

DIRECTIONS

for Foursquare Christian Educators

FALL 1990

National Department of Christian Education & Foursquare Publications
International Church of the Foursquare Gospel

Volume 9

THE CHURCH

A Learning Place—For Learning People

"All learning comes from experience but not all experience makes for effective learning" C.B. Eavey

A current trend in Christian education indicates an emphasis on 'good curriculum' rather than on 'good teaching'. Why has this shift occurred? It may be that we have become more lax and have allowed certain ideas and assumptions to accumulate and influence our thinking. A few of those misconceptions are:

- Teaching is good content
- Curriculum makes for good teaching
- Personality will ensure good teaching
- Willing people always make good teachers

All of the factors mentioned are only a part of the learning experience. Think with me for a moment about what teaching and learning really is.

Teaching is not just structure and academics, but showing the learner how to apply the principles being taught.

The articles and information in the Fall Directions are useful in any teaching situation. They are useful generically

because they focus not on CONTENT, but on CONTEXT; that is, on developing an environment in which teachers nourish relationships with the learners so that spiritual growth takes place. The underlying goal is to disciple more effectively, not to find something new just for the sake of novelty. The Bible is the unchanging truth. Our continual challenge is to apply God's truth to the context in ways that will draw people to Christ and enable them to grow toward a deeper Christian maturity.

Learning with you,

Rick Wulfestieg

National Minister of
Christian Education
and Director of
Foursquare Publications



by Juanita Conger

10

COMMANDMENTS

for Sunday School Teachers.

She probably never attended a conference for teachers or read a book about creativity, yet she taught me with such love, enthusiasm and style, surely she was a creative teacher before her time.

I came to her class, a child of nine, very much in need of love, acceptance, security and encouragement. She taught in ways that met my needs. Her teaching in class and through her life was a sustaining and stabilizing factor through my early teens. She did much more than tell me Bible stories. She found creative ways for me to become a "doer of the Word and not a hearer only." I recall fondly the many Sundays I went to her home for a simple lunch of soup, crackers, cookies and milk. Her family of five and I were used to simple meals during the Depression years.

We joined other boys and girls and visited shut-ins. We sang and prayed for them. On other occasions we went to hospitals for the insane. A favorite visit was to the home of our town baker. We climbed the stairs to their rooftop patio where we befriended their retarded daughter. Going away with delicious goodies was reward enough.

I loved decorating containers to fill with candy and cookies we made to take to the convalescent hospitals. Even today that tradition is a part of my holiday giving.

Looking back, now I can understand the lessons I learned when scrubbing the scribbles from church walls before homecoming day was one of our "creative activities". Each time I glance over my shoulder I see that her mantle has rested upon me these fifty some years of fruitful ministry. Her ideas and plans were not printed in a quarterly. They were designed for her class by the Holy Spirit. Because of those creative activities my interest was keen. I formed friendships for a lifetime. There is an indelible stamp on my heart that reads, **"Serve the Lord with gladness"**.



Rev. Conger recently retired from L.L.F.E. Bible College after 32 year of teaching. She is currently serving at L.L.F.E. East.

Dr. Mears wrote down what one must do, not just what one ought to do in order to serve the Lord. Here are "her own 10 commandments as a Sunday School teacher."

- 1> I will win the personal allegiance of every one of my class to the Lord and Master.
- 2> I will not think my work is over when my student has made his decision for Christ.
- 3> I will see that he finds a definite place in some specific task.
- 4> I will bring Christianity out of the unreal into everyday life.
- 5> I will seek to help each one discover the will of God so the Master can work through him and use every talent.
- 6> I will instill a divine discontent in the mind of every one who can do more than he is doing, not by telling him his life is petty and ordinary, but by giving him a vision of great things to be done enthusiastically, passionately.
- 7> I will make it easy for anyone to come to me with the deepest experiences in his inner life--not by urging, but by sympathy and understanding. I will never let anyone think I am disappointed in him.
- 8> I will keep the cross of Christ central in the Christian life.
- 9> I will pray as I have never prayed before for wisdom and power.
10. I will spend and be spent in this battle

THE PURPOSE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday school teaching should have a three-fold purpose.

●FIRST: LEADING SOULS TO CHRIST. For many of our pupils this means a complete change of attitude toward our Lord. It will be definite turning from a life of way-wardness and willful disobedience to a life of surrender to God's will. For others it may mean the public acknowledgement as Savior of Him whom they have loved from their earliest recollection. It is the first great business of the Sunday school to see that all its members love Christ as Savior. The life and the instructions of a Sunday school teacher, however, are the most important agencies in the school.

