

REACHING CHILDREN

By

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CHAPTER SEVEN

MEETINGS FOR CHILDREN

HAVE YOU been asking yourself the question, "How can I best win children for the Lord JESUS?"

If you have, you will be interested in the different avenues of approach that the Lord has been pleased to honor in this work for Him. They range from the most simple, with no organization at all, to a complex campaign with many factors taken into account.

PERSONAL WORK

First of all is the most simple, that of speaking to children wherever we come in contact with them: on the bus, out in the park, on our front lawn, or out in a vacant lot. In other words, it is personal work with boys and girls.

The Lord has blessed this method in a remarkable way when accompanied by consistent prayer.

One worker spent ten weeks on the streets of Chicago speaking to little groups of children on the streets, and over five thousand professed to receive CHRIST as Saviour.

The ordinary lay person cannot spend a full day speaking to children as he finds them, but he will meet with children occasionally, and he may ask GOD to enable him to speak with them about the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and seek to lead them to a knowledge of Him. [113]

Thus, the ordinary contacts of life are turned to eternal advantage.

A notable work along this line has been done with the children in Chicago for the past several years.

As soon as the weather is warm enough for children to be out, the city is honeycombed with a band of workers speaking to the children.

The city is divided into sections of several blocks each and portions of parks and beaches to

which volunteer workers are assigned. Each one goes to his section once a week for an hour or so with the wordless book, the Gospel walnut, or just the simple message of salvation.

No meetings are held; no songs are sung.

Quietly, effectively, children are made friends with, told the Gospel story, and invited to come to the Saviour.

Many and wonderful are the tales told by these workers.

One young woman reported that she stayed for two and one-half hours on one street corner telling the Gospel over and over again. She stepped from the street car, reached the curb, and there was a girl about ten years of age. She made friends with her and led her to the Saviour. This child, glowing with joy, said eagerly, "Don't go away, I want you to tell my pals about this."

She disappeared for a moment, and returned bringing three or four children her own age.

As soon as she saw that they were accepting the message, she disappeared again only to reappear with a new batch of recruits.

This went on and on until the worker had stayed much longer than she had planned, and still the child was bringing more. That day on one street corner many, many children entered into a new life with CHRIST. [114]

Another worker went to the colored section once each week. She met a little colored boy named George, who was intensely interested.

After he had accepted CHRIST, he asked question after question.

Mrs. Harvey (not her real name) sat down with him under a tree and showed him the answers to his questions in her Bible. She told us afterward, that she thought she told him all she knew. He was captivated by the wordless book and asked her where he could get one. Very generously she gave him hers.

The next week she came back to the same section and saw three children playing. After talking with them awhile she asked, "Have you ever seen a book without words?" This was the way she opened the conversation about the Lord.

What was her surprise to hear them say, "Yes, we have."

She knew that she was the only worker assigned to that section and she could not imagine how they had seen one.

"George showed one to us," they told her.

Mrs. Harvey, however, told the story again, thanking the Lord for giving her cultivated ground, but she was not prepared for what she found.

"Wouldn't you like to ask JESUS to come into your hearts so that He could make them nice and clean?" she asked.

"Oh, we already did that," they explained.

"When did you?"

"Why, when George showed us his wordless book he told us to ask JESUS to come into our hearts, and He would make us happy. And we did, and He did."

Little George had already become a soul winner.

Oh, that adult converts were as zealous.

Of course, personal work with children is not a bed of roses. There are many difficulties. [115]

Sometimes when leaders of strong church groups not holding to the truth have found that their children have had a new experience, they warn the other children in the vicinity, forbidding them to listen to a stranger. Many hardships have thus been encountered, but when backed by persistent, prevailing prayer, even these have been overcome. However, this is a difficulty that does not arise until this type of work has been done over a period of years in a single city. If you are just starting this work, you will not have this to fight.

There will be one thing which will greatly hinder those who have the desire to do this type of work.

That is the failure to begin.

The prospective worker knows not what is ahead of him and often Satan prevents him from ever beginning by filling his heart with fear, or by bringing one thing or another to his attention which should be done instead of contacting the children. Because of this, the best way for beginners is to set a definite time when two will go together.

If one person has done the work before, he can take a new one with him; otherwise they may both begin together.

The disadvantage of this plan of winning the children is that Satan seeks to prevent the worker from doing it at all, and the advantage is that it is one of the most fruitful ministries to children.

We have observed that sometimes teachers, who are able to lead large groups of children, organize Daily Vacation Bible Schools, and conduct successful meetings for boys and girls, are very often afraid to get started in this work.

They confess that they do not know what to say.

On the other hand, some of the very best workers in this field have been exceedingly timid folk, those who never speak out in meetings, and are so quiet that no one even knows they are around.
[116]

Do not despair if you are timid. Perhaps this is the ministry GOD has for you.

In England a work very similar to this has been done for many years by the Children's Special Service Mission.

Recently a missionary from China told us that the majority of the missionaries in her mission were saved on the streets of England under this plan.

She had visited in many of their homes and said that their parents were of the extremely worldly type. They themselves were saved while children because they were contacted on the street by an interested Christian, and when they grew up their lives were spent for GOD on the foreign field.

Truly a marvelous testimony of how GOD keeps His children.

For more information about this field of service see the book, "*Open Air Child Evangelism*," by J. Irvin Overholtzer, Child Evangelism Fellowship.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Eternity alone will reveal what has been accomplished for GOD in the Sunday school.

It was as a result of the Sunday school and a consecrated teacher doing GOD's task that D. L. Moody was brought to CHRIST.

