

DIRECTIONS

for Foursquare Christian Educators

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NATIONAL DEPT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
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Richer Relationships - Sounds Great doesn't it?!

A recent Gallup poll reveals that 92% of 1,000 adults polled placed healthy relationships as the #1 need and priority in their lives. The 1980's top selling book, "Megatrends" by John Naisbitt states that one of the major forces affecting today's society is the **lack of meaningful relationships**. Our "high tech" marketing of information needs the "high touch" of human warmth and understanding.

Jesus modeled a life of "high touch" before His disciples. Even though Peter understood who Jesus was, in following Him he struggled with personal relationships. These relational problems surfaced as he walked with Jesus. The simple truth is that Peter was not an unusual case in how people deal with relationships. *We all have difficulty following Jesus in developing richer relationships.*

Whether you are a Pastor, C.E. Director or teacher, there will be times when relationships are difficult. These difficulties do not get solved in suppressing and/or avoiding them. Prayer does change things but so does honesty and love in cultivating right relationships.

Relationship problems in themselves are not a sign of spiritual immaturity. None of us should feel embarrassed—or that a godly person does not have relational problems. Failure to deal with the problems in a godly way is what indicates spiritual immaturity.

In looking at Jesus' encounters, we see that He identified needs as they arose. We can't maintain healthy relationships by meeting yesterday's needs. **We**

must meet the needs that exist right now, whether it be for forgiveness, obedience, or trust.

As we approach this Winter season, may we be committed to developing richer relationships by giving ourselves to meet one another's existing needs. This issue focuses on richer relationships within the Church.

I trust you will take a few moments to look at the many excellent resources offered in the contents of this packet. You will find order information on the following tools:

- ◊ 1992 Church Planning Calendar
- ◊ Christmas resources for special activities
- ◊ 1992 Foursquare Designs in Worship bulletins
- ◊ New tracts for children
- ◊ Foursquare Distinctive products
- ◊ Curriculum for Sunday School and Church

*"Beloved, if God so loved us,
we ought also to love one
another."* I John 4:11

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HOW TO AVOID CONFLICT WITH INTEGRITY

1. Ask for more information about the potential conflict.
 - Many conflicts arise from a lack of information.
2. Insure enough time for the conflict to be managed.
3. Assess the level of maturity of the groups facing conflict.
 - Give some thought to what are the marks of maturity. There is a difference between being childlike and childish (consider Phil. 3 as a starting point -- also James 3).
4. Gauge the emotional temperature of the conflict.
 - This is the most difficult dimension, you can't get any degree of firm control over this area.
5. Know the difference between your principles and your preferences.
6. Practice saving and spending trust credits.
 - "It is not always possible to love your neighbor as yourself, but we can work on earning our neighbor's love."
7. Handle criticism as you would a live bomb.
 - Take a moment to examine your intent, before you criticize. How it will affect the recipients of your potential criticism. Consider modeling the change you want to see in the other person before you criticize.
8. Practice the power of optimism.
 - There is a difference between happiness and joy; happiness is related to events, joy is an inner attitude.
9. Recognize the day by day conflict trap.
 - "It isn't the mountain ahead that wears you out, it's the grain of sand in your shoe."
10. Avoid finding yourself in time binds.
 - Don't get so busy that you need to always be on the run and can't stop for even a moment.

Excerpted from *The Change Masters* written by Rosabeth Moss Kanter. Simon & Schuster, 1983, pg 101

Called to Ministry

People who feel called by God to serve and minister to other people often exhibit some or all of the following characteristics. Do these describe you?

Understand stewardship. This person manages well what God has given him. Having more and more material things is not what motivates him. Using well what he has is his goal.

Knows exactly who he is. The called person recognizes his own depravity compared to the holiness of God. He knows that all he is and ever hopes to be are by God's grace and mercy. Result? He praises God with his whole being.

Unwavering sense of purpose. Having come to terms with his call from God to serve, the called Christian knows that his whole purpose is to praise God with every phase of his life. His focus is on Christ.

Unswerving commitment. Knowing well his purpose to live for God, he is fully committed to that plan for his life. He cannot be diverted to less important pursuits.

Empowered dependence. The called servant of God knows and believes that if God calls him to a particular task, he will also be empowered by God to succeed in the task. His sense of confidence and power come from God.



