

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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December 31, 2012

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Theocratic Ministry School Reminders

Dear Brothers:

Perhaps you have now received your copies of the Theocratic Ministry School schedule for 2013 on www.jw.org or through the mail. We eagerly anticipate the fine spiritual food we will receive at these meetings. To help everyone to benefit, it would be good for all elders to read and apply the following carefully so that they can be “examples to the flock” as they handle their parts on the school during the year ahead.—1 Pet. 5:3.

1. **TIMING:** The school should keep to time. The 2013 school schedule makes some fine suggestions as to how this can be done.
 - a. *Highlights of the Bible reading:* The instructions clearly show that the speaker should only use four minutes for his comments. Six minutes should be allowed for comments from the audience. Elders should be exemplary in following this direction.
 - b. *Timing of student talks:* The schedule says that Talks No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 “should tactfully be stopped when the time is up.” It is observed that many school overseers do not do this. However, this is a clear direction in the schedule and it should be followed. If some other part goes overtime the school overseer should shorten his own comments and discuss this with the brother after the meeting.—*be* p. 282, par. 4.
 - c. *Comments of the school overseer:* After each talk the school overseer will not comment for more than 2 minutes. At times, his comments may be significantly less than this.
2. **COUNSEL:** The school overseer does not offer counsel from the platform. After Assignments No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 he will offer a few positive comments on an aspect of the presentation that was commendable. (These comments do not necessarily have to be based on the speech quality that the student was working on.) The schedule says he will “draw attention to specific reasons why it was effective and refer frequently to the *Ministry School* textbook.” Please note: This means that he will have the book with him on the platform and will refer to what the book says about the aspect of the speech quality he is commenting on. He will encourage all in the audience to open their books and to follow along as he draws their attention to those references. This will educate everyone in the congregation, and focuses attention, not on the school overseer’s thoughts, but on the *Ministry School* book, as it really is a textbook for the school. Any counsel on the assigned speech quality is given privately.—*be* p. 283-p. 284.

Regarding private counsel, the school overseer will want to follow closely the instruction in “Guidelines for School Overseers” on page 283, paragraph 5 to page 284, paragraph 5 in the *Ministry School* book. Please note that he should encourage the students to use the exercises in the book, as the book says: “After the student cares for his assignment, privately ask whether he did the exercise(s) shown at the end of the discussion of the counsel point. If so, a check mark should be put in the box on the form.” (*be* p. 283 par. 2) Some school overseers may have overlooked this point.

3. **SUPPORTING AUXILIARY SCHOOLS:** Attending an auxiliary class to make up the audience is entirely a matter of personal choice. Perhaps relatives of those giving talks or others may choose to join the auxiliary class. Some congregations arrange a schedule based on field service groups. However, there is no need to insist that publishers support the school if their group is scheduled to do so.

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Page 2.

4. **CONCLUDING THE SCHOOL:** It is not necessary for the school overseer to wait for the students from the auxiliary classes to come back into the hall before he concludes the school. When the school has ended he will immediately hand over to the brother who is introducing the Service Meeting. This brother will in turn, go straight ahead and introduce the song. Please do not delay the meeting by waiting for those attending other classes to come back into the main hall.
5. **ANNOUNCING NEXT WEEKS' STUDENTS:** As the program ends, it is not necessary for the school overseer to announce the names of those who have talks the following week. The brothers should receive their assignment slips at least three weeks in advance and they should be encouraged to develop the habit of checking the information board at all times.—*be* p. 284 par. 6.
6. **SISTER'S TALKS AND DEMONSTRATIONS:** The table and chairs for these parts should be located at the front of the platform so that the entire audience can see the participants clearly. The chairs should be set so that the participants are mainly facing the audience, not each other, but at an angle so that they are able to converse with each other in a natural way.—*km* 9/10 p. 2.
7. **REHEARSALS FOR STUDENT TALKS:** The *Ministry School* book on page 282, paragraph 3 encourages school overseers to take a genuine interest in the progress of the students. The book also mentions the need to “listen carefully to each talk.” Perhaps with this in mind, some have arranged for the school overseer to rehearse student talks in advance. This is not necessary. The school overseer will “listen carefully” when the student gives the talk at the Kingdom Hall. There may be rare occasions when a school overseer feels the need to work with a student before a presentation - but this would be an exception. There is nothing wrong if a student asks a publisher to help them prepare their talks but there is no arrangement for formal rehearsals of student talks.

Thank you for considering the above reminders. We pray that Jehovah's rich blessing will be upon you as you conduct the Theocratic School in your congregations. Let us be determined to always loyally follow written directions from the organization. At the same time we would want to be careful not to go “beyond the things that are written.” (1 Cor. 4:6) If we keep these things in mind, we will all benefit to the full from the wonderful worldwide teaching program that the “Grand Instructor” has prepared for us.—*Isa.* 54:13.

Please be assured of our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

c: Traveling Overseers