If this were the only result we would not be able even then to estimate the worth of the Sunday school to the kingdom of GOD. The Sunday school has contacted those who would not otherwise have been reached by the church, and the church has profited by their presence and help later on. Many children of unsaved parents are contacted in this way, and through them the parents are reached. [117]

In this modern world of growth and development communities have been known to spring up almost overnight. A new subdivision is opened, a housing project is built, a group of homes grow up around a new industry, the opening of a new defense plant brings people to a new locality.

Soon grocery stores, drug stores, filling stations, and other commercial establishments are available to the newcomers.

They also need a testimony to the saving grace of the Lord JESUS, but all too often it is several years before this is effected.

Do you live in or near one of these places?

Perhaps the Lord would have you organize a Sunday school.

Even if you have never done it before, GOD will honor your efforts if they are backed with much prayer. If there are other Christians willing to help, they might gather together for prayer several

times before plans are discussed. **"Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it."**

Because a Sunday school is more or less of a community project there will be many in favor of it who do not know the Word of GOD, or perhaps are not saved. It is of utmost importance that they are not placed in a position of authority, and for this reason a groundwork of prevailing prayer needs to be laid before anything else is done.

Next, a place of meeting may be selected.

It may be an empty store building, a home with large rooms, or perhaps the school. This, too, should be a matter of prayer.

Then a few teachers should be selected. It is better to have one good teacher than many poor ones. Never let a person teach who is not saved. The blind cannot lead the blind. If possible, it is best to have the children separated from the adults. However, it may be at first that most of the Sunday school will be children, and they may be divided accordingly. [118]

The time of meeting may be Sunday morning, or in many cases, Sunday afternoon. Take into consideration the habits of the community, and try to set a time when the most people can come.

After the time and place have been set, call on the different homes in the community with a cordial invitation to attend the first meeting. A special attraction will aid in getting more to come out, but nothing takes the place of personal interest. After the call, send a card urging the attendance of the family. A poster or two in the stores will help, as will a news item in the newspaper that serves the community.

But if there are no facilities such as these available, do not despair.

On the lawn of one housing project in Chicago a Sunday school was carried on all summer with an average attendance of from eighty-five to one hundred.

One thing to watch in starting a community Sunday school is that all officers, teachers, and those who have to do with the work are saved, and that they are true to the Word of GOD.

A person, no matter how well educated and well qualified in other respects, has no place in a position of authority in an organization whose purpose is to lead men to a Saviour he does not know.

Pray earnestly that the Sunday school may be kept for GOD, and may not degenerate into a community social affair.

The program for the new Sunday school need not be complex, in fact, it is better to start out simply, being sure to keep it Christ-centered and true to the Bible.

The meeting may well start with group singing. You will be fortunate if you are able to secure a piano, but do not use a pianist unless he is able to play the correct notes and keep the proper

rhythm. [119]

Nothing is more embarrassing than to try to lead a group in singing while the pianist stumbles along hunting for the next note. The best thing to do in such a case is to sing without accompaniment.

You may be able to borrow enough hymn books from some interested church, but in case you are not, the words may be printed on a blackboard, or if even that is not available, they may be put on blank newspaper with heavy black crayon, show card color, or India ink. Save all copies for future use.

Someone who is handy with tools might make an easel where they could be kept and displayed.

The program may be outlined as follows:

20 minutes Gospel singing
10 minutes Special feature
5 minutes Scripture reading and prayer
40 minutes Classes with study of the Scripture lesson
1 hour, 15 minutes - Total Time

This is only a suggestion, and of course, may be altered to suit the individual case.

The special feature adds much interest to the Sunday school. It may consist of an object lesson, a flannel graph talk, a special musical number, or a blackboard talk.

Here then, is thrown out briefly an idea which, if developed, will bring true blessing and salvation to many who otherwise might not hear. Is GOD speaking to you about your community? Ask Him what He would have you do about those who live near you. [120]

THE CHILD EVANGELISM CLASS OR BIBLE CLUB

During the past several years a new method for winning children to CHRIST has sprung up - The Bible Club.

Boys and girls are gathered into homes right after school one day a week for an hour in which they sing Gospel songs, learn memory verses, listen to a Bible story which contains the Gospel, and receive an invitation to accept CHRIST as Saviour.

Advantages

Catholic children forbidden to enter a Protestant church, Jewish children, boys and girls with atheistic parents, and those whose parents simply neglect their spiritual instruction, meet in a neighborhood home with children who do go to Sunday school but receive very little biblical instruction, and others who attend good sound Sunday schools.

What an opportunity!

Some of these children could never be brought into a church to hear the Gospel, but a woman in their own neighborhood, across whose lawn they have run many times, invites them into her home, and they meet there around GOD's precious Word.

They meet with children on the same social level.

If the neighborhood is a poor one and the home is very simple, the children do not mind that is the type of home they have, too.

On the other hand, if the home is pretentious, the children are comfortable, for they live in the same district and come from similar homes. [121]

Many children are not in Sunday school today because indifferent parents will not make the effort to arise early enough on Sunday to get them ready.

Many of these parents are not actually antagonistic to spiritual things, but just neglect them.

Their children can be reached through the Bible Club, as it requires no effort on the parents' part for the child to attend a club right after school. He does not have to change his clothes, he does not have to bring an offering, and furthermore, he is out from under foot for another hour.

Since the home does not carry a distinct denominational mark, many children come who could not go to a church carrying a "Baptist," "Methodist," or "Presbyterian" name.

These are a few of the advantages of the Bible Club.

Asks H. G. Wells, "Is there, after forty, any alternative to bridge?" And he answers thus: "At present there is no useful role for most of these women in their forties and fifties. Their old jobs, if they had jobs before marriage, do not want them back." *"Life Begins at Forty"* by Walter B. Pitkin.

No useful role, when boys and girls are without CHRIST on their very doorsteps?

No useful role, when hungry-hearted children are longing for the Bread of life, and there is none to give unto them?