Abiding peace and joy. The person who answers God's call to minister feels at peace with himself and the world. He has great joy in knowing that he is fulfilling God's purpose for his life. External disasters cannot shake his internal calm from God.

Waits for God to act in his own time. This person knows that it is the striving for God that is important, not the actual achievement. He is content to let God display the results of his own striving when God is ready. Meanwhile, the called Christian is happy to wait patiently for God's timing.

Conclusion So, what is your conclusion? Are you called or driven to ministry?

Notes from a class taught by Mike Washburn, Involvement Minister for a large church in Fort Worth, Texas. Used with permission.

RATTRAY'S



1 *TEACHING IS A CALLING FROM GOD ON YOUR LIFE. AS A TEACHER, YOU ARE HIS SPECIAL GIFT TO THE BODY OF CHRIST.*

You have been called to feed His sheep, to nurture His lambs. Your role as a teacher needs to be top priority; your attitude must reflect this commitment.

2 *YOU ARE FIRST A SOUL-WINNER, THEN A TEACHER.*

Each Sunday school session should be culminated with an invitation to receive Christ or make a fresh commitment to Him. Express your own joy and enthusiasm over each response, encourage your class to rejoice with you.

Warmly welcome the unsaved to your class. Honor and praise those who bring their unsaved friends. Ask the class to pray for the ones you have led to the Lord; and to praise God for them. Follow-up these new babes.

3 *SPIRIT-FILLED, POWER-PACKED PREPARATION BEGINS EARLY EACH WEEK.*

On Sunday afternoon or Monday, begin to prepare for the next Sunday. Scan the new lesson; look at the objectives. Simplify them, writing them from the student's point of view. Spend time in prayer. Remember to first ask the Lord to do a work in your own life regarding the behavior changes you are seeking for your students. Second, anticipate your students already practicing these changes. Praise God for what He is going to do. Thirdly, ask the Holy Spirit to help you select activities to help meet these goals. Plan the details. Anticipate changes!

4 *ALWAYS TAKE TIME TO EVALUATE; DID YOU MEET YOUR OBJECTIVES?*

Many teachers fail to realize that the student -- changes in his behavior, his attitude -- is the target.

Make questions out of your student-centered objectives. Your answers to them will help you evaluate properly. You may need to do some investigating: some personal visits, and some parental contacts. When you see objectives that were not met, pray! You may need to repeat some lessons, coming from a different angle.

5 *MANY LESSONS ARE CAUGHT NOT TAUGHT; MODEL CHRIST.*

Speak from personal experience when teaching. Be real. Love and encourage them. Share your joys and sorrows; request their prayers, invite them to rejoice in the Lord with you.

Don't ask them to do anything that isn't already a part of your life. Memorize verses with them. Give current situations where the Word you have memorized really ministered to your need.

Be happy in the Lord, they will be eager to follow you as you follow Jesus.

6 *BUILD SELF-ESTEEM IN THE STUDENTS; VALUE EACH PUPIL AS CHRIST SEES WORTH IN EACH OF US.*



Respect each student and treat them accordingly. Quickly learn each name; have eye-contact and complete attention to each student as you talk with them. Be a part of their world, knowledgeable of achievements earned both in and outside church so that praise can be given. It is this atmosphere that the Holy Spirit begins to affect the changes we so earnestly covet.

7 *A BASIC ROUTINE OFFERS NECESSARY SECURITY; BUT REMEMBER VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE IN THAT SAME CLASSROOM.*

Students like a structure that allows them to be comfortable, yet something different that keeps them attentive and motivated. The skeleton of each class period should reflect vital aspects of the class: **The opening.** In the opening prayer, verbalize the objectives, and ask the Holy Spirit to do His part. **Prayer requests/praise reports.** Their needs are important. God likes to hear our praises for what He is doing. **The offering.** Giving to God is an exciting privilege and duty. After the offering and before the closing exercises is the special time for the **lesson.** Vary this activity. Remember the more of their senses that are involved, the more meaningful the experience becomes. **The altar call/closing prayer.** Always give them the opportunity to "make it right" with God.

Interpersonal Relationships In The Christian Education Program

by Ray Syrstad

The employment consultants tell us that approximately 85% of all employee turnover is due to personality conflicts and relationship problems. Unfortunately, the same dynamics are sometimes at work in the local church. We chuckle at the rhyme:

**To dwell above with saints in love,
Oh, that will be eternal glory;
To dwell below with saints I know...
Well, that's another story.**

Yet God has created us for relationship. We were not born to be alone. To be is to be in relation to someone. And the church provides the most beautiful opportunity for the expression of people in relationship.

