

## **Conducting an Inventory in a Non-Computerized Church Library**

Written by Sue Berthelot

### **Manual Inventory Supplies:**

- 3X5 slips of paper or index cards
- Pencils with good erasers
- Paperclips and rubber bands
- Copies of Repair Slips (See Page 47, *Church Library Ministry Information Service*)
- Boxes for books needing special care once inventory is complete

In a manual (non-computerized) library, where the cards are typed and filed in the card catalog, use the shelf list file to perform the inventory. Organize your library team in to teams of two people. Each team will take one drawer of shelf list cards and work from that drawer. From experience, avoid removing the cards from the drawers. If the drawer is accidentally dropped or turned over, all of the hours of filing will need to be repeated.

With needed supplies close at hand, one person on each team reads the title of the item, the call number and the accession number. The second person locates the item on the shelf. If an item is missing, carefully remove the shelf card from the file drawer and write in pencil "*missing*" and the date on the card. Return the card to the file drawer, but turn the card up on its end, in the file drawer, with the call number showing.

Do not forget to check promotion items, furnishings and other items that have been processed. They are an important part of your inventory.

### **Locating Missing Items**

Once the inventory is complete, the task of locating missing items begins. Consider the following possible places to find missing items:

- Is the item checked out?
- Is it in a display in or out of the library room?
- On Reserve?

If located, replace the shelf list card to the correct place in the file drawer.

For items not found, remove author, title and subject cards from the catalog drawer.

- Band these cards together by subject headings
- Mark the date of the inventory on a cover card for each group.
- Place cards in a small, labeled file box for "Lost Items"
- Keep cards for one year
- If item has not been found after a year, remove from your accession book by drawing a line through the information with a pencil or delete it from database.

### **Caring for Problems**

As each team proceeds with the inventory, an item that needs some sort of repair should be removed from the shelf. Insert a repair slip in the book or case indicating the problem. Place the item in a box with other items needing to be repaired. Possible repair needs include:

- New Spine Label
- Item Incorrectly Processed

### **Caution**

If you are using an accession book, make copies of each page and store in a fire safe location. If disaster strikes, you will have needed information for insurance purposes to help replace your collection. If you are automated, store a backup of your complete database in a fire safe location. You may want to keep one copy at home and another in a different safe location.

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Sue Berthelot is a LifeWay Church Library Ministry specialist and leader of the library team for Ascension Baptist Church in Gonzales, LA.