Their old jobs may not want these women back, but GOD wants them. He wants to use them as laborers in His harvest. Are you over forty and feel unwanted? Listen to His call: "**It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish**" (Matthew 18:14).

Are there lost little ones near you?

Then He would have you go to them and tell them of His love, and gather them into His fold. CHRIST has a work for you to do. Women over forty have played a very definite part in the Bible Club movement that is sweeping the country. [122]

They have become hostesses, teachers, have organized the work in new sections, and have even become State Directors.

Yes, the Bible Club has another advantage; it offers to women over forty a new life of service.

One church found, after experimenting with starting new Sunday schools in outlying communities, that they could reach more children by having week-day Home Bible Clubs instead.

The classes were started, held several weeks, calls made on the parents, and finally an invitation extended for the family to attend the main Sunday school.

After the parents were acquainted with the teacher and realized that their children were benefiting from the classes, denominational barriers that might have interfered were broken down, and permission was granted for the children to attend.

The Sunday school which used this plan would receive eight, ten, twelve, and even twenty new members on a single Sunday.

As the Sunday school is a feeder for the church, so the Child Evangelism Class is a feeder for the Sunday school.

Through the efforts of one unassuming Christian woman on the north side of Chicago, forty children were added to the Sunday school.

Another woman during the three years in which she had a Bible Club, brought sixty-five children into the Sunday school.

A missionary to Guatemala, where the Bible Clubs have been started, stated that their mission reached more children through Bible Clubs in homes than they did in the Sunday school. [123]

Some women have neglected to invite the children in their Bible Club to Sunday school and church. This is very definitely a mistake. The saved child needs to be affiliated with the church. It is one more tie which links him to GOD.

He has enough pulls in the other direction to need every tie possible to bind him closer to the Lord.

One teacher asks at the opening of each Bible Club period how many children attended Sunday school that week, and those attending receive a bright gold star. If the teacher's or hostess' Sunday school is too far distant from the child's home, she could give his name to a teacher in a nearby Sunday school, and encourage her to contact the child for that Sunday school.

One hostess invited the children who lived in the next apartment to her Child Evangelism Class. The children were saved, and then she invited them to Sunday school. Each Sunday her family was accompanied by the two neighborhood youngsters, as they went on the street car to Sunday school. One day their mother passed her in the hall. "Mrs. Brown, my husband and I don't go to

Sunday school anywhere. Next Sunday you go with us in our car to Sunday school, and all the children can ride too."

Thus two adults were brought under the sound of the testimony.

Time and Place

As has already been stated, classes generally meet in homes one day a week right after school.

However, this is not a hard and fast rule.

Some mothers have found it more convenient to hold the class on Saturday mornings, while in other localities Sunday afternoons seemed the best time.

In some sections there are no homes available, and the clubs meet in a cooperating church or mission.

The plan is elastic enough to allow it to be adapted to the community. [124]

Materials

Only the simplest materials are necessary to conduct a Bible Club.

A place with chairs and a piano is an ideal set up.

One class which had more children than chairs was helped when the hostess borrowed several table boards and made benches by placing the boards between chairs: True, there was scarcely enough room for the teacher to stand in the room when all the children had assembled, but what did it matter when little souls were saved each week?

Another hostess substituted orange crates for chairs, while in another home the children used the floor.

One father with kindly thoughts for the children built little benches which were used for this purpose. The basement was all fitted out just for the Bible Club. A flannelgraph board was built on the wall, pictures were hung, an old piano was secured, and the children had a room for their own.

Some women have the children meet in their bright kitchens where tracks may be easily mopped.

Another woman stands at the front door with a broom, and brushes off the children who have been romping in the snow. Covers are put over the upholstered furniture before the children arrive, and are taken off after they leave.

And as to the piano, that is not really necessary.

In fact, the majority of classes in some sections do not have one. Most of these classes sing acapello, but others are led by a child who plays a musical instrument. He may be informed

beforehand what songs are to be sung and thus can practice. Do not use a child, however, unless he can play the correct notes and keep the right rhythm, as he will hinder rather than help.

Some have a piano but no pianist. [125]

Others have earnestly desired a piano for their class and have taken the matter to the Lord in prayer. Over and over again He has answered this prayer to glorify His name. Many people no longer want their upright pianos and will give them away if they are moved. If you feel you must have a piano pray earnestly about the matter and GOD will surely hear.

One class has met for four years and has never had a piano or any musical instrument. The class averages from twenty-five to forty. Thus, you see it is not an absolute necessity.

Besides these things, the teacher will need lesson helps for teaching.

Ordinary lessons are not used, but special stories have been prepared in which the Gospel is given each time.

This is the most important required material.

A class should not be started until this material is secured, as just the telling of a Bible story, or the teaching of what the teacher knows about the Bible will not generally result in the salvation of souls, and that is the purpose of the class. Do not fail to secure this material.

A song or chorus book may be obtained any good publishing house selling sound Christian literature.

Inexpensive awards may be used to build up the class or to aid in memory work, but are not an absolute necessity.

A flannel graph board which has a blackboard finish is a great help in the work, but should not be considered essential. Flannelgraph material was discussed in a previous chapter. [126]

How to Conduct a Bible Club Prayer

Every Bible Club should be started in prayer.

So many factors enter in, and Satan hates this work to such an extent that every part of it must be fortified in prayer.

It is important that the right hostess and teacher are mated; therefore this should be made a matter of prayer. Difficulties can arise from placing the wrong people together, either one of whom would work perfectly well with someone else.

Pray too that the right children will come to the Club, those whose hearts are prepared for the message of salvation.

One little skeptic might throw cold water over the interest of a whole group, especially at the

first.

As the first meeting of the Club more or less sets the stage for future meetings, it is of utmost importance that this meeting go off well.

Pray about the discipline: that the children will behave, and that they will be interested to such an extent that no behavior problems will arise.

