

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
THROUGH GROUP WORK

A FIELD WORK PROJECT

Under the Supervision of
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and
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To

Rev. Clarence Moses Hawkins

and

Mrs. Susie D. Hawkins

whose Christian guidance throughout my earlier years influenced me to pursue this field of work.

PREFACE

This report is especially for the purpose of giving in detail the actual project work of the writer with two groups-- The Jolly Teen Agers of Ariel Bowen Methodist Church and the Y-teen Club of the Carrie Steele Pitts Orphanage Home.

The program of these two groups, based on the objectives given in Chapter III of this report is one of religious education and an endeavor has been made to develop each group in like manner--striving at each meeting to achieve the objectives as stated.

The writer wishes to express her gratitude to Mrs. A. Louise Taylor, Executive Director of Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the Y.W.C.A., who made possible the agency through which Gammon's M.R.E. candidates could work and who has helped the writer greatly through advice during conferences in her offices and at staff meetings; to Mrs. M. J. Butler, Extension Director of Phyllis Wheatley Branch Y.W.C.A. for her constant leadership and guidance in my work at Ariel Bowen Church through personal conferences; to Mrs. Hilda Bell, Director of Y-teen Department of Phyllis Wheatley Branch Y.W.C.A. who gave me constant guidance and materials to work with in the Y-teens club at Carrie Steele Pitts Home, and to Professor P. A. Taylor, Director of the Department of Religious Education at Gammon Seminary and my instructor in several classes, who through personal conferences, staff meetings and class room instruction has given me advice, constant guidance and materials that have aided me in building up and carrying out this program of Religious Education through project work in the afore

mentioned groups. I also wish to express my appreciation to the authors and publishers from whose works quotations have been made.

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CHAPTER I

AN INTERPRETATION OF WHAT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROPOSES TO DO THROUGH GROUP WORK

Before discussing the basic factors of what religious education proposes to do through group work I think it quite essential to define religious education, and enumerate a few of its original problems which gradually led to the specifically defined program which religious education now proposes to do through group work.

Religious Education may be defined as the process of teaching people how to live religiously. This statement is necessarily very broad.. "How to live religiously" is open to as many interpretations as religion itself, and few words in our language are subject to a wider latitude of definition than religion. Hence a more concise definition of religious education would be needed for this particular purpose.¹

Religious education means the use of all those agencies which will enable a plastic individual to grow into, and appropriate as a personal possession, the values of religious experiences, more idealism and intelligent biblical knowledge.²

Elliot, from the point of view of progressive education discusses the problems of religious education as they affect the church. He says,

Important problems facing the churches grow out of the fact that two separate and distinct streams of influence meet in the work of the churches. The historic practices of the church belong primarily to the first stream and religious education primarily to the second. The efforts to adjust or in-

1. Lotz-Crawford, Studies in Religious Education. p. 58
2. Ibid., p. 61

tegrate the two in the program of the churches causes serious problems particularly since there are disagreements both in regard to basic assumption and in regard to the approach to be made to the solution of the differences.¹

It was hard for the churches to see into the fact that as Christianity has come into contact with diverse conditions and new knowledge, it has undergone both reinterpretation and enrichment. Religious education which is Christian is a part of this centurylong process. Here reappraisal and reconstruction in the light of expanding experiences; and at the same time contemporary experience is undergoing interpretation, appraisal and redirection in the light of our historic Christian heritage.

Religious education therefore is not an education with a fixed and predetermined content. There is no true interpretation of the Christian religion which it is its function to transmit. Rather, religious education is an enterprise in which historical experiences and conceptions are utilized in a process by which are meaningful for them today.²

These viewpoints make very vivid the reasons why group work plays such an important role in religious education since, as will be noticed, group work does a lot in fulfilling the ideals mentioned. A technical examination of what religious education proposes to do through group work will clarify the the statement mentioned above. Let us begin with Slayson's examination of this type of program.³ He states that,

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1. Elliot, H. S. Can Religious Education Be Christian. p. 58
 2. Lotz-Crawford, Studies in Religious Education. p. 61
 3. Slayson, S. R. Creative Group Education. p. 3.