●SECOND: DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. Sunday school teaching is spiritual work. It means soul culture. When the Sunday school pupil has been won to Christ, the work has just begun. Everything must now be done to help the pupil to form habits of Christian living.

●THIRD: TRAINING CHRISTIAN WORKERS. The privilege of giving to Christ's cause and the duty of engaging in some definite line of activity should be laid upon the conscience. The teacher should keep before the pupil the joy of Christian service. Christ delivers not only from guilt but also from sin's selfishness. We are saved to serve if saved at all. Young Christians should be placed in training classes where they may be thoroughly prepared for the high office of teaching of God's Word. In every department of the school, missionary instruction should be given. It should be the prayer and purpose of every church to send out strong people who can carry Christ's message into the home and world.

The Church and the Blended Family

Wes and Sheryl Haystead

Some people call them stepfamilies. Some people call them expanded families. Use whatever name you will, about 1300 of them are formed every day.

The blended family faces some unique challenges—challenges for which the church is uniquely able to provide practical help

Special Problems of Blended Families

Blended families face all the challenges and problems experienced by any family: setting goals, household and income management, discipline of children, conflict resolution, etc. For a number of reasons, however, each problem has a greater potential for division in a blended family, especially in the first year:

- Stepparents and children tend to have very strong—and often unrealistic expectations about how things will be. Some parents assume their new stepchildren will automatically love them dearly. Some children fear their new stepparents will be mean (“the Cinderella myth”).

- The members of a blended family are attached to their previous family traditions and patterns of doing things. Just as it takes time for a new bride and groom to adjust to one another and it takes time for new parents to adjust to a newborn baby, it also takes time for members of a stepfamily to become truly comfortable with one another.

- Discipline is more difficult because mutually accepted guidelines for sharing parenthood take time to develop.

- Children often feel pulled by loyalties to two families, a tension which may be increased when the stepparent is warm and loving.

- Children may be shuttled between families, creating scheduling pressures as well as conflicts between personalities and lifestyles.

As a result of these and other uncertainties, it is not uncommon for children of blended families to exhibit unpredictable behaviors, sometimes seen as learning problems, disruptive actions, withdrawal or overly sensitive reactions. Many children may show no overt signs of trouble while holding in very deep fears, resentments or anxiety.

What Teachers Can Do to Help Children and Parents

Thoughtful teachers can help a child cope positively with the challenges of being part of a blended family.

1. Pray regularly for the child and the parents, asking God to help you become a supportive friend.

2. Be aware of the new situations and accompanying thoughts and feelings faced by a child in the months surrounding a remarriage.

3. Be aware of the ongoing schedule demands on a child who shuttles between two families on weekends, holidays and vacations. Make comments to build a bond of understanding. “It must be hard when. . .” or “I hope you have a really special time. . .”

4. In conversation, avoid assumptions regarding family life. Include references—without sounding negative—to children who live in a blended family and who visit their other parent.

5. Plan specific ways to give the child some extra attention in every class session. Go out of your way to chat with the child about activities of the past week. Use the child’s name. Affirm the child for effort expended and work accomplished.

6. Be patient about behavior challenges. Understand that the child may be trying to deal with significant disruptions. This does not mean allowing a child to run amuck. It does mean showing a great deal of love and acceptance.

7. If a child cannot attend regularly, mail the child’s *Student Guide* page and/or take-home paper, including a short personal note. Avoid making and issue of the child’s absence; instead, focus on your interest in the child.

8. Work with others in your church to plan family events—game nights, overnight camp outs, movie nights, picnics, beach outings, etc. Enjoyable activities help blended families establish new traditions and create positive memories.

What Parents Can Do to Help Children and Teachers

Parents play a key role in helping the children in their blended family to develop strong bonds with the church family.

1. Be patient and flexible, both within your family and in guiding your family’s interaction with others.

2. Openly explain your situation to your child’s teachers. Show your desire to establish as much continuity as possible and invite ideas on ways to accomplish this.

3. To compensate for sporadic attendance, help your child build lasting friendships within the church family. Invite your child’s teacher and/or children from your child’s class to informal get-togethers. For example:

- A classmate will enjoy coming over to play after school.

- The teacher will be delighted to join your family for dessert at a favorite restaurant.

- The whole class will have a ball at a Saturday morning pancake breakfast and cartoon festival.