Let us remember, too, that GOD answers the requests that we make, so let us include all the requests.

The ladies interested in one class prayed about the things mentioned above, and GOD answered those prayers in a wonderful manner. But after the class a friend asked, "Were any children saved at that meeting?" The answer was "No." Then the ladies suddenly realized that they had not asked GOD to save souls at that meeting, although that was the whole reason they had begun the Child Evangelism Class. [127]

They quickly brought that request to Him, and the next time could report several boys and girls brought to the Saviour.

Nothing is too small to bring to Him.

If some particular phase of the meeting will be hard for you, pray earnestly about it, and ask your friends to do the same. Then give Him the glory when He brings the victory. The wonderful thing about having a Bible Club is seeing so very many answers to prayer.

Prayer is the foundation, not only of the beginning of the Bible Club, but also remains the basis for it as long as it continues.

Preparation

Next, the day and time should be chosen.

If the Boy or Girl Scouts meet on Wednesday, or baseball practice is on Wednesday, it would be the part of wisdom not to choose that day. If you are able, find out about the school activities and choose a day when the most children can attend. Also be careful not to choose a holiday to start your class, as the children's schedule is upset and they will not remember to come.

The time should be set right after school, so that the children will not have time to return home. Otherwise they may find something else to engage their interest. Also, it might be well to say that a home near the school is a very wise choice, since it is available to the greatest number of children.

Now, the children must be invited to the Club.

If you know the children in the neighborhood, contact them personally. You may also call on their mothers, explaining that this is an interdenominational effort, that the doctrines of any particular church are not taught, but that the children are told stories from the Bible and that an

effort is made from these stories to have an effect on their conduct. [128]

However, the way most classes secure their first group of children is to have some one pass out colored invitations (which contain the place and time of meeting) at the school as the children leave.

There are different ways to pass out these invitations and they bring as many different results.

One person may resemble a telephone pole as far as coldness, aloofness, and interest in the children is concerned. Others let their love for the children be felt. They are warm and friendly, seeing each child as an individual.

It isn't difficult to see which one has the most at her Bible Club.

Some states prohibit the passing out of literature on the school grounds. Therefore station yourself on the sidewalk in front of the school or even across the street.

If the home where the class is to be held is north of the school, pick the north corner to pass out the invitations.

One teacher wondered why no one responded to all the invitations she passed out, and finally discovered that she had chosen the wrong corner. All the children who passed that way lived in the opposite direction, and the Club was too far for them.

Then do not think that because you pass out fourteen invitations, fourteen little darlings will show up. You will need many times that number of invitations to get fourteen children. Invitation blanks may be secured from the Child Evangelism Fellowship. Do not leave the filling out of the blanks until the last minute, because it really takes longer than one would expect. Some like to design their own and have them printed as blotters.

In my opinion, it is better to pass out invitations at least two different times, as this will fix the matter in the child's mind. [129]

One of these should be as the children go home for lunch on the day your class is to start. The boys and girls may then ask permission of their parents, and yet do not have such a long time in which to forget about the Club.

The more you work with children, the more you will find out what short memories they have. Do not give them a chance to forget.

It often helps, at least for the first few times, for the teacher or some one interested in the class to be on a certain corner across from the school to walk with the children. When they see her they are reminded that it is Bible Club day, and they will come.

Besides preparing to have the children there, the teacher will need to have her program prepared.

She must know what she is going to do each minute of the time that the children are there in order to use the time to the best advantage, and in order that the children do not become unruly.

Given below is a sample of what might be done the first time the Bible Club meets.

Welcome the children
Teach the chorus "The B-I-B-L-E"
Teach John 3:16
Tell the story of the wordless book
Give the invitation for the children to come to CHRIST
Close with a brief prayer

Later on the Bible Club hour should be divided as follows:

15 minutes Gospel singing
15 minutes Memory work
20 minutes Bible story
10 minutes Invitation and closing prayer

If you do not already know the chorus, of course you should learn it and learn it well. [130]

If you have a blackboard, print the words in large letters before the class meets. Paint a piece of plywood two by three feet with blackboard paint bought at a paint or hardware store. However, if you do not wish to do this, a shirt cardboard with a black crayon will do just as well. This can be saved and used later to review the song, or when new children come.

Slips of colored construction paper may be prepared with the memory verse for the following week written or typed on them. If they are colored the children are not so apt to lose them.

Then the teacher must prepare the story.

It is well to start each class with the wordless book if the children are not familiar with it, as this illustrates the Gospel so well.

The teacher should look up verses on Heaven, sin, the Cross, salvation, until they become a very part of her.

No matter what the story is, she should first study the Bible. She should meditate upon the verses.

If she wishes to use an illustration, she should get all the details clearly in her mind.

As she does the dishes or walks to the store, she should see if she can recall the story in its proper sequence, until she can do so without difficulty.

She may tell the story to her son or to a niece for practice, or tell it aloud by herself for the first few times.

She may also plan just how she will phrase the words of the invitation.

Later these things will come naturally, but the first time this practice is very helpful.

As part of her preparation, the teacher should arrive early at the place where she is to teach, so that she can help arrange the chairs for the children and decide where she will stand.

In a home, there may be several places where she may stand, and she should decide beforehand which would be best, rather than waiting, and then causing the children to move. [131]

If there are two or three adults, the duties may be divided.

One person may take the names and addresses at a table by the door as the children come in. This is the ideal way, as the getting of this information is anything but interesting and makes the class time dull to the children, besides creating unnecessary discipline problems.

Later, the children can say their memory verses at the door as well as being checked for attendance there.

If there is no adult available for this, an older girl who can be trusted may be trained to do it.

If you have some one interested in the Bible Club work but who declares that she cannot do anything to help, ask her to take the attendance and hear the memory verses, and she will soon learn by observation how the class is conducted, and later may be willing to teach a class. Many good teachers have been trained into the work in this way.