It is interesting that Scripture never mentions church membership or Sunday School rolls; the New Testament describes believers as the body of Christ. In I Corinthians 12:27 (NIV), the apostle Paul says: "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it." In Romans 12:5, he reminds the believer: "so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."

We normally take very good care of the things that belong to us, especially those which have great value: a new car, a prized stamp collection, or perhaps an heirloom that has been passed down through the family. Shouldn't we be more concerned about caring for and relating to God's family — especially those with whom we serve in Christian Education ministry? Of course, it takes more than concern. It also takes commitment.

As I have observed working together in Christian education, it has become evident that an "I want my own way" attitude has caused the majority of interpersonal relationship problems.

One of the lay leaders in our church has written: "Commitment is at the foundation of all human relationships." We cannot be committed to God without being committed to one another. Vertical commitment must be expressed in horizontal relationship. In John 13:35 (NIV), Jesus said: "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." The basic injunction in the New Testament to love one another is repeated more than any other injunction. Most believers love one another in principle; Jesus is talking about Christian love in action.

As I have observed working together in Christian education, it has become evident that an "I want my own way" attitude has caused the majority of interpersonal relationship problems. That is not surprising. After all, Isaiah reminds us that "each of us has turned to his own way" (Isa. 53:6 NIV). Of course, Isaiah is describing the old nature. Jesus Christ died to give us a new nature, and we have the prerogative of using that new nature when relating to one another as Christian workers.

God has reminded me of that truth whenever I have worked with a person in ministry who was difficult to love (and you can generally find one or two in every church). Romans 5:5 (NIV) says: "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us." God is not asking us to love that difficult person with our human love. He has given us his love and he wants us to release his love to that person. So it is not a matter of can I love. It is a matter of will I love. God has given us the potential, but we must be willing to release his love.



Dr. C. Peter Wagner, who has written widely on church growth, says: "In evaluating the quality of a church, it is in the end result how individuals work together to accomplish God's goals for the body that matter most." Early in my ministry someone shared the very helpful little saying that "there is no limit what can be accomplished is we don't care who gets the credit." God calls us to an unselfish, cooperation-style of relationship in which serving others in Jesus' name must be our primary motivation.

Jesus emphasized this when he used himself as the example which we are to follow. He said: "*Even the Son of man came not be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*" (Matthew 20:28 KJV) The way to become great, he said in verse 27, is to become a servant. Regardless of the age group with which you work, your primary calling is to relate to and work with adult co-workers. This will largely determine the effectiveness of your department or group. Here, then, are a few suggestions that can help you relate to co-workers.

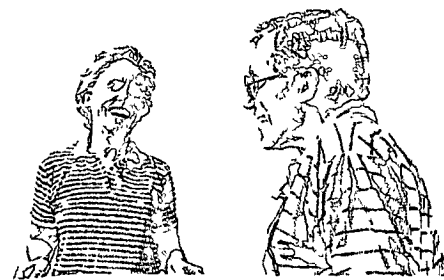
BE A FRIEND. It is important to work at becoming friends with co-workers. One of the most effective Sunday school departments I had the joy of witnessing was a third grade department where the superintendent and the teachers met monthly in each other's homes for a potluck supper and planning meeting. The deliberately set aside time to get to know each other, become friends, and plan together the work of their ministry. They also invited their spouses to these supper meetings and when the workers met together for planning, their mates met in another room to pray for the needs of the department. This team of workers stayed together for many years because they were friends as well as fellow servants. As the apostle Paul said in Romans 12:10 (NIV), they were "*devoted to one another in brotherly love.*"

BE A GOOD LISTENER. Listening is hard work. Many of us have worked so hard at becoming good communicators that now we need to learn to talk less and listen more. "Slow to speak and quick to listen" has some very practical ramifications. While we are listening, we can be thinking. While we are listening, we can be attempting to understand what we are hearing. When we are listening, we are giving of ourselves to another person. Often the greatest gift we can give a co-worker is the feeling that he has been heard. And remember, when we are listening, we are learning something about our co-worker that will probably enhance our interpersonal relationships.

