

# Seven Needs of a Child

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. We need to know a child's needs.**

Every human being needs food, clothing, and shelter. Beyond these physical needs there are inner needs of the individual which need to be met. As Christians, we understand that every person is a sinner and needs Jesus as their Savior. In Sunday School, we concentrate on the child's need for God.

### **B. We need to meet the child's needs.**

When we lead a child to Christ, we cannot forget the other basic needs of the child. Often, an unmet need, feelings of insecurity, or lack of discipline hinders the message to get through to the heart of a child.

### **C. The seven needs of a child are:**

1. Need of Attention
2. Need of Security
3. Need of Acceptance
4. Need of Love
5. Need of Praise
6. Need of Discipline
7. Need of God

## **II. NEED OF ATTENTION**

This basic human need makes the child feel important and builds their self-esteem. If the child does not receive attention it often leads to misbehaving in order to get noticed. Positive attention as prevention, is better than negative attention in answer to misbehavior.

### **How to meet this need in Sunday School:**

1. Give the child a chance to help in class.

2. Learn and call every child by name.
  - a. Introduce visitors
  - b. Avoid labeling children according to behavioral characteristics or otherwise
3. Never ridicule or mock a child who fails in their task. Encourage the child to try again.
4. Listen with interest when the child tells you about his/her own matters.
  - a. They will all want to tell you special things at times. (Sometimes, all at once!)
  - b. Give the child your time not only in the classroom but outside as well.
5. Let the child feel that you trust them.
  - a. Trust builds self-esteem.
  - b. Trust builds responsibility. Sometimes, a disturbing child may behave well if given a responsible position in class.

### III. NEED OF SECURITY

The child needs to feel secure, confident, and comfortable to develop a healthy self-esteem. If this basic need is not met the child may grow feeling insecure and timid or become aggressive. Later, this kind of child may become an abuser of alcohol, drugs, or develop other bad or unhealthy habits.

#### How to meet this need in Sunday School:

1. Be kind. Be calm. Smile.
2. Show a child love and acceptance even at times when he/she misbehaves, acts out, or fails.
3. Explain to the child how to properly behave in Sunday School.
  - a. Explain the rules and the consequences for breaking those rules.
  - b. Introducing proper discipline and order will help create a safe atmosphere in the classroom.
4. Help the child feel that they are wanted and they belong to the group.
  - a. Introductions and a common welcome build up a feeling of fellowship.
  - b. Unity is built by group activities together such as picnics, celebrations, or outings.
5. Show your love to the child.
  - a. Embrace the child. Pat him/her on back, cheek, give hugs. Jesus Christ is our example.



**Mark 10:16**

*“And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.”*

6. Use familiar activities.
7. Guide conversations to God's constant, unchanging love.

#### **IV. NEED OF ACCEPTANCE**

Acceptance means that we respect the child as a person and love him/her for who they are. In this way, the child feels that God also accepts them. When a child feels that they are accepted, they respond by appreciating not only himself but others as well.

##### **How to meet this need in Sunday School:**

1. Love a child as the unique person he/she is.
2. Help a child experience the joy of success by giving him/her the kind of duties they are able to perform.
  - a. Be careful that every child in your class will succeed in some task.
  - b. Task examples: Reciting memory verses, singing well, cleaning the board, picking up after themselves, helping the teacher, etc.
3. Listen to a child when he/she speaks about their matters to you.
  - a. Give the child your time. That time might not be during class, but be prepared to listen.
  - b. God may need you to hear something important so you can better minister to the child and possibly his/her family.
4. Remember you are working with children and not adults. Do not expect children to behave like adults.
5. Respect a child by being polite to this precious individual. Through your example the child is learning to be respectful and polite to others.

#### **V. NEED OF LOVE**

The need to love and be loved are two basic needs of a human being. When a child feels loved, they reciprocate that love. Love is the key to the child's heart and a loving teacher makes the child realize God's love toward him/her.

##### **How to meet this need in Sunday School:**

1. Give your time to the child.
2. Open your home to them, allowing them to visit you.

3. Visit them, especially if they are sick.
4. Be interested in their matters and problems and listen to them.
5. Appreciate the child's small tokens of love; letters, gifts, flowers etc.
6. Tell them about our Heavenly Father and His proven love for us through Jesus Christ to all people, good and bad.
7. Avoid favoritism.
  - a. Love all your children equally.
  - b. Be careful not to have teacher's pets.

## VI. NEED OF PRAISE

Each child is worthy of praise in some way or another. Normally, the more you praise a child, the more the child wants to please you. Negative feedback causes the opposite reaction. By encouraging and praising a job well done, you can help a child develop and grow in the right direction.

### How to meet this need in Sunday School:

1. Praise a child for good deeds, no matter how small the feat was. Do not praise the child for characteristics such as goodness, kindness, humility, and obedience.
  - a. The child know that he/she is not always good, obedient etc, don't tell them otherwise.
  - b. Give them compliments that will be meaningful to them, particularly if the child struggled with the task.
  - c. Make comments on duties done well.
2. Commend the child for their effort, even if unsuccessful.
3. Your comments and praise will encourage the child to try again.
4. Praise a child when they have taken initiative in something.
5. Prizes can be given for specific tasks or specific participation.
  - a. Prizes don't need to be large or expensive.
  - b. Do not award prizes every time.
  - c. Be specific what the prize was awarded for.

## VII. NEED OF DISCIPLINE

Discipline is "training that produces moral or mental improvement" according to the American Heritage Dictionary. Children need definite limitations on their behavior. A

child who has no definite limits feels insecure as though no one cares. Setting borders and boundaries shows love and creates security.

**How to meet this need in Sunday School:**

1. Set clear and straightforward guidelines for behavior.
  - a. Make as few rules as possible.
  - b. Demand that the rules be followed.
2. Avoid public humiliation.
  - a. Humiliation as discipline only works for a short time and doesn't work in the long term.
3. Do not threaten.
4. Positive feedback helps a child more than negative feedback.
5. Be consistent.
6. Be realistic.

**VIII. NEED OF GOD**



***Ecc. 3:11***

*"He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end."*

Every person, even a child, longs for God. Sadly, as adults, we belittle the spiritual needs of a child. We do not bother to answer their questions and we will leave kids somewhere rather than bring them to church or prayer meetings. The Bible teaches that parents have the responsibility for their child's spiritual upbringing.



***Deut. 6:6-7***

*"These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."*

**How to meet this need in Sunday School:**

1. The Sunday School teacher must realize that he/she is uniting with the parents of the child in order to meet the spiritual need of the child. This makes the teacher responsible before God to teach according to His Word.
2. The Sunday School teacher should be an example.
3. The Word of God should be taught to children because only through it, can they come to know the Lord.