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in the Work of Christian Education"
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OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION"

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OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION"

(Teacher Recruitment)

OPENING STATEMENT

Let's hear our Savior's words to better perceive our calling as Sunday school teachers. Jesus spoke of the power that motivates people to agree to teach His Word, "Peace be unto you: as my Father has sent Me, even so send I you....He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John 20:21-22) Thus He spoke to His disciples on Easter evening. Hear again our Savior's commission to His believers for all time, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them:.... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 18:19-20) Consider the specific activity Jesus tied to our love for Him as our Savior, "Lord, You know that I love You. He said unto him, Feed My lambs." (John 21:15) Finally, let's thrill at our Savior's final marching orders for His followers and His promise of power for that work, "But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

"Sunday school teachers filled with the Holy Ghost in the work of Christian education" is our topic today. The Sunday school teacher is very much in the work of Christian education. It is true that the pastor is called to conduct the Christian training of the young in the congregation. But how broad a base of Bible knowledge could he give to the children without the years of patient instruction by faithful Sunday school teacher? Even so, there's not a teacher here today who feels that the instruction he or she may give to pupils for one hour a week is sufficient to teach them the "all things" which Jesus wants us to teach. Solid

Christian knowledge and the wisdom to apply it do not come readily through hit-and-miss Sunday school attendance. Surely every one of us has longed for daily instruction in the Word of God for our young people. The Christian elementary school is the model of Christian education we desire for the lambs of Christ.

But let's be honest. There will not soon (or ever) be a multitude of Christian elementary schools in the congregations of our district. Therefore, the most widespread way to teach Bible history, the life of Christ, the way of salvation, and the application of our faith in life for this district and for our Western conference IS the Sunday school. Even in congregations blessed with a Christian elementary school, not all children will attend such a school. And even those who do attend the Christian elementary school need Sunday school. Review and reinforcement of Bible history is always in order. Fellowship and contact with all peers in the congregation is needed to build solid congregational life for the future. For these reasons, the Sunday school is an integral part of the Christian education of our children.

According to our title, we are concerned that our Sunday school teachers are filled with the Holy Ghost. This is the goal, that they be filled with the Author of faith, and fully equipped with His spiritual gifts, such as joy, peace, knowledge, longsuffering, zeal, hope, etc. Of course, none of our Sunday school teachers are truly filled with the Holy Ghost, not in the Pentecost sense, not crowned with tongues of fire or blessed with the miraculous gift of speaking in foreign tongues. Nor will our teachers be filled with the Holy Ghost in the sense of inspiration, as if what they had to say to their pupils were the inspired Word of God, equal to the Scriptures.

Rather, the goal of our Sunday school teachers being filled with the Holy Ghost lies in the area of motivation. What makes them want to teach the young about their Savior? The Holy Ghost does indeed fill our teachers' hearts with faith in the Savior,

with a desire to conform to His will, with the get-up-and-go to get up and go forward in His work of feeding the lambs. We need teachers who will be involved in Sunday school because the Spirit has given them the faith to expend the time and energy for His work. We need the Spirit's gift of faith to enable the new teachers in the congregation to answer the call to teach with enthusiasm, with confidence in the Holy Spirit, the master Tutor who will help them find the words for their teaching.

In another sense, the work of the Sunday school teacher is automatically filled with the Holy Ghost. For in our Sunday schools the subject matter is the Word of God. This is not the case in every Sunday school in other churches, where the social gospel may prevail. Precisely because we teach the Bible and its history in our Sunday school, we can be assured of the Spirit's powerful presence. For His Word does not return to Him empty. The Holy Spirit uses His Word efficiently, whenever we teach it.

We also want the work of our Sunday school teachers to be filled with the Holy Ghost at the bottom line of all things. Our goal in Sunday school is to give God's saving truth to children so that they will retain their confirmation faith, continue to hear the Word and receive the Sacrament, and persevere through this tempting world, holding fast to Jesus Christ in true faith until death, and eternity beyond. This is our vision of "success" in Sunday school. Only the Holy Spirit gives such success, for only He creates and sustains faith in Christ. We want our work to be filled with the Holy Ghost in that His blessing rests upon our pupils in their faith.

One last word about being "filled with the Holy Ghost." We all have our good and bad teaching days. Sometimes our presentation seems to fall in place. Other times we know it simply falls apart. Preparation is usually at the base of teaching effectiveness, though there can be influences beyond our control. But effectiveness in the Sunday school teacher is often directly proportional to his/her enthusiasm for the Spirit's

message to the children in the lessons before them. Students can be made eager to take something home from the lesson only when they can see that the teacher has found something there for himself. Let your teaching be filled with the Holy Spirit, so that your pupils will want to share what their teacher "has" because it's evident that the teacher has found a good thing in this lesson from God's Word.

Spirit-filled teaching, with enthusiasm, can have a positive influence on potential teachers. Fellow members will be moved to respond more readily to a call to teach if their children have come home enthused about Sunday school. And the pupils themselves are potential Sunday school teachers, especially if the Sunday school has been a positive, enjoyable process of Christian education in their experience.