The accepted practices in schools and group work was quite different from the instances cited. Education consisted of adult imposed programs for individual members and the entire group. Adults imposed their will throughout the meetings of the class or club. The objectives centered largely around training for conformity and, in the words of a leading public educator of that time "for instinct obedience of authority".¹

At the present time the interest is shifting from program construction to development of interests, initiative, talents, and power in the individual. The trend now is toward using the small club and school group as a training ground for wider social action; the individual member is viewed as a potential force for group function and for social improvement. The perfection of the individual in a static world, which dominated the old pedagogy, is giving way to the concept that education is not merely an instrument for social conservation but that it is also a force for social creativity and change. Thus we are witnessing important advances in group education. No longer is its major aim to protect children from their environment of the congested tenement, and of the crowded street, by providing substitutes in the form of clubs and club programs. Group education now seeks to advance and guide the development of the individual so that he can resist the evils of his environment and reconstruct that environment in the interest of human happiness. In a general sense, group work in former days was a time-filling device and largely

1. Slavson, S. R. Creative Group Education. p. 3.

negative; it aimed to prevent real or imaginary disaster rather than to build new conditions in the world and dynamic attitudes in the individual.

To be still more specific, through group work religious education attempts to help each person in at least the following ways:

(a) To feel that the world is a friendly place. If the material world is merely a machine it can be no more a home than is a tractor or a stone crusher. To the Christian it is a home permeated with love, ministering to the welfare of those who live in it. Therefore it will be treated with that respect shown to the home. Persons with this attitude cannot ruthlessly destroy beauty or exploit resources and treasure for themselves alone. It is the heritage of all and must be conserved for the future as well as used for the present.

(b) To develop self-reliance. It is no kindness to do for persons what they can and ought to do for themselves. With tiny children of the nursery age, for example, the aim is to encourage them to dress and undress themselves, to look after their own playthings, to undertake and do increasingly difficult things. To help oneself, to be self reliant, to provide for one's needs, not to be afraid, to face problems and overcome are essential qualities if one is to be a helpful member of society.

(c) To develop the spirit of helpfulness. Human sympathy and helpfulness are among the most beautiful things in life.

The good Samaritan touches the imagination and makes the heart glow, however much one may fail to live up to his example.

"Let this be your watchword", said Tolstoi, "he who hurts another harms himself; he who helps another helps himself."

The sympathetic heart and helping hand are essential to social happiness and promise.

Another step is necessary, namely, to change the social system itself. The changes which need to be made cannot be brought about by the individual alone. It is necessary to get groups working together. For example, it is safe to say that parents, labor unions, employers and churches in a factory town may bring about any changes in reason that they are determined to effect; if they work together heartily. The religious educator seeks to get groups however different they may be, to unite on any common ground for social betterment and friendly intercourse.

One of the most important factors that should not be left out according to Myers¹ is the development of a consciousness of God and an interpretation of Him on the level of their experiences of the group involved. Most of the foregoing, it is true, applies as well to character education as to religious education through group work. It is all incomplete and lifeless without God. How God shall be conceived by various age groups is a major problem for the religious teacher. Many

1. Myers, A. J. Wm. Teaching Religion Creatively. p. 47

Old Testament and medieval ideas of God are no more acceptable today than are the scientific ideas of those times.

Two phases at least are necessary to satisfy man's needs today: (a) The idea of intelligence, and purpose; of universal ethical probity; the warm glow of friendship and love. He cannot, therefore, be less than personal. (b) With this must be coupled the idea of cosmic force. No longer can an age which thinks of space in terms of millions of light years and has looked into the universe of the atom be satisfied with a local God who sits above the clouds in a detached heaven looking down upon mankind. He must be in the cosmic processes and in the life of man and society. This is not blind force, but the force we know best as purpose, friendship and love. Even scientists like Pasteur* have accepted the fact that "there is something beyond."