After she has been helping for a while ask her if she would like to bring an object lesson or conduct a drill for the children.

The person who takes the attendance should not be the one who leads the singing, as it is often necessary to start before all the children have arrived, and she cannot be doing two things at once.

If you have enough help, let one person play the piano while another leads the singing.

Many Bible Clubs have only one adult - she takes attendance, plays the piano, leads the singing, hears the memory work, and tells the story.

It is possible, but it is much easier if she can secure a helper or two.

The teacher should decide upon and arrange for each one of these tasks beforehand, in order that the class will move smoothly. [132]

Presentation

It is now time for the children to come.

Everything insofar as is possible is ready. Time has been spent in prayer, the hostess and teacher are leaning hard on the Lord for strength.

As the children arrive, make them feel at home. Remember this is a new experience for them, too.

You want it to be pleasant so that they will return. If you are cordially interested in them they will sense it, and will like to come to the Child Evangelism Class. You will probably be surprised to learn how little love some children get at home. Welcome the children not only with words, but also with your attitude.

In teaching the chorus, let the pianist play it as the children assemble, and they will become familiar with the melody before they have learned the words.

- A few words about the song, making it interesting and explaining the meaning, will make the children want to learn it.
- Sing it for them a couple of times even if you do not have a remarkable voice. They won't mind, and you will soon learn not to.
- Then let them hum it while you sing it again. Have them try it slowly as you point to the words.

If there are enough children, have the girls sing it, then the boys, then have them stand and sing it. Vary the conditions under which they sing the song, and have them do it several times, and they will enjoy learning it.

The same idea can also be used in teaching the memory verse.

The blackboard method is good to use the first time.

See the chapter on memory work.

As for the story, it should be made as interesting as possible. The best way to do this is to be interested yourself. Do not read the story. Do not keep a quarterly or book in your hand. [133]

If you must have help, write your outline on a small slip of paper and put it in your Bible, but only refer to it in an emergency.

There is no easier way to kill interest in the Bible Club than to read the story. Never do that. It is almost the unpardonable sin.

Let each person speak in the words he might have used.

Use direct quotations rather than indirect. It is more powerful.

One child always looked over a library book to see if it had lots of quotation marks before selecting it. The story with the most quotation marks is more interesting to them. Stick close to the facts given in Scripture. Too much imagination is not good.

Unless you have had experience in story telling, it is better to tell a short story first and hold the attention, than to drag it out and lose it. Later on increase the length of the story.

As you near the end of the story proceed naturally into the invitation.

Give the children a fair opportunity to accept the Lord as their Saviour, but do not beg them, or look disapprovingly upon them if they do not wish to receive CHRIST.

After the first meeting it is better to deal with the children right in the presence of the others, as a large percentage of the group generally will respond unless it is a group which has already been evangelized.

Dismiss the children with a few cordial words, telling them that you will be looking for them the next week at the same time.

If all these instructions have been followed as unto the Lord and in His strength, we are sure that you will have cause to praise Him after your first class is over.

Your soul will be refreshed, and His joy will be bubbling over in your heart.

Why wait any longer to start YOUR class? [134]

Questions and Answers

Question: What shall I do when my class becomes too large? If I speak so that the little ones understand, the older ones become bored.

Answer: Have the singing and memory work with the whole group taking part, but separate the group for the story, putting the little ones in the dining room or bedroom with another teacher. The class may even be divided into three groups, according to ages. One moderately sized home had a class of sixty-five which met in the combined dining and living room. When story time came the little ones went into the kitchen, the older ones in the bedroom, and the middle sized group stayed in the living room. The memory work might also be taken care of in these smaller groups.

If the teacher preferred, the group might be separated by having the girls meet on one day and the boys on another. In this way the same teacher could teach all the children, which would be an advantage in case of shortage of teachers.

Question: Should I serve refreshments?

Answer: Generally the answer is "No." It is not necessary. The children will come without it if properly trained. They will enjoy awards for memory work even more. There is an abiding value if awards which contain the Scripture are chosen. Refreshments take valuable time from the Bible Club proper, which is much more important. The children may soil their clothes, and thus the ill-will of some mothers will be secured. [135]

It is far better to omit the refreshments altogether, and have a real party for the children once or twice a year with games and refreshments. However, in starting Bible Clubs in some localities, the children are already spoiled and expect refreshments. Do not make the mistake of thinking that this situation occurs in well-to-do neighborhoods. It rather occurs in poor ones where

everywhere the children go they are given something. Try to retrain them to come to Bible Club without the refreshments, but if it is impossible, do not omit them if it means having no children. Ask the Lord for His will in cases of this kind.

Question: Not one child came to my Child Evangelism Class when the day for it fell on a holiday from school, and after that the attendance was much smaller. What should I do in the future?

Answer: Your experience is quite common. When Bible Club day is a holiday, the children's schedule is upset. They always have come straight from school, and since they are not at school, they forget. Then too, the family plans outings which occupy the children. If you do desire to have a regular meeting, cards should be sent to the children to be received the day before, as this will help remind any who might otherwise forget. Calling on the mothers the week before a holiday will be helpful.

Instead of holding the class, you may dismiss it for any holidays when the children are not in school. Have that understood between you and the children. You will find, however, that sometimes the attendance will be lower afterward. The habit of coming has been broken. [136]

The best thing to do is to choose the week when the holiday occurs for a party. During Christmas vacation when the children are apt to forget the Club meeting have a party for them. Make it a gala occasion, and talk about it much in advance. You will find it a help in getting new members for the Club, as well as keeping old members interested. Of course, you will devote a few minutes of the time to a Gospel story or in some way show it is a Bible Club party.

