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).
  
     2. Believe that God loved you so much He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus, to bear your sin and die in your place. “. . . He hath made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

     3. Confess that you are a sinner and repent (turn around and go in the other direction). “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13).

- Be baptized by immersion (to dip under the water).

- Complete both sessions of the New Member Class. Session I is a basic introduction to New Hope and what we believe as Southern Baptist. Session II is focused on who you are in Christ and how God has equipped you for ministry.

- Fill out and turn in Book of Life and Covenant Sheets (in New Member Class). By filling out the Book of Life you are sharing your salvation experience with New Hope. The Covenant Sheet states that you are in agreement with New Hope’s mission, vision, purpose, structure and beliefs and you do want to join the New Hope Church Family.

If you have any questions regarding membership or would like to register for an upcoming class, please call Lesley Deyton at 770-461-4337 ext. 884. New Member Classes are offered every 4 to 6 weeks.
“Getting To Know You”

Shepherd/Teacher Testimony

Name: ________________________          Date: ___________________
Address: _______________________________________________________
City: _________________________           Zip Code: ________________
Home Phone: _______________         Work Phone: ________________
    Mobile Phone: _______________________
E-mail: _______________________________________________________
Employer: _______________________________________________________
Occupation: ____________________________________________________
Class Name: _________________________
SHEPHERD/TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

DOCTRINAL COMMITMENT


2. Do you agree with New Hope Constitution? Y/N

3. Do you agree with The Baptist Faith & Message 2000? Y/N

4. Do you agree with the Guiding Principles of Sunday School? Y/N

5. If there is an area that you do not agree with, please write out those areas and briefly explain why: ______________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

CHURCH COMMITMENT

1. How long have you been a New Hope member? ____________________

2. Have you ever served as a Shepherd/Teacher in the past? ______________
   Where? _______________________________________________

3. Please mark the services you attend regularly:
   Sunday Morning 9:00 South    Sunday Morning 10:45 North
   Sunday School (please list class) ____________________________
   LIFE
   Please list other areas of involvement at NHB: ____________________
   ______________________________________________________

4. Will you give priority to your church and its ministries and hold it in greater regard than organizations such as clubs, lodges, schools, etc.? Y/N

5. Are you willing to serve anywhere in the church the Lord leads you? Y/N

6. Do you practice New Testament stewardship and support your church with your tithe and giving beyond the tithe? Y/N

7. Will you provide support to the life of this church by following its mission and give of yourself to fulfill the commission of our Lord for His church? Y/N

8. Will you guard the fellowship of our church in a spirit of gentleness? Y/N

9. Have you read the Shepherd/Teacher responsibilities found toward the end of this document, and do you agree to uphold them? Y/N

Signature: ___________________         Date: ______________
PERSONAL COMMITMENT

1. Give the testimony of your salvation experience. (Use the space provided at the end of this form.)

2. How long have you been a Christian? __________________________

3. Are you committed to the Lordship of Christ in all areas of your life? Y/N

4. Do you have regularly scheduled personal devotions? Y/N

5. Are you willing to commit yourself to personal evangelism training and visiting in our community during your service as Shepherd/Teacher? Y/N

6. If you drink alcoholic beverages, will you make a commitment to abstinence for the sake of your testimony? Y/N

7. If you use tobacco, will you make a commitment to abstinence for the sake of your testimony? Y/N

8. Will you seek to guard your Christian testimony and the testimony of New Hope by abstaining from any action or activity that would cause others to stumble? Y/N

FAMILY COMMITMENT

1. Are you married? Y/N If so, how long? __________________________

2. Do you have children? Y/N If so, please list their names and ages:

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

3. Have you been married more than once? Y/N If so, briefly describe the situation:

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

4. Will you serve in a cooperative spirit with the pastor, staff and deacons and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, fulfill your service as a Shepherd/Teacher to the best of your ability? Y/N

Signature: ___________________ Date: ___________________
QUESTION FOR SPOUSE:

If your spouse is selected as a Shepherd/Teacher, do you share his/her beliefs as stated above, and will you cooperate and support him/her in every way to uphold the total program of our church?  Y/N

Signature: ___________________         Date: ______________

SHEPHERD/TEACHER CONVERSION STATEMENT

Testimony Question #1 Under Personal Commitment
(Please provide a statement of your conversion experience.  Ex:  Your life before Christ, how you came to know Christ, and your life in Christ now.)