The human mind, actuated by an invisible force will never cease to ask itself: What is beyond? What is left without this sense of God?

Teachers of religion are too ready to attempt to meet the needs of people in any way but through getting them to God. Yet young people themselves feel this need, but too often the church offers everything else but this. It tries to entertain and amuse. The creative teacher of religion helps his pupils experience the cosmic, living God!¹

This then is a large part of the contribution of the teacher of religion in all group work: to help his pupils have an intelligent apprehension of God in keeping with the scientific and cultural enlightenment of his day; and yet so

*F. N. Vallery - Radot, Rene, The Life of Pasteur. Translated from the French by Mrs. Devonshire. The Star Edition. No date, as quoted by Myers, A. J. Wm.

1. Myers, A. J. Wm. Teaching Religion Creatively. p. 43

warm and personal and intimate that he feels the very universe to be permeated with a loving spirit as in the best home circles, that he feels all peoples to be his brother, and communes with God in work and play and worship as with an intimate friend. These qualities all meet in Jesus and lead to the estimate of H. G. Wells: "To this day this Galilean is too great for our small hearts!"

But the question still remains, "How do we know when we are working with God?" Here are unmistakable signs:

(a) If one is helping individuals have concern for the right and a conviction that the right must be done, he is working with God. If he helps one have faith that his own life is worthwhile however often defeated, he is co-operating with God. Morale seems possible if one is of significance to the Eternal. Without morale the struggle for the good life is already lost.

(b) If there is suffering through injustice on the part of any person or group and one throws himself into the struggle to get justice done, he is undoubtedly working with God. Every Church should be so valiant for justice that the world could not help identifying social justice and the Christian's God.

(c) If there is unloveliness and ugliness in the world and one seeks through any and every means to make life more beautiful he is working with God. If one gives his strength to make the "east side" blossom as the rose with parks and gardens and tasteful houses he will be co-operating with God.

He who helps open man's eyes and heart to appreciate and create beauty is allied with God in His creative work.

(d) In seeking truth one need have no doubt that he is on God's side co-operating in His purpose. If there is ignorance and superstition and one is giving himself to banishing it he may be certain God is with him in that effort. If there are children or youth or grown-ups who do not understand God, and one helps them to know the truth, he is working with God.

(e) If there is ugliness in human life - disease, sin, instability, selfishness, anti-social attitudes and rebellion against God, and one seeks to help others to a purer, stronger, more helpful, more godly life, he is working with God.

(f) It is true that one may do these things and yet not acknowledge God or even be an avowed agnostic. This does not alter the fact that he is doing the work God is seeking to have done.

To recapitulate: The teacher of religion has to do with persons; always persons. His work is to inspire and help each one live a pure strong, helpful personal life; to be constructive members of their group; to change society; and in all and through all to live in and with God. These qualities are seen in Jesus. Creative teaching effects growth, development and change in persons, and brings about even radical changes in society itself. The aim of Christian teaching, then, maybe defined somewhat as follows: "To help each person achieve his own highest and best life, in fellowship with God, and in cooperation with and in service of his fellows and to promote a civilization embodying ever more fully the ideals of Jesus".¹

1. Myers, A. J. Wm. Teaching Religion Creatively. p. 48

To summarize these points of emphasis which show what religious education proposes to do through group work it is quite vivid now that the

Organization of religious education around life situations of children and young people is more than a pedagogical device for motivating subject matter. It is fundamental to the significance of religious education. Since learning takes place in and through experience, a significant educational process must be related to these situations where the learning is taking place. Otherwise attitudes and habits will be developed and ideas will be formed in the "trial and error" learning of life, without the contribution which the Christian religion might make.¹

Hence the function of religious education is to help children, young people, and adults to consider the problems which they face from day to day with a view to discovering what is the Christian solution of the problem, and to make plans for carrying out these decisions in individual and group life. This chapter has expressed what should be the proposals of group work through Religious Education in general. It will be noted in the following chapters that some of these proposals formulate the same methods used in carrying out the group work for which this entire report is written.

