Conducting an Inventory in a Computerized Church Library
Written by Sue Berthelot

Automated Inventory Supplies Needed:
- Printout of Shelf List or Bar Code Reader
- Pencils
- Copies of Repair Slips (Page 47, *Church Library Ministry Information Service*)
- Boxes to handle books needing special care once inventory is complete

Automated Libraries Without Bar Code Readers
In an automated library, without a bar code reader, assign each team (two people) a section of the printed shelf list. For efficiency, each team needs to stay within a particular age group and like media rather than cross between areas of the library. Each team has one member working from the shelf list while the other team member works from the shelf. Process steps follow:
- The shelf team member calls out the title, call number, and accession number of a book.
- The list team member notes if the book is next on the shelf list.
- If correct, the list team member simply says, "*Yes*", and proceeds to next book.
- If the next book on list is missing from the shelf, the list team member notes "*Missing*" on the list beside the title of the missing book.
- For a missing book in a series, include the series title and volume number and note on the list.
- If a book is on the shelf but is not listed on the shelf list, place the book in a separate stack to go to the workroom for processing. This inventory process will continue until the assigned section is finished.
- If the team is unable to complete assigned area in one work session, note on the shelf list where the process stopped in order to avoid going over a completed area again.
- Check promotion displays, furnishings and objects that have been processed into collection. They are also an important part of your inventory.

Automated Libraries With Bar Code Readers
Libraries with bar codes and a portable reader will find the inventory process fast and efficient.
- Using portable Bar Code reader, tip each item out and scan.
- Begin with the printed materials on the shelves.
- Next, scan the audiovisual items.
- Next, check promotional items, furnishings and objects that have been processed as part of your collection. They are also an important part of your inventory.
- Next, check all displays for missing items that are part of your collection.
- Finally, verify items that are checked out.

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 missing items are not located, follow the procedures for your automation program and make the appropriate notes.
- Print the list of missing items and file it in your desk book.
- Do not delete the items for at least one year, because items may suddenly reappear in the library. If items are still in your data base, they will not need to be processed again.

If missing items are not located after one year, follow the procedures provided by your automation program.

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

Final Thought

Once the inventory is complete, make three back up copies of your database. Keep one in the library, one at home and one in a fire safe location. Be sure the collection is covered by insurance should there be a disaster.

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