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________         Date: ______________
BIBLE STUDY LEADERSHIP COVENANT

Under the power of the Holy Spirit, I am willing to make the following commitments....


- Cooperate with the established church leadership and support the plans and activities of the church and Sunday School program. (Hebrews 13:17)

- Be regular and punctual in attendance to the Bible Study class, showing up early to prepare for visitors, and in case of unavoidable absence, give notice thereof as far in advance as possible. (1 Corinthians 4:2)

- Be regular in attending the weekly Worship Service along with the other highlighted services throughout the year. (Hebrews 10:25)

- Make thorough preparation of my lesson and my other duties each week. (2 Timothy 2:15)

- Believe and teach the Bible is the divine, inspired Word of God, and that the Scriptures are “truth without any mixture of error.” (2 Timothy 3:16)

- Attend the regular Sunday School Team Meetings and special events planned for Sunday School. (Luke 14:28-30)

- Be a faithful steward with those whom God has entrusted to me by ministering to my members and reaching out to my visitors. (1 Peter 5:2-4)

- Commit to grow in my personal walk with Christ and develop my spiritual gifts, taking advantage of resources that will sharpen me as a leader. (2 Timothy 1:6)

- Be faithful to my spouse and lead my family by proving to be an example in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

- Commit to be above reproach recognizing that some things are lawful to do but are not expedient for my witness for Christ as a leader. (1 Timothy 3:2-3; 1 Corinthians 6:12)

- Give joyfully and sacrificially to the Lord by contributing to the church with my tithes and offerings. (Malachi 3:10; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

- Endeavor to make verbal and lifestyle witnessing a part of my life. (Colossians 4:5-6)

Signature: ___________________         Date: ______________
Shepherd/Teacher’s Responsibilities

*New Hope Sunday School Guiding Principles* state that a Sunday School class is very similar to a small church. This makes the Shepherd/Teacher role basically a teacher and shepherd, a pastor, of this class. We can even think of this person as a church staff member called to ensure *sustainability, interdependence, and replication* in himself, the participants, and the Sunday School Class. A New Hope Sunday School Shepherd/Teacher is a mature believer, growing in and practicing their faith, a member of New Hope, and understands and agrees with the *Guiding Principles* of New Hope Sunday School. The Shepherd/Teacher is called to equip the participants in the class to do the work of building up the body of Christ to achieve the Great Commission given by our Lord.

The Shepherd/Teacher is responsible for leading people toward faith in Christ and guiding them to serve Christ in discipleship, evangelism, prayer, fellowship, ministry, and worship. In pursuing this mission, a Shepherd/Teacher understands that teaching moves beyond the Sunday School session into the daily living of participants. A teacher must look for opportunities to mentor participants before and after Sunday School sessions; ensure that a positive ministry environment is provided during the session that facilitates the work of the Holy Spirit; investing in building positive relationships with participants; and involve learners in meaningful Sunday School.

**The major responsibilities are to:**

- The Shepherd/Teacher is responsible for leading people toward faith in Christ and guiding them to serve Christ in discipleship, evangelism, prayer, fellowship, ministry, and worship.
- Lead a small group of adults in meaningful Sunday School.
- Build positive relationships with participants and prospects and ensure that they are contacted regularly in order to meet their needs.
- Ensure that follow-up ministry and ongoing care ministry is effective and consistent.
- Understand and support the LIFE Group ministry of New Hope by knowing the discipleship needs of Sunday School participants, what is offered each session, and encouraging participants to ‘take their next step.’
- Ensure the maintenance of attendance records and other participant information that strengthens the class’ pursuit of the overall purpose and mission of Sunday School.
- Inspire and ensure the class organization to effectively support the work and mission of Sunday School.
- Enlist an apprentice from the class for the purpose of teaching a new adult class or working in another age group as a teacher.
- Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and being fully involved in the life, ministry, and unity of New Hope.

**Signature:** ___________________        **Date:** _______________
What is an “Open Group?”
Dr. Steve R. Parr

It is my privilege to serve the churches of the Georgia Baptist Convention as the Specialist for Sunday School/Open Group Ministries. I trust that you have noticed the change in the ministry title. The term Sunday School is familiar to both believers and unbelievers. The first Sunday School in the 1780’s was literally a school that met on Sundays to teach children to read. The schools quickly emerged as an effective evangelistic strategy for reaching children and within a few years adult Sunday Schools were developing.