4. Keep your child apprised of the routines. Preschoolers need constant reminders of what will happen next—just don’t try to inform the young child too far in advance. The elementary aged child, however, needs to know the long-range plan, e.g., “You’ll be at Sunday School on the first and third Sunday of every month.”

5. Talk positively with your child about why the church is important to you. And remember, your example will speak much louder than your words!

Permission is granted to reproduce this Partnership resource for church and home.

Wes and Sheryl Haystead live in Ventura, California. Wes is Consulting Editor for *Gospel Light*, Ventura, CA. Sheryl is a former curriculum editor at *Gospel Light* Publications and is now working as a free-lance writer.



Helping Children Adjust to New Friends

Remember when school started?
It was tear your hair out time!
Cranky kids all across America.
What was going on?



Each fall children face a new classroom, a new teacher and a new set of classmates. The best friend of last June may be in a different classroom. Also, everyone has grown and changed through the summer, both through physical growth and through their summer experiences and activities. So even when children find old friends in their classes, everybody's a little different. The questions emerge: "How do I fit in?" "Am I gonna belong in this group?" "Am I gonna be an outcast?"

Likewise children want to know who has the power. Who calls the shots? Who makes the decisions? "Is the teacher going to tell us how to breathe every single minute?" "Are we going to be bullied by some big kid?" "Will I have any say or do I just keep quiet?" Since school is the main job of most children, resolution of these issues is of major importance in their world. Being aware of the significance of this situation in their children's lives, parents are in a position to help out.

Kids often have feelings of uncertainty before they firm up their position in a new group, but they don't always tell you that's how they are feeling. Behavior such as unusual irritability, pouting, silence, temper tantrums and verbal or physical attacks on siblings can be clues that back-to-school anxiety is building. On the surface the action may seem unrelated to school, not only to the onlooker, but also to the children. To get to the core of the problem the parent needs to be a good listener. (Sometimes, of course, parents need to protect life and limb.) It's best not to jump the gun and suggest to the child that the cause of the problem behavior is anxiety about school. It might not be! And even if it is children need to discover this connection themselves.

The problem of belonging has to be resolved by the child not by the parents. But parents can assist the process by listening and responding to feelings expressed. In your response to your children's feelings, withholding judgements and solutions is hard to do, but will be useful. Children's perceptions may not be realistic by a parent's standards, but they are valid within the child's experience, and sometimes need to be acknowledged and accepted. When children are thinking out loud, talking things through, they are trusting you to hear and understand what they are experiencing. Children struggling with finding their place in their world aren't helped by hearing "Ten years from now this won't make any difference," or "All you have to do is go there and. . ." The first criticizes and devalues the present perception and self-worth depriving the child building blocks of self-esteem that may well be in place in ten years. The second is your solution, not your child's. Children need to find their own solutions.

A supportive and caring atmosphere is likely to be particularly palpable at bedtime, when your children are feeling secure and trusting. You may be bone tired or at your busiest, however this is the time to summon all your stamina and deep caring you have for your child's well being, and **LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN!**

By emphasizing and listening to feelings you are not solving the problem, you are paving the way for your children to solve their problems. You're giving them a place where they know they are valued and accepted while they are questioning their value and acceptance at school.

Listen with your whole presence—use eye contact, and body language that says "I'd rather be here listening to you than anywhere else." When you talk, tell your children what you understand them to be saying by paraphrasing statements that reflect their feelings. Let them have an opportunity to modify or clarify the statement.

The process rests when your child finds a place in the new pecking order, when the anxiety of the unknown is relieved. When you hear or sense your child saying, "Yes, I belong here. They like me. Now I know who calls the shots. I may not like it but I can live with that." With resolution the child can get on with other things.



**HANG IN THERE, MOM AND DAD,
YOUR CHILD IS WORKING THINGS THROUGH
AND YOU'LL GET SOME SLEEP BEFORE LONG!**

Excerpt from "Ways Parents Help Children Adjust to New Friends" by Carolyn Shadle.
Permission granted by For Parents newsletter, Eden, N.Y.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

by Wes and Sheryl Haystead

How to Help Your Child Get The Most Out of Sunday School.

1. **Encourage your child to develop friendships at Sunday School.** One of the strongest benefits the church provides your family is an extended "family" of both adult and childhood friends who support positive Christian values. Consistent attendance makes it easy for meaningful friendships to grow.

2. **Be Consistent in bringing your child to Sunday School so that he or she will benefit from the biblical instruction.** Children are surrounded by influences which are often in conflict with the truths of Scripture. Sunday School can be your child's most important hour out of the 172 every week!