It is well to take a calendar and see what holidays fall on Thursday, if that is the day your club meets. If you inherit George Washington's birthday, you have a fine chance for a party. Thus you will not be shocked sometime when no children show up, and you discover belatedly that they were not in school. One hostess found that the party she gave during spring vacation was the beginning of real growth and interest in her class, while others who had just regular class meetings said that it marked the time when their class went downward in attendance.

Question: How can I gain the co-operation of the mothers, so that they will remind the children to come to Bible Club, and also help them with their memory work?

Answer: A friendly call from the teacher or hostess is often helpful. Besides enlisting the mother's help, the teacher gains an insight into the problems of the child and can help him in a more effective manner. Some mothers feel that the Club is set up in opposition to them and to their beliefs, and are quite antagonistic. To overcome this, one hostess wrote on each invitation before handing to the child, "Mothers always welcome." Other teachers have had special days when they invited the mothers to see just what the regular Bible Club was like. [137]

If you choose this method, be sure to pray much about that meeting as Satan seems particularly opposed to it. Mothers have had their eyes opened at these meetings and have been saved afterwards. One teacher was suddenly stricken with the flu on the day before the class when the mothers were to come, but the Lord marvelously undertook, and her sister was told not to report for work that day, and was able to make the meeting a success.

Question: Is a program with the children participating ever advisable?

Answer: Most certainly, if it is well prepared, and is typical of what the children have been doing in Bible Club. Children may give object lessons that they have had in class, presenting them in their own words; memory work may be recited; a sword drill may be conducted; songs be included; testimonies given; and even a story on the flannelgraph used. The main message may be brought briefly by an adult. One class may do this, inviting their parents and friends, or several classes may combine. If the latter is chosen, one person should direct the program, and plan what each class should do in order that the program has unity but no repetition. Great care must be exercised not to have it too long or to have it drag. Make it clear that all cannot take part. Have the children pray for the results of the program and you will find that they are very interested. Opportunity may be given at such a meeting for the friends of the work to help in a financial way. In some cases this might not be advisable. A yearly program will cause a great deal of interest and help the cause of the Child Evangelism classes immensely, if it is conducted in the proper manner. [138]

Question: Is it possible to train children to give an object lesson or flannelgraph talk in their own words, or must: I write it out for them and have them memorize it?

Answer: Do not permit them to memorize it, but see that they are so familiar with it that they can speak easily in their own words. To do this, several steps should be followed.

1. Select the story, object lesson, or flannelgraph story far in advance.
2. Tell it in the regular course of events, not mentioning that it is for a program.
3. Decide in your own mind several children who might do it well, but do not tell them lest they become hurt if they are not chosen.
4. At a subsequent meeting ask one of the possibilities to review the story using objects or flannelgraph just as you did.
5. Give other children the same opportunity, and select the child who does it most acceptably (unless there is another reason why one child should give it).
6. Ask selected child to prepare it more thoroughly for the next class meeting.
7. Invite some other group or an adult to the class and let the child know in advance that he is to give the story for them.
8. Last of all, tell the child he is to give it on a program, and give him one or two more opportunities for practice, with special help, if needed. [139]

Why should we proceed this way? Because if a child is informed that he is to tell a story before an adult audience he immediately gets stage fright, and cannot think of words even in practice. When he has already given the story many times, he is more confident, and it is easier for him to think of another audience. Then too, this makes it easier for the teacher to select the proper child without having to hurt someone's feelings.

If more than one child is to be used, the practice may be the same.

One child may put the pictures on the flannel graph board, another may tell the story. Five and six-year-old children have been taught in this way to give object lessons in loud, clear voices in their own words, which was much more effective than a short memorized speech.

One little girl, in telling the black page of the wordless book said, "Everybody has done wrong;

all the mamas and the papas and the sisters and the brothers and the aunties and the uncles, and the grandmas and the grandpas, the babies too." It was her own idea, and was much more effective than if she had stumbled through a memorized speech. We have found that the audience is tremendously interested when the children give a program in their own words. They are amazed to find what can be done with children.

TENT MEETINGS

Every summer brings with it a crop of tents which spring up like mushrooms all over the country. And every evening sees groups of adults gathered in these tents while the morning shows to all an empty tent with children nearby who need the Gospel. There is no child who is not to some extent fascinated by a tent, be it a pup tent or circus tent. Why not fill the tent in the mornings with these eager boys and girls? Make it pay double dividends. And very often the harvest reaped in the morning will exceed that gathered in the evening. [140]

For twenty years several Swedish churches on the south side of Chicago banded together for tent meetings, and for twenty years nothing was done for the children. Then the twenty-first year, evangelistic meetings were held in the mornings for the children, and nearly a hundred came to know CHRIST as Saviour. Mr. E. G. Winstedt, chairman of the tent committee, said, "I consider these meetings of the children to be our greatest missionary effort in all these twenty-one years of tent meetings."

Tent meetings for children may be carried on much as a Child Evangelism Class or Bible Club, with the difference of meeting daily. To follow this plan only a pianist, secretary, song leader, and storyteller are needed. Even these may be reduced by one person doing double duty. The children may be held for an hour to an hour and a quarter. A great deal may be accomplished in such a meeting, but there is little opportunity for memory work, for extensive personal work, or for personal contact between teacher and child.

Children's tent meetings may also be conducted similar to Daily Vacation Bible Schools by keeping the children two hours and omitting the handwork, which is impractical in a tent.

Sample Program

9:30-10:00 Games for those who come early
10:00-10:05 March into tent. Flag salutes
10:05-10:45 Music period, object lesson, announcements
10:45 - 11:20 Classes for memory work
11:20-12:00 Closing session with message, story, and invitation. [141]

The variety of such a program enables the children to give their attention for a longer period of time.