People today associate the term Sunday School with a small group Bible Study that meets on Sunday morning prior to worship. Many churches have chosen alternative titles since the words do not literally communicate what occurs each week. Titles that churches now use include, but are not limited to, Sunday Morning Bible Study, Bible Study Fellowship, Life Groups, Cell Groups, Bible Study Groups, Small Groups, etc. A majority of churches still use the word Sunday School because of its familiarity.

Dr. Thom Rainer noted in his research of believers who were formerly unchurched: “Interestingly, we did notice a slight transition from the nomenclature ‘Sunday School.’ Almost 20 percent of the churches in our study called their Sunday morning small group ‘Bible Study.’ This shift was made because of the churches’ perception of how the name ‘Sunday School’ is received. [However], none of the formerly unchurched [in his research] expressed concerns about the name.”

The title Sunday School/Open Group Ministries encompasses all weekly Bible study groups whether they are called Sunday School or by some other name. But what is an “Open Group?”

An Open Group:

1. Meets for Bible Study each week throughout the year.
2. Can be joined or visited by any prospect at any point along the way.
3. Is intentional in reaching and assimilating others.
4. Equips members for the ultimate aim of sending them out for service in ministry.

Every Sunday School class, cell group, Sunday Morning Bible study, or whatever the title, should be an “Open Group.” Unfortunately, many have lost sight of their purpose (fulfilling the Great Commission) and have become “Closed Groups”. Closed Groups also have a role in spiritual development. I once took a group of college students through an intense twelve-week Bible Study. They had to sign up, attend every session, and complete assignments or they could not participate. It was a powerful experience for each of those young men. Notice that we met for a limited time, limited who could participate, and did not add anyone to the group once we started.

I encourage you to utilize Closed Groups to help your members maximize their spiritual growth. However, do not neglect to use your Sunday School, or whatever title you use, as a tool to enable your church to fulfill the Great Commission by providing “Open Groups.”
The ShAPES of Things to Come:  
A Way to Organize Your Sunday School Class  
By Tim Woodruff

This is not a stained glass window. Nor is this a puzzle or anything sinister. This is the collection of the roles and function of a healthy Sunday School class. Each shape represents a ShAPES ministry within Sunday School. This diagram is a combination of the ShAPES symbols.

So what is ShAPES?

ShAPES represents the roles or functions that must exist in a Sunday School class for health and growth. We know that there are many different ways to establish, strengthen, and growth productive and spiritually successful groups. After looking at many of the methods and practices of small group ministry, we discovered some consistent elements in healthy groups. We have adopted this as our framework to create, grow, and expand our community of Sunday School classes. We have “boiled down” these elements to five: **Shepherd/Teacher, Administrative Leader, Prayer/Care, Evangelism, and Social.** The Shepherd/Teacher is the one who Shepherds and teaches the most in a class (thus the name). The Administrative Leader takes the burden of administration and coordination off of the Shepherd/Teacher to help maintain the class. The Prayer/Care role ensures everyone in the group gets needed prayer and care and helps organize and support care groups with the class. The Evangelism function makes sure that the class stays focused on connecting with those outside the class within the church and community by sharing the Good News of Christ and welcoming them to New Hope and to reconnect with those with the class. The Social function keeps the ministry of fellowship alive by keeping the class connected through events.

Every healthy Sunday School class has each of these functions in some way. A healthy class will always have a teacher who understands the responsibility of transformational teaching and shepherding. Each class will have someone who takes
care of the administrative duties and coordination within the class. A healthy class will have a prayer ministry and a way to ensure that everyone receives caring ministry when needed. Every healthy class understands that evangelism is key – remembering to follow up with its members, prayerfully look outside the class, and to encourage sharing the Good News of Christ during the week. Fellowship and connecting is always present in healthy classes. People want to come together and get to know each other more closely. Fellowships (parties) with people from outside the class are also a sign of healthy growth. These functions always exist in healthy Sunday School classes. Classes that neglect any one of these will eventually stagnate and loose effectiveness. Since the teacher cannot do all these functions all of the time, the best way to ensure healthy growth is to move these functions into the class.