BE AN EFFECTIVE MODEL. I recall a most effective teacher who modeled the Christian life so beautifully for the high school girls she taught. One afternoon a week, the girls were free to come by her house after school and she was simply available to them. Most of the time she went right on with her ironing or other household chores, but she listened to the girls, answered questions, and let them absorb the atmosphere of her Christian home.

We find ourselves attracted to people who live what they profess. It's a joy, for instance, to serve together with the person who responds with Spirit-filled calmness to unforeseen or difficult situations—the one who models a consistent prayer life so that when he says he'll pray for you, you know he means it. This type of person demonstrates a great interest in the worker than the work they share.

BE A SENSITIVE SUPPORTER. In 1 Peter 2:5 (NIV), the apostle Peter reminds believers that we are "*like living stones, being built into a spiritual house.*" The kingdom of God which we are seeking to build in our individual churches is made up of living material—costly stones—because they have been bought with the precious blood of Christ. So the apostle Paul admonishes us that "*each one should be careful how he builds.*" (1 Corinthians 3:10 NIV) We must be sensitive how we relate to our fellow workers in the body of Christ because we are called to build up one another. How do we do that in our Christian education ministry?



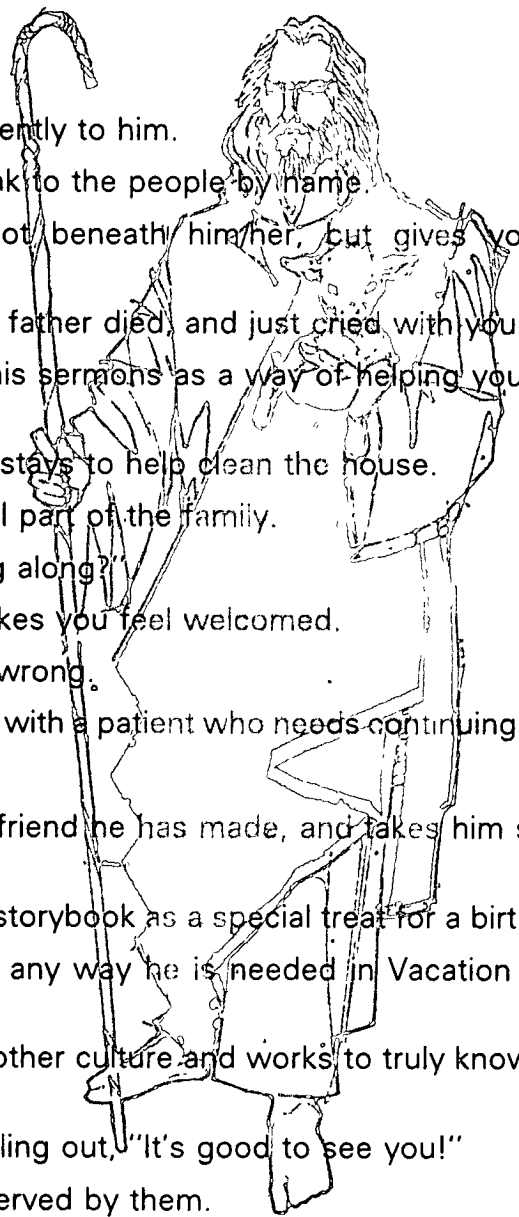
First don't take another person's ministry for granted. Show appreciation. Be an encourager. If you notice some exceptional service rendered, send that person a hand-written thank you note. One Sunday, after morning worship, my wife commented to me: "Did you know that Joanne worked the night shift last night (she was a Registered Nurse), came directly to Sunday school and taught her class of eighth grade girls? She then stayed for the worship service because she wanted to be a good model for them." The next morning I sat down and wrote Joanne a note expressing appreciation for that kind of commitment to the ministry of building young lives.

Another way you can be a sensitive supporter of your fellow worker is to make a commitment to pray. Drop him or her a card and say, "During the week of the 10th, I'll be praying every day for you." Or remember each co-worker on his or her birthday or the anniversary of the day you began serving together. The writer of Proverbs reminds us: "*Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act.*" (3:27 NIV)

Interpersonal relationships in Christian education are, in the last analysis, important because the way we get along with others reveals what we are spiritually. Our walk with God is always reflected in the way we get along with God's people.

The Servant Leader Is...

