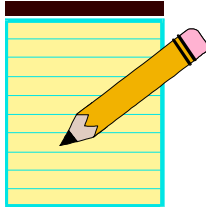


Who's missing?

Introduction



Does your Sunday School have a policy regarding children who are absent? If this is left to individual teachers with **no overall plan**, then the likely outcome is that some will and some won't address this important matter. We all like to be missed - that our **absence is noticed** and that someone enquires after us.

Children deserve no less, and every Sunday School - indeed every organisation, ought to have a pre-determined method worked out to ensure that each person feels that he or she **matters** and will be **missed** if absent.

Steps that can be taken include:

1. Keeping an **accurate record** of attendance's.
2. Following up **every** absence.
3. A sibling or friend may be able to give an immediate reason e.g. away visiting, on holiday, sickness etc.
4. Sickness ought to be sufficient cause for a phone call or a call in person at the child's home. Most parents appreciate the interest we show in their children. A get well card, if deemed appropriate, will be warmly welcomed.
5. Irregular attendance ought to be pursued sensitively to ascertain the problem.
6. No child ought to be allowed simply to **disappear** from the roll, without genuine efforts being made to follow them up.
7. The attendance of some children will be **erratic** no matter what steps are taken. When present, be sure to value them and encourage them to feel important and appreciated.
8. **Welcome back** children who have been absent, for whatever reason.

*By the Rev. Ian T. McKee,
Deputy Director of Youth and Children's Ministry*