3. **Cultivate friendships with your child's teachers.** It's easier for you to approach two or three teachers than for them to personally contact the parents of all the children in their classes. Your support helps teachers do a good job!

4. **Watch for and talk with your child about the take-home materials provided each week.** A few minutes of informal conversation at home can help to reinforce and apply the Bible truths your child has studied.

5. **Talk about the Bible Words with your child.** Copy each week's verse onto a folded index card and set it on your breakfast table.

6. **Ask a few questions about the week's Bible story to see what your child remembers and understands -and talk about how the story illustrates familiar experiences at home or in the neighborhood.** A good question is, "What is one way you can do what that story teaches us?"

7. **During the week look for ways to connect a recent Bible verse or story to specific situations.** For example, while watching TV, ask how a character's actions compare with those of a person in a Bible story.

How to help Your Child Get the Most out of Worship Services

1. **Enter the worship building as a family,** introducing your child to the adults you greet. This helps your child feel like part of the worshipping community.

2. **Sit near the front so your child can see easily.** Children tend to pay better attention and participate more the closer to the front they sit.

3. **Talk with your child about the first hymn or chorus to be sung.** Give a one- or two-sentence explanation of what the song is about. Explain one or two words you think your child may not understand.

4. **If your child is beginning to recognize letters, share a hymnal**

or bulletin and Bible with your child. Point to the words being sung or read. Holding a book together helps the child to feel a sense of participation.

5. **If you are invited to shake hands with people nearby during the worship service, introduce your child to those you greet.** (Most adults tend to converse over the tops of children's heads, making children feel like outsiders.)

6. **Be ready with something interesting for your child to do when service is longer than your child's attention-drawing paper and/or coloring books are fine for many children; looking at pictures in books brought from home appeals to others.**

7. **Talk with your pastor or church staff about the possibility of including a brief children's sermon each week or on one Sunday of every month.**

Permission is granted to reproduce this Partnership resource for church and home.

Wes and Sheryl Haystead live in Ventura, California. Wes is Consulting Editor for Gospel Light, Ventura, CA. Sheryl is a former curriculum editor at Gospel Light Publications and is now working as a free-lance writer.



Good People Learning to Build!

Cathedral of the Valley Foursquare Church recently hosted a training day for Christian education teachers in "**How To Build A Righteous Generation**"

Rick Wulfestieg and Frank George shared about "**How to Understand Those That God Is Building.**" and "**How to Bring The Presence of God Into Young Lives.**"

If you are interested in Christian education training in your church, please contact your District Office.



GOOD NEWS BEARS INTERNATIONAL BIRTHDAY PARTY!!

The first Good News Bears International birthday party was held during the Foursquare International Convention in Asheville, N.C. with 600 people celebrating God's great work.

Active Good News Bears Clubs are now in Colombia, Costa Rica, Brazil, Thailand, and Canada as well as 400 clubs in the U.S. We are currently working on a Spanish translation of the Resource Manual.

For information in starting a Good News Bears Club, mail the enclosed yellow and red order guide or contact Frank or Pam George at Foursquare Publications 213/484-0105 ext. 307.



Good News Bearers come in all ages!



Our Good News Bears Club in Bogota, Colombia

Sunday School Facts and Figures...

In the 1980's attendance increased 7.1 percent. That's 2,400,000 students. Ninety-eight percent of all churches in this country have Sunday school.

David C. Cook Publishing



All Sunday school students in America standing hand to hand would reach from Los Angeles to New York eight times. David C. Cook Publishing

(Foursquare Churches alone would reach 45 miles!)



Why focus on Adult classes?

Churches in which leaders are convinced the Sunday school is an obsolete concept, the numbers are dwindling. By contrast, in those congregations in which the leaders are convinced the Sunday school, and especially adult classes, represent a critical component of the total ministry of that church's life, the Sunday school is thriving!

There were 36 million Sunday School students and 4.1 million teachers in 1989.

David C. Cook, Publishing



DIRECTIONS FOR FOURSQUARE CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS is published quarterly by the National Department of Christian Education in Los Angeles, California, as a resource for Foursquare Christian Educators. A copy of this publication is mailed without charge to each Foursquare Church in the United States.

If you would like to receive bundle (5 or more) copies of the newsletter to distribute in your church, please contact us. For a small charge to cover shipping costs, we would be glad to assist you in this.

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

NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1910 West Sunset Blvd., Suite 200

Los Angeles, CA 90026

(213) 484-0105