1. Elliott, H. S. Can Religious Education Be Christian. p. 313.

CHAPTER II

WHAT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROPOSES TO DO THROUGH CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIVITIES

In the previous chapter an attempt was made to show what religious education proposes to do through group work. Stress was placed more or less however on the reason why group work was important. This chapter shall include what the writer is terming the "substance" of group work - constructive activities.

The writer is using the word constructive to describe activities for group work because she is thinking in terms of activities that will make for further development, i.e., that will be pertaining to or resembling construction. There are many types of activities that will do just this. Only a few of them will be mentioned in this chapter and these particular ones have been chosen because of the fact that throughout the time of the writer's field work she has attempted to include in her program these activities. They are dramatics, crafts, play, parties and worship.

In selecting dramatics as a constructive activity any leader has to be sure that he has a specific purpose in mind and a careful study of the material selected must be made. The real value of dramatics lies in its creative aspect; the more the group tends toward making up its own plays the more beneficial it will prove to be to them. Slavson says "the enrichment and strengthening of personality occurs through the use of the components that constitute it; and since im-

personation, manual work, art, design, music and group activity are all involved in creative dramatics, its educative value becomes at once apparent".¹ Hence dramatics, with the proper leadership, can prove to be quite constructive.

Through crafts--generally termed "handicraft"--many developments of individual personalities may be made. Slanson says,

It has been observed that to manipulate and to put together is a natural reaction in man. The expression of basic manipulative drives releases body tensions and balance the personality. It also develops the power of mastery, and leads to many learnings concerning the nature of some of the materials used in the process. Solution of difficulties and problems, which is possible in working with crafts, strengthens character and a sense of self-esteem results from achievement.²

These results pointed out by Slanson are very helpful as well beneficial to individuals and to groups but as in dramatics, unless a true amount of creativity and self-expression can be included the work becomes training rather than development and the ultimate goals are not achieved.

The activity we call play is one that through the years has been greatly misunderstood. From infancy up the child spends a large amount of his time playing, playing, playing. He grows into adolescence and sometimes even into adulthood feeling that a part of his leisure must be spent in play but

1. Slanson, S. R. Creative Group Education. p. 13

2. Ibid. p. 89

does he ever learn why he plays? In a large number of cases he does not because it is never revealed to him that play can and actually does have constructive value when it is understood and has become meaningful. It is likely that as adolescents play would be meaningful in the sense that it aids in the physical development of the body - this is a part of its true value but not all of it. Dewey says that,

The defining characteristic of play is not amusement nor aimlessness. It is the fact that the aim is thought of as activity in the same line, without defining continuity of action in reference to results produced. Activities as they grow more complicated gain added meaning by greater attention to specific results achieved. Thus they pass gradually into work.¹

This should be the thought of every leader when including play into her curriculum. If she can't include it as a purposeful activity then it would be better that she left it out. It is only constructive when there is a purpose in mind and a definite goal set.

Parties become of constructive value when they can and do offer opportunities for educational experiences and for the exercise of creative imagination. So often parties are given with no particular purpose in mind and the results are outward expressions of self-conscious silence or rough-housing

The educative possibilities of a party are (1) group activity, (2) enjoyment of a social milieu, (3) overcoming of shyness and self-consciousness, (4) learning social behavior, (5) acquiring

1. Dewey, John, Democracy and Education, p. 241

skills, (6) self-expression, (7) gaining social approbation, (8) raising the standard of aesthetic and social enjoyment. These educative possibilities are stated by Slawson¹ and a description of each is given.

