**Assistant Training**

**Goals for the Convention**

1. To empower each potential customer by offering enough information about Sonlight so the customer can decide if our curriculum is right for them.
2. To leave all event attendees with a positive impression of Sonlight, whether they choose our curriculum or not.
3. To obtain legible, complete cards for all potential customers (i.e. every family unit that walks by the booth).
4. To highlight Sonlight as a package or program – Sonlight’s strength is that everything is done for you.
5. To actively focus on new, potential customers.

\*\*\*Success in achieving these goals will mean opportunity for increased income for veteran assistants in the future!!!\*\*\*

**Obtaining Contact List – ACTION POINTS in RED**

1. Each event is paid based on commissions. It is imperative that we obtain contact information (name, address, email, etc.) on each potential customer. Have each customer fill out a card. Be sure to ask each attendee to sign up and then give them a catalog.
2. Be honest about why we need the information if they ask. Most customers are happy to oblige. Customers will receive a few, selected emails over the year.
3. Ask for contact information on veteran Sonlight users. Some customers say they “use” Sonlight, but they have never actually purchased FROM Sonlight! (They may have only purchased used.)
4. Keep track of those customers who show real interest, you spend time with them – i.e. ‘hot prospects’. Write their name on the notepad provided or put an x on the back of their postcard. Ask if they would like a personal consultation with Judy – indicate those who respond yes by circling their name (or circle the x on the back of the postcard).
5. More commissions mean increased pay for veteran assistants the next year!

**Sonlight as a Package –**

Sonlight is not a book dealer. Our goal is not to sell customers on individual books. Our goal is to sell the package. How we will accomplish this goal:

* Sonlight has created Newcomer packages to offer customers an easy way of ordering a complete program.
* The booth will feature at least one complete Newcomer package.
* We will exhibit one week of other core levels – the bible, history, read aloud, reader (and science) and the IG – to show how it all works together.
* Complete phonics programs along with a good selection of readers from each phonics level will be displayed.
* Our goal is not to suggest ways for customers to ‘do it cheaper’ (i.e. suggestions on how to use the library), but instead show them the benefits of buying the package:
	+ Reduce your risk – *Love to Learn* week guarantee
	+ eligibility for scholarships (after purchasing 4 core programs)
	+ save time – no longer spend hours searching for that used book
	+ save money – % off your entire order, discounts on IG’s purchased in a package
	+ avoid frustration – inability to find some books at the library or the book is checked out
	+ complete – you know you are covering ALL areas
	+ free gifts – pg 11 in the 2009 catalog
	+ Satisfaction – those who purchase complete packages are more satisfied!

**Specifics of Selling Sonlight**

1. At least one representative needs to be at the edge of the booth at all times to make eye contact with all who walk by the booth.
2. When someone walks by the booth, engage them! Smile and ask an opening question such as, **"Are you familiar with Sonlight", or "Would you like a catalog?"**  Try to engage EVERY person who walks by the booth.
3. Have everyone sign a card.
4. If you receive a positive response and the customer takes a catalog, give your "Sonlight in a nutshell". [Sonlight in a nutshell: a 30 second to 1 minute explanation of Sonlight. Develop your personal 'nutshell' - it will be easier to modify when needed! (Don't try to memorize mine!)]

Your 'nutshell' should include these key points:

* + literature based
	+ integrated history, read alouds, readers and LA
	+ Glimpse of IG - ease of use, all laid out for you, etc.
	+ Complete curricula provider – SL offers all subject areas: bible, history, math, science, etc. for Prek – high school

(This is a sample 'nutshell'.) "Sonlight is a literature based curriculum with an historical focus and a missionary emphasis. For example, in our Intro to American History Part 1 basic program,{at this point I pull out the catalog and show the sample IG page} when you are reading the *Landmark History of the American People* for history, you are also reading *Johnny Tremain* for a literature selection, and your child is reading *Meet George Washington.* The instructor's guides lay out everything for you and are very easy to use. Language Arts is integrated with the Core program, and we offer complete math and science choices as well." Take advantage of the samples laid out on our display tables.

1. At this point (or even before giving the ‘nutshell’), the person on the edge of the booth should refer the customer into the booth to speak with another representative. This allows you to continue handing out catalogs and gathering contact information on all who pass by the booth.
2. Ask open-ended questions to find out what they need.
3. Be sure to have the potential customer to sign a card (asks name, address, etc.) before giving out a catalog. If the customer doesn't want to fill out the card, explain why we ask for the information, that it enters them in a drawing for a free gift (if this event allows drawings), and then give out the catalog anyway.
4. Though we are not trying to convince everyone that Sonlight is right for them, we do believe Sonlight is a great program, or we wouldn’t be using it! Many do not understand a literature approach. Listen first to understand their objections, then overcome those objections with an emotional connection – you now love history and literature because…

**Foundations of Selling**

**Attitude is important**

* 85% of our success depends upon the actions of booth staff -- YOU ARE IMPORTANT!
* Develop a mindset to help people. Hebrews 3:13 says, "Encourage one another day after day".