BALLOTS

Here ballots will be distributed to all, so that you may indicate what you consider to be the most pressing problem in recruiting new Sunday school teachers in your congregation(s).

STATISTICS

While you are filling out the ballots, consider the following statistics regarding Sunday schools in our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, according to the Statistical Report of 1977:

	<u>Western Conf.</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Synod</u>
Teachers	129	300	6,394
Students	666	1,662	43,444
Teacher/Student Ratio	5.2 : 1	5.5 : 1	6.8 : 1
Male Teachers	27	62	1,321
Female Teachers	102	238	5,255
Male/Female Teacher Ratio	3.8 : 1	3.8 : 1	4 : 1

RECRUITMENT

While no congregation follows the ideal in doing everything in the Sunday school according to "the book", there is a recommended way in which Sunday school teachers should be recruited to their work. Our pastors-in-training at the Seminary learn about teacher recruitment in this way.

Because the Sunday school is often the "front line" in the spiritual training of a majority of our children outside the home, the securing and training of Sunday school teachers is to be a matter of high priority with the pastor and or with the congregation's committee on Christian education. Securing and training Sunday school teachers is not to be a sideline activity, crowded into the final weeks before the next Sunday school session begins.

Recruitment of teachers would best be done by invitation or appointment. The pastor together with the council or its committee on education should select and call teachers in advance of the time when they will be needed. The Sunday school teacher will be teaching the gospel of Christ to our children, and trying to make the Bible events "come alive" for them. Therefore careful selection of teachers is mandatory. The selecting committee must give prayerful consideration to the qualifications of those who will be chosen to teach our children. Bear in mind the care with which the church in Jerusalem chose those seven deacons who were to administer the physical affairs of their large congregation. Those deacons were to be of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. (Acts 6:3) Our Sunday school teachers should not be anything less than the people most fit for this work!

Note that this recruitment would best be done by invitation or appointment. Calling for volunteers to fill a teacher vacancy may add up to grave disappointment, should the pastor or church council have to conclude that one or another volunteer seems unfit for the work. However, calling for a list of names of people who are generally interested in teaching children and

working with the youth of the congregation might be helpful in providing the selecting body a pool of interested parties. There will be those who are quite qualified, but do not think themselves ready for teaching and reluctant to place their names on yet another list of volunteers.

Men and women of various age levels may be asked to teach in the Sunday school. None below a junior in high school is recommended, and these younger teachers only for the small children. Male teachers should be considered, especially for the upper grades where boys begin to catch on that the Sunday school teachers are mostly women. If the staff is exclusively women, the youngsters might gain the impression that religion and instruction in the Bible is not a "manly" thing. When recruiting teachers, attention should be given to recruit a list of substitute teachers as well, so that the regular teachers will have approved substitutes to "fill in" for them on occasion.

Some of our congregations extend a written "call to teach" to Sunday school teachers. Some congregations induct their teachers into office each fall, or on a church "education" Sunday.

TRAINING SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

The example of some congregations in our Synod hold before us the ideal for training Sunday school teachers, once recruited. The first kind of training is preparatory, before they ever step before a class. Some congregations have a two-year training course, consisting of Bible history, the life of Christ, doctrine study, and teaching methods. Professors Schuetze and Habeck of our Seminary provide the following bibliography of works useful for such preparatory training:

Concordia Leadership-Training Series. St. Louis: Concordia.
Drews, Christopher F., Introduction to the Books of the Bible.
St. Louis: Concordia, 1929.

- Eickmann, Paul E., The Wonderful Works of God. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1970.
- Eickmann, Paul E., Gospel Gems from Isaiah. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1973.
- Fischer, William E., God's Will for Our Lives. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1973.
- Franzmann, Werner H., The Gospel Banners Forward Go. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1970.
- Gerlach, Joel, The Word is Now. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1972.
- Grunze, Richard, God's Record of Beginnings. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1972.
- Kolander, Donald E., The Sermon on the Mount. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1973.
- Kretzmann, P. E., Popular Commentary of the Bible. St. Louis: Concordia, 1921-24.
- Lueker, Erwin L., Concordia Bible Dictionary. St. Louis: Concordia, 1963.
- The Lutheran Educator. A. F. Fehlaue, Editor. Wisconsin Synod. 3614 W. North Avenue, Milwaukee, Wis. 53208.
- Meier, Norbert R., Jonah, the Unwilling Missionary. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1972.
- Meyer, Arnold C., Getting Acquainted with Christian Teaching. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1968.
- Miller, E., Religious Arts and Crafts for Children. St. Louis: Concordia, 1966.
- Panning, Armin J., The Life of Christ. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1971.
- Rein, R.C., Building the Sunday School. St. Louis: Concordia, 1950.
- Riess, Oswald, What Does the Bible Say? Detroit: Bethany Lutheran Church Office. Available Northwestern, Milwaukee.
- Rupprecht, F., Bible History References. St. Louis: Concordia, 1934.
- Schuetze, Armin W., Basic Doctrines of the Bible. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1969.
- Schuetze, Armin W., Family Life under Christ. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1971.
- Toppe, Carleton, The Church's Ministry in a Corrupt Society. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1972.
- Wicke, Harold E., Catechism of Differences. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1974.
- Wicke, Harold E., Christ and the Holy Scriptures. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1970.
- WELS Commission on Doctrinal Matters. This We Believe. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1967.