- ▶ One who can get down on a child's level and listen intently to him.
- ▶ An elder who stands at the church house door to speak to the people by name.
- ▶ A person who can make you feel that you are not beneath him/her, but gives you an understanding response.
- ▶ The friend who came to see you when your mother or father died, and just cried with you.
- ▶ The preacher who can speak of his own struggles in his sermons as a way of helping you with yours.
- ▶ The lady who takes a pie to a sick neighbor, and then stays to help clean the house.
- ▶ One who invites you into his home and makes you feel part of the family.
- ▶ The teacher who genuinely asks, "How are you getting along?"
- ▶ The person who sits by you in a strange class and makes you feel welcomed.
- ▶ The friend that can lovingly correct you when you are wrong.
- ▶ The person who goes to the hospital to sit several hours with a patient who needs continuing care.
- ▶ The teenager who mows the law for an elderly widow.
- ▶ The fifth grader who visits the nursing home to see a friend he has made, and takes him some fruit.
- ▶ The teacher who gives a child in her classroom a Bible storybook as a special treat for a birthday.
- ▶ The deacon who takes off a week from work to help any way he is needed in Vacation Bible School.
- ▶ The Christian who goes on a campaign for Christ in another culture and works to truly know and relate to the people.
- ▶ The person who speaks to everyone he/she meets, calling out, "It's good to see you!"
- ▶ One who is more anxious to serve others than to be served by them.



By Dr. Jim Mankin, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX. Used by permission.

The Terrible Reader Miracle

Joshua always volunteered to read, and he was a terrible reader. Why, I wondered as he stumbled through the Bible verses, would he put himself through this? But about the third time Josh read, I caught the bigger wonder. Not one of his lively, typically rude, teasing seventh grade peers ever made fun of him. Instead, when he stumbled, someone would volunteer the word. When he finished, the other guys would smile, nodding their head in approval.

Somewhere some teacher before me had gotten through to these dozen boys. That teacher had taught Joshua that God wanted him to read the Bible, even though he stumbled. And, that unsung teacher had taught Josh's friends that God expects them to cheer on fellow Christians as they attempt hard things for Him.

David C. Cook Bible-In-Life Teacher Touch. Used by permission.





Burlington Bears

We're back and better than ever! That was the theme we used in our publicity to re-introduce our Good News Bears Program for the Fall season. Last year we began GNB for the first time in the Burlington Foursquare Church. Praise the Lord it was a great success. We put the Bears on vacation for the summer, but continued to promote the program by announcing that the Bears will back in September.

For the fall kick-off we had a 20 foot banana split. All the Good News Bears leaders and Bear Essentials made a relay to build the "Beary" delicious treat. The 41 children and adults enjoyed all the yummy fun that followed.

And that isn't all! The Hawk Eye (the local Burlington newspaper) came to take pictures. Much to our pleasant surprise, our Bears made the front page in bold, living color the next day! The whole church is praising the Lord for this testimony to the community.

- Submitted by Gwen Fratt, Burlington, Iowa.



A Generation Church

There has been an increased awareness of the need to develop ministry so that the transition from age group to age group is made smoothly and effectively.

As Youth Pastor, I have the blessing of leading Jr. High School and High School age youth. As we worked to develop the Youth Department, there was a need for Jr. High school students. At this time, our Good News Bears Club Director, Elaine Easter approached me with the need for some fifth and sixth grade assistants. Two of our Ministry Team leaders (college age) volunteered. Due to their help and God's hand at work, the Good News Bears Club birthed a Jr. High School group and they have become the leaders! We now have a smooth transition taking place from grade school to the Youth Department.

The Good News Bears Club is an essential key in continuing a generational process that is sought after in all areas of today's church. I truly believe that if a church is to serve its generation, it then must strive to provide training and proper attention to all ages. It is our goal at Burbank Foursquare Church to see a person cared for and nurtured from Nursery to adulthood without losing one to the world as result of an incomplete transition. The Good News Bears Club is a crucial link in this process which takes place at such a tender age.

By Dan Frutiger, Youth Pastor, Burbank Foursquare Church



Copy of the photograph run in the Burlington Hawk Eye

The vast majority of fathers want their families to be an important part of their lives. This is echoed in research by the National Center on Fathering which clearly shows that most adults and children in America want continuity and enduring commitment in father-child relationships.

Excerpted from "On The Father Front" newsletter published by Christian Service Brigade

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You may receive bundle (5 or more) copies of the newsletter to distribute in your church for a small charge to cover shipping costs.

If you would like to make a contribution to this newsletter we would appreciate hearing from you.

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