This more than doubles the effect of the meetings. By devoting class periods to memory work, some inexperienced teachers may be used who would not be capable of leading children to CHRIST. Since the children receive the Gospel and the invitation in the main meetings this is not absolutely necessary in the classes. Of course, the more experienced and the more

evangelistically inclined your teachers, the better it is. However, it is possible to conduct a tent meeting without a complete staff of experienced teachers.

The teachers should meet several times beforehand to have outlined to them the purpose, plan, and program of the meetings. This is absolutely necessary if the times with the children are to proceed smoothly. Every detail should be considered and decided upon in advance. Too much planning in the spirit of dependence upon the Lord is not possible.

Expenses may be kept to a minimum. Some awards will be needed for perfect attendance, memory work, or other contests, but may be kept very simple.

A final program on a Friday night, with an offering from the adults, added to the children's daily offerings, should meet the expenses.

There is an endless amount of work in conducting tent meetings for children, but souls may be saved and boys and girls established in the Word of GOD with the help of the Lord. [142]

BIBLE CAMPS

The appeal of the out-of-doors life in camp has in the last few years been used as another method of reaching boys and girls with the Gospel. Glowing reports as to its effectiveness in changing lives for CHRIST have come from those who have had children at camp.

In order to start a camp for children, a site should be selected: one that is pretty, on a lake or river for swimming, high enough in case of rain, having pure drinking water, and yet not too far from transportation. Some rent camp sites for ten days or two weeks with all the equipment available, while others prefer to build their own camp. Tents or cabins housing from eight to twelve children and one leader are best. A camp site is very important. Be sure before you select it that you are getting the features you desire.

The personnel of the staff should consist of a Camp Director, cook and kitchen crew (some older children may be permitted to earn their way as helpers at so many hours per day), life guard, with a leader for each eight or twelve children. The leaders should be able to serve double duty as handicraft teacher, Bible study teacher, pianist, or song leader. Each leader should be responsible for his set of children, checking their clothing when they arrive and leave, seeing that they obey the rules of the camp, and seeking to be used in the life of the child.

The program should be planned well in advance with nothing left to the last minute, for a well, planned program does much to put over a camp.

A group of boys and girls let loose outside is not a camp; it is a dreadful mistake.

Many different programs might be planned, but the following is given just as a sample and thought stimulator. [143]

Sample Program

6:30	Reveille
7:00	Breakfast
7:30	Devotions by groups around breakfast table
8:00	Clean up
8:30	Inspection, with banner for group with neatest tent or cabin
9:00-11:30	Morning sing, classes, message
11:30	Mail and free time
12:00	Dinner
1:00-2:00	Rest (should be enforced)
2:00-4:00	Recreation (Planned games, hikes, baseball, tennis, swimming, nature study)
4:00-5:00	Handicraft
5:00-6:00	Free time
6:00	Supper
6:30	Canteen (Candy and pop store open)
7:00-8:00	Program (Stunt night, campfire, missionary program, etc.)
9 :00	Taps and lights out

At one camp all members are sent into the woods alone with their Bibles for fifteen minutes before breakfast. In each group of eight or ten an impromptu leader is appointed who leads the members as each contribute a thought or verse from their own meditation. This gives a point and purpose to their Bible reading.

A good story around the campfire after a few songs captures the magic of the hour, and opens hearts for the message to follow.

Hold evening group devotions outside with members in a circle, arms around shoulders, and eliminate the tendency to snuggle under covers. [144]

The last Sunday have a communion service at sunrise on a nearby hilltop. Follow with an outdoor breakfast.

At one of last campfires have a fagot service.

Campers take fagot, give their testimonies, and throw fagot on the fire. Or, form a circle around the fire and as a camper gives his testimony he steps closer to the fire, forming an inner circle of those who are saved.

Divide campers into groups at the beginning of camp, naming them after Indian tribes, colleges, or even colors. Have a camp-long contest between groups, awarding points on notebooks, memory work, sporting events, etc. Have a special treat for the group that wins, such as an all day trip, or something of special interest. Award the greater percentage of points on memory work so that it will be impossible to win unless the memory work is learned.

A few miscellaneous hints may prove valuable to the one having a camp for the first time.

If possible, have the boys and girls at a different time at camp, as it will do away with many problems. Instruct children to have all clothing and possessions marked with indelible ink before

coming to camp. Keep a lost and found bureau, perhaps making the child do some duty around camp to earn his article back. Limit the amount a child may spend at the canteen to eliminate stomach aches.

Have some one in charge of first aid with simple remedies on hand, and the address of a good doctor on record.

Accidents do happen, and it is better to be prepared.

The children should be warned and instructed about any hazards such as poison ivy. [145]

Pray much about your camp, and if possible, gather the leaders together for prayer and counsel once a day, and you will find many difficulties ironed out.

Bible camps for children are comparatively new, and therefore there is much pioneering to do in this field. Why not do a little work in it yourself? You will find that it is work to a great extent, but blessing pressed down and running over. The children will never forget their time at camp, and many may be led to CHRIST.

As to the expense, many give the Christians an opportunity to send a boy to camp, not necessarily designating the particular boy. Others raise most of the amount beforehand, and let the children pay a nominal fee. Some raise all the money, and the children must learn five hundred Bible verses as entrance fee to camp. Some even permit the children to bring certain foodstuffs as part payment, though this involves many problems. There are as many ways of handling the expenses as there are camps. Trust in the Lord to supply the needs and proceed as He directs.

JUNIOR CHURCH

In many places the nursery at church serves a real purpose by enabling mothers with very small children to attend the church services, while in other places it has degenerated into a free-for-all for older children. In the latter case, and in the case where the majority of children leave the church as soon as Sunday school is over, a Junior Church is very much in order. But in the very rare case where all the Sunday school attendants, including the children, remain for the morning service, the Junior Church would be undesirable. [146]

Once a month Junior Church might attend in a body the opening part of the church service, and less frequently, the whole morning service. This would help train them in the importance of attending church.