**ShAPES** can be a function or a role within the class. A healthy class will exhibit these attributes through their actions. There may be teams that take the responsibility for these functions on a regular or rotating basis. There may even be specialized care groups (sub-groups within a Sunday School class) that “own” a particular ministry area, like parties (Social). Regardless, when groups or teams take on these functions, there is a need for coordination from someone within the group.

Another way to manage these functions is to assign ownership to an individual. This takes less initial coordination, but runs the risk of burn-out. Still, the best was to ensure ShAPES is for someone to take responsibility for each function. No matter how the function is managed, ShAPES will exist in some way in every healthy Sunday school class. One thing we know for sure is that if you don’t have a method, this one is better than the one you are using now.

**ShAPES: Role Definitions**

**Shepherd/Teacher**

For the Shepherd/Teacher, we have assigned a rectangle. This denotes the idea that a Shepherd/Teacher helps maintain boundaries within the class. We are not opposed to creativity or “thinking outside the box.” But in an age where everyone is taught to think outside the box, there are times when thinking inside the box is prudent. Our theological underpinnings are not “up for grabs.” We have a statement of faith or confession as New Hope members. We will value and operate within that framework. There are other areas, like this methodology and the *Guiding Principles of Sunday School*, which are important to us. Teaching is a gift and an art. Someone who stands before a class should have the maturity and judgment to teach well and consistently according to God’s Word. The Shepherd/Teacher is in essence a pastor of a mini-congregation holding the common vision, mission, purposes, philosophies and practices of New Hope Baptist Church. We are not called to “lord over” others. The Shepherd/Teacher is in place to guide and direct in love the class to grow within the boundaries of our Faith and church family.
Administrator Leader

For the Administrative Leader, we have assigned a diamond. This shape represents the idea that the administrator will help the class touch all the bases. The bases are the functions of the class (ShAPES), ministry, record keeping, and other areas of administration. This is a key person that helps the Shepherd/Teacher and others focus on their ministry areas. The Administrative Leader is a necessary function of communication and information.

Prayer-Care Coordinator

The Prayer/Care Coordinator is represented by a symbol of a cup (a rhombus). This is an example of how prayer and care are cups of cold water in the name of Christ to people within the class and outside. This person represents the ministry of praying for each other and the lost while caring for people in the class. Care groups are an essential piece of this ministry. As classes grow in size, care groups are the only effective way to prevent anyone from being left out or missed in caring and prayer.

Evangelism Coordinator

The triangle represents the Evangelism Coordinator. The triangle points up to Christ. Each leg points outward (well, sort of), toward the community. The Evangelism Coordinator helps us remember to pray for and seek the lost. This function is also charged with maintaining information on those who have visited or those who we have visited. The Evangelism Coordinator will also ensure that the Sunday School class stays in touch with the evangelism process and methods used by New Hope. The Evangelism Coordinator also maintains the specific names of those unchurched and unsaved individuals for whom the class is praying each week. This person is also the recruiter and encourager to join those who gather weekly to connect on our community visiting teams.

Social/Fellowship Coordinator

The Social/Fellowship Coordinator is shown as a circle. Actually it’s an oval, but the idea is the same. The circle represents a circle of fellowship and friendship. This person plans activities, events and communication to the class to develop community and koinonia for the class. This person is connected very closely with the evangelism ministry to ensure that the fellowship extends beyond the class to those outside of the class – especially the lost. Luke gives a great statement about who we should invite to
banquets – not just those we know, but those we don’t know – those who can never repay us. This does not mean that the social or fellowship function is not also aimed at team building. That will happen on its own. We just have to keep talking about reaching outside, because we may forget. The Social/Fellowship Coordinator will help us stay connected through hospitality.

**But what about ministry?** Some will say that ministry is absent from this model. Well, it is. We couldn’t find a word that has S A P E S and an M – SMAPES doesn’t spell anything! Actually, the sum of ShAPES, plus the participant in the class, filled with the Holy Spirit directing us personally and collectively will result in ministry. We also have many ministries within the church – the Sunday School is interdependent with these areas as well. Tying people into (not up) with these opportunities will happen as we all continue to love God, love the lost and love each other. As we grow in maturity to Christ Likeness together, we will see the output of ministry all around us.