**Educate yourself about Sonlight - a good exhibitor knows their product!**

* Education will give you needed self confidence!
* Read through the new catalog, cover to cover!
* Spend time on the forums, especially the choosing forum and LA forum. This will give you a taste of the types of questions you will get at the booth.
* Take advantage of other workers. If someone asks about a product you haven't used, if possible, refer them to someone who has used that item.
* Learn about the changes. I will provide as much information as I can, but reading the catalog and spending time on the forum is invaluable.

**Integrity**

* Our purpose is not to convince customers that Sonlight is right for them. Our goal is to offer enough information about the products so the customer can decide if Sonlight is the right choice – to empower the customer!
* Be enthusiastic, but don't over-promote. No curriculum will work for everyone.
* It is ok to be honest if you've made a choice to use another product, but remember to honor Sonlight in the process. When asked, I tell customers I use mostly Sonlight, but I evaluate each child each year and make the best choices for my family -- then share why you love Sonlight!

**Enthusiasm**

* It can be difficult to maintain enthusiasm over the weekend as you get tired. Let's encourage each other! It is fun to share something we love with others!
* Take advantage of your breaks. Sit down in the break area, and take time to eat. Concession stands are available.
* Dress for warm air, and then bring a sweater to ensure you are comfortable. Neat, clean and comfortable clothes and shoes are a must! Wearing a different pair of shoes each day usually is helpful.
* Bring water, chapstick, breath-mints--whatever you will need to be comfortable.
* Take the time to read the customer when they enter the booth! Be excited, but try not to scare the looker off with your enthusiasm! Do they just want a smile and a catalog, then to be left alone? Or do they want more information?

**Connections - the art of attentive listening is as important as fluently sharing information!**

* Listen first. Find out what they are really asking for!
* Ask pertinent, open-ended questions. (Are you homeschooling now? How many children do you have?)
* Select key points and share them clearly and slowly; don't overwhelm them with information.
* If someone is within 10 feet of you, acknowledge their presence! Pay attention to each person - let them know they are important! Acknowledge their presence (smile and SPEAK to them!) even if you can't help them right then. (Don't you hate to be ignored in a store?!) Be welcoming.
* Attendees pay for the opportunity to talk to you and see the product. We owe them our full attention. Try to keep personal conversations and cell phone calls to a minimum, but if it is necessary, move away from the booth, not just out into the aisle, to take care of the call/conversation. If you are in the booth, please be 'on the job'.
* Attendees don't like to interrupt you when you are sitting down or talking. Use facial expressions and body language to let them know they are welcome and important. (Stand up, smile, walk towards them, etc.)
* If you are speaking to 1 person and others are waiting, open up your stance to allow others to feel comfortable eavesdropping or even joining in the conversation.
* Paint a picture with words of the customer using the curriculum. "You'll read...” or "Your child will...”
* NEVER make a disparaging comment about another company.
* It's ok to say, "I don't know." If you need help, just ask! There will be questions I cannot answer!  **We can always take their name and number and have Sonlight call them.**

**Counseling a Customer on How to Modify Sonlight for more than one child**

1. Stress the flexibility of using literature with a broad grade range (vs. textbooks written for one grade).
2. Stress purchasing flexibility - buy as much or as little as you need.
3. Options in combining:
	1. Teach to your oldest (deleting or modifying for younger students)
	2. Teach to your youngest (supplementing for older students)
	3. Teach to the middle of 2 grades (delete or supplement as necessary)
	4. Choose complimentary levels for wide range (4+ years/grades) (yr 2 with 6 for example)
4. Present the options BEFORE you give your recommendation or personal experience. Remember, we are trying to empower the customer, not convince them our choice is the right way!
5. Instructor's guides are overfilled on purpose -- explain the Thanksgiving analogy. (Our IG's are like Thanksgiving dinner - many bowls on the table. You can eat all of one bowl, or a little of many bowls. No one can eat everything in every bowl!) They are designed for use with a broad range of grades!

**Other notes:**

* If you plan to do some shopping at this convention, please do not buy products that SL sells from a discounter. As a representative from the SL booth, this is not appropriate. If you really need to buy something from a competitor. please do not wear your SL apron, shirt or nametag.
* Some phrases that may help you--

 \* Instead of saying, You need to, or You should.....*We recommend...*

 \* Instead of saying, I don’t know... *That’s a great question, let me see if I*

 *can find an answer or let me take you name and number (email) and I will*

 *have someone get back to you.*

 \* If someone asks if we have convention specials....*Sonlight offers free*

 *shipping year round on orders of $150 or more, and always offers % off*

 *everything if you buy a Core.*