The Junior Church should embody more dignity than the Sunday school. The use of more hymns than choruses, older children as ushers both for seating and for taking the offering, will add to this. A child too, may read the Scripture lesson, others may review the Sunday school lesson.

Many other suggestions may be utilized from those under the chapter on Child Evangelism Class and Bible Club Hour.

A few of the less hilarious drills under memory work may be employed, but the time should be kept in a more serious vein than the Sunday school. A different room than used for these same children in Sunday school is desirable, but if one is not available, a different arrangement of the furniture helps to change the atmosphere.

The Junior Church should never be used to draw children away from the morning worship, but rather prepare them to better take part in it. A certain age limit should be set depending on local conditions, and children over that limit expected to attend the adult service.

If you see the need for a Junior Church, consult your pastor and lay before him a few well-thought-out plans. He will be glad to assist you in its organization if it would be of advantage to your church. [147]

DAILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

This most worthy development in children's work has unlimited possibilities and advantages.

Many suggestions given in this book will be helpful and can be incorporated into the Bible School, but to adequately cover the subject a separate volume would be required.

A few suggestions follow.

The Bible School is generally of two or three weeks duration, although one week schools are profitable. Some hold them as long as six weeks. If a school is well conducted the children will not tire of it. It is a question as to how much time the teachers can devote to it.

Personnel

Only those who are saved and interested in leading children to CHRIST should teach in the Daily Vacation Bible School. If you have only a few spiritual Christians, use other Christians in places of minor importance as secretary, pianist, or assistant. It is of utmost importance that the ones who teach the Bible classes should be spiritual Christians with as much training as possible.

The following is a list of teachers and officers necessary.

Superintendent - In charge of the whole school. The planning and greater part of the preparation is up to him. This should begin as early as January or February, and all material on hand at least a month before the school. He conducts advance sessions for teachers.

Pianist - Should be able to play hymns and choruses well.

Secretary - Should be methodical, absolutely dependable.

Teachers for each - Should be able to use flannelgraph. Regular in attendance of the classes. [148]

Assistant for each - Takes attendance, hears memory teacher work, helps keep order, assists her teacher generally.

Director of Games - In charge of children before school begins. (Not absolutely necessary.)

There may be doubling up on the responsibilities. The pianist may teach, the secretary may be

director of games, etc.

Division of children into classes

Pre-school	Beginners
1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades	Primary
4th, 5th, and 6th grades	Juniors
7th and 8th grades	Intermediates
9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades	Seniors

Classes should be kept between twenty-five to thirty pupils unless the teacher has extraordinary ability. If fifty children come the first day in the Primary class, divide them into boys and girls, providing a new teacher and assistant. Or they may be divided by grades, having three Primary classes. There is always less of a showing in the older classes but they do not mind so much if the other classes are somewhat the same size. Even if the fifth grade had two classes, one of boys and one of girls, it would not so badly outnumber the Intermediates composed of both boys and girls. The classes must be divided in the best way that suits the given community and the teachers available. If the schools are smaller, more grades may be put together. Divide according to grades instead of years because the public school has already done the sifting process, and the ability and intelligence of the children will be much more uniform. [149]

Curriculum

The material taught the children should not only be scriptural but evangelistic, so that the teachers may use it to lead the children to CHRIST. The rest of the program may be planned by the superintendent, or complete outlines for D. V. B. S. may be purchased. These may be followed exactly or altered to suit the circumstances of your school.

Contests

The following are suggestions for contests to run in the D. V. B. S.

A large award board may be prepared from plywood covered with black cambric, with the awards mounted attractively. Also include on a typewritten sheet the instructions for obtaining each award. Cover the whole with cellophane. You will find that this will greatly encourage the effort of the pupils.

Perfect Record Contest - For each one who started on or before the third day, if they have a perfect record in attendance, memory work, offering, and Bible. Penny portions should be supplied those with no Bibles.

Memory Work Contest - Award to be given to the best one in each class. For large classes second and third awards may be given.

Handwork Contest - Award to be given to the best work in each class. Second and third may be given.

Storytelling Contest - Same as above.

Care must be taken to keep careful records, with absolute fairness in all contests. [150]

Handwork

Handwork is valuable if it has on it the Word of GOD, but much valuable time is wasted on mere busy work. If the children have not had school with handwork before, they will be content without it. Handwork causes the greater part of expense of the school, more headaches for the teachers, and many discipline problems. The children do love it, and it attracts them to the school. If you can't have a school with handwork have one without it, substituting many drills and other expressional activities to take its place. The children won't miss it unless they've had it before. Many valuable projects can be worked out in the handwork period if the money and teachers are available. Handwork does have a place, but its place is not the most important on the program.

Recess

If recess is eliminated, so is much rowdiness in the classes that follow. The moving from room to room and the change of subject matter provide enough relaxation for the children. If it is desirable to have outdoor games, appoint a leader and let them take place half an hour before the school starts. This also does away with late comers.

Expense

The ideal way is for the church to provide for the D. V. B. S. in its budget, but this is the exception rather than the rule. The Sunday school may be persuaded to finance it. Lacking this, an offering may be taken each day, with a program on the final night and offering from the audience. [151]

Sample Schedule

This may be altered to meet the varying needs of your school.

8:55	March in to school
9:00	Worship service, all classes together. Salute to the flags Opening hymn (same hymn each morning) Song service Announcements Prayer chorus Prayer Object lesson or chalk talk
9:35	Classes. Bible lesson on flannelgraph, invitation, memory work
10:20	Drills, object lesson by children, recitation of memory work
10:45	Handwork or expression period
11:30	Dismissal. [152]

~ end of chapter 7 ~