Those members who volunteer for youth work in general may be invited for this preparatory training. Others, lacking confidence in their talents, may have to be "evangelically encouraged." Preparatory training should include having the trainees observe capable teachers at work in the present Sunday school classes.

A second phase of teacher training is the on-going training of active teachers. This type of training is more commonly carried out among us. This involves weekly or biweekly meetings of the Sunday school teachers with the pastor. Here lessons are studied in advance, teaching problems discussed, and the practical matters of offerings, schedules, singing practice, and devotions are arranged. The on-going training of teachers should also include further courses of study for teacher enrichment, demonstrations of our Sunday school teaching method, and filmstrips that will give depth to the teacher's knowledge of Bible life and times.

All will agree that careful training of Sunday school teachers goes a long way to help them have confidence for the important work they are called upon to do. While getting people to devote time for such training in preparation to teach would be a challenge, the training itself could upgrade the opinion of Sunday school teaching in the congregation. Ideally, those who work through preparation courses of study should be filled with the Holy Spirit through the Word, with the result that they view teaching as a responsible privilege.

VARIATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

So much for how teacher recruitment and training should be done. Most congregational situations are far from ideal. What variations might help Sunday school teacher recruitment and training in your Sunday school?

Recruitment

Present Sunday school teachers might invite individual church members to observe their class, or to come in to help with some phase of the lesson. Get them exposed to the work of the Holy Spirit in the Sunday school, rather than that they merely see it from outside the classroom. Teachers can also boost teacher recruitment by the manner in which they speak of their work in the Kingdom of Christ. Does the teacher complain about the time Sunday school eats up? Does he/she grumble about kids not listening these days? Or do our present teachers lift their eyes to the Lord in their work, looking beyond inattentive children and makeshift classrooms, seeing their work for what it is, namely, making the way of salvation known to children. Let our present teachers speak of "privilege" and "opportunity for growth" when they talk to others of Sunday school teaching! Let them testify to how much they have learned of their Savior by having to teach Him to others! Teachers can help recruit their own replacements.

Pastors may also have to vary the ideal method of recruitment. Let your next stewardship "program" include a survey of talents and interests of the members of the congregation. Give this same survey to each new member when he joins the church. Include a slot for "Sunday school teaching" or "teaching children about God." Discover your potential teachers, so you may later invite them for training. Secure teachers for Vacation Bible school other than those who teach in the Sunday school. Let VBS with its short-term, concentrated approach be the proving ground for those members who may be apt to teach on a year-round basis. The adult Bible class might also serve for teaching recruitment. The pastor may give assignments for brief presentation to adults in this study class. Be attentive for those who indicate an aptitude for teaching, and a love for God's Word. And when a new teacher is to be called, let it not always be the pastor who runs after candidates with a hand full of teacher's manuals. Have your church council or its department of education extend the

invitations to teach Sunday school.

Pastors must demonstrate their respect for the Sunday school teacher's office, in the humble knowledge that without the Sunday school, he would be hard-pressed to give his instruction classes anything close to a sufficient background in Bible history. If the shepherd of the congregation respects his teachers, the members of the flock will be prompted to respect the office of teaching Sunday school.

Training

What about variations here? Certainly not many of our congregations are looking at a two-year course of preparation! Perhaps a shorter preparatory course could be arranged. Eight to ten lessons over a one-year period, with several scheduled observation sessions in the present classes. If not that, then perhaps a short course during the summer for new teachers. Or if the Sunday school is extremely small, the pastor might give the same training course informally at the home of a prospective teacher. But some kind of preparation is surely preferable to bringing in a new teacher cold to his task!

A variation in on-going training might be for the pastor to conduct actual Sunday school classes for each teacher in turn, letting the teacher observe the pastor using the teaching method with children. To help with teacher evaluation, church council members or education committee members could visit each teacher's class, prearranged, with a teaching evaluation form supplied by the committee or pastor. So few of our teachers get any feedback from observers in their classes. This way, the pastor could offer specific points of help for the teachers' classroom procedures.

COMMON PROBLEMS IN RECRUITING TEACHERS FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL

Teachers quit when their children are out of Sunday school.

Some are reluctant to teach small classes with one to three pupils.

Some are reluctant to teach in a small Sunday school where a wide range in age prevails.

Men claim an inability to teach children (usually untried) more often than women.

There is little congregational knowledge of or regard for Sunday school teaching.

Prospective teachers claim they are not capable.

Many claim they have "no time" for teacher's meetings and preparation.

High school students lack maturity to effectively handle children.

There is too little training before teachers must start their duties.

There is too little supervision of the actual teaching process, too little evaluation, feedback, and help.

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