In examining his descriptions the same principle which holds true in the other activities holds true in this one. If the leader is constantly on guard to maintain a harmony of thoughts and ideas in the midst of disagreement among the individuals of the party; if creative imagination and ability are given sufficient choice; and if the correct atmosphere is created as a result of careful planning then there can be observed and seen in actuality the educative possibilities of parties.*

Worship is the activity that I place very near the top when we think in terms of constructive activities. It does something for that part of the body that hardly anything else would have any effect on - that is the soul. It involves fellowship, music, communion with God. It gives one the opportunity for silent meditation and close examination of the self at which time one can see more clearly what ought to be done and has greater strength and courage to do it. It creates in one the desire to do that which is highest and best provided he received full benefit from the service.

Brightman says, "Worship consists of reverent contempla-

1. Slawson, op. cit., p 155

*It has been pointed out by several authorities that perhaps the best gathering is a co-educational group where a boys' or girls' club is the host to a group of the opposite sex

tion, revelation, communion, and fruition".¹ Mrs. Althearn says,

The true meaning of worship is in the word itself, which literally means 'worth-ship'. Whatever is of worth or value is that to which we attach most meaning. The Christian religion regards God as of supreme value; therefore anything which brings us into closer relationship to God is our 'worth-ship'. Hence we may briefly define worship as any thought, feeling or act which brings one into closer contact with God, and through which the Divine reaches human life.²

Any number of definitions and descriptions of worship may be recalled as we think in terms of its usefulness in developing a group. There is one other important aspect of this activity that should be considered here however. It is "how do we worship." Myers states two ways in which one might worship: (1) "through spontaneous, emerging or incidental worship and (2) more formal worship."³ When thinking in terms of the best of these two types of worship experiences as they relate to group work the former is the most appropriate. In spontaneous, emerging or incidental worship there is opportunity for creativity, originality and complete self-initiative because the experience is not a planned one but one that arises because of the situation at that particular time.

What Religious Education proposes to do through group work and what it proposes to do through constructive activities

1. From the Religious Values by Edgar S. Brightman. Copyright used by permission of the Abingdon Press. Page 179 as quoted by Althearn, Laura A. Christian Worship For American Youth. p. 9.

2. Ibid p. 8.

3. Myers, A. J. Wm. Teaching Religion Creatively. p 160, 170.

has been discussed in these first two chapters of this report because it is through these channels that the report will move. That is to say, in carrying out a proposed program of religious education with teen-agers the method used was the group work method and constructive activities.were the substance of the ` group work program. The writer began her report with various author's viewpoints in order that her actual program which composes the remainder of the chapters might prove some of the suggestions and ideas that these authors feel sure will work.

CHAPTER III

THE PROPOSED CALENDAR PROGRAM OF THE JOLLY TEEN AGERS

- October 24, 1946 A planned worship service. The theme of the worship: "Service"; organization of the group.
- October 31, 1946 Halloween Party. Games, one or two involving music, mental thought, physical exercise; a halloween game; refreshments served by social committee.
- November 7, 1946 Worship service, games.
- November 14, 1946 Theme of Worship: "Perseverance". The organization of the group; ask for suggestions from members on things they would like to accomplish during the year. Plans for next meeting. Taps.
- November 21, 1946 Theme of Worship: "Thankfulness". Electing other committees needed to carry out group activities that were not formed at previous meeting. Miscellaneous program planned by the program committee. Dues. Games. A permanent record of the membership of the group to be made. Discuss activities for next meeting. Taps.
- November 28, 1946 Meeting to take the form of a Thanksgiving Entertainment planned by the Youth Fellowship of the Church.
- December 5, 1946 Plans for the Christmas Party which was decided upon in the previous meeting, games. Taps.
- December 24, 1946 Christmas party in the home of one of the members.
- January 9, 1947 Short worship service. Business part of meeting. An attempt again to get suggestions on activities the group as a whole would be interested in. Remarks from Mrs. M. J. Butler (Extension Director from Y.W.C.A.) Games, dues. Taps.
- January 16, 1947 Group singing, business part of meeting, games. Taps. Present Miss Black who will be in charge of handicraft group. Decide on craft.

January 23, 1947 Begin group work - making of crocheted beanies for girls; organize debating team for boys. Business part of meeting. Taps.

January 30, 1947 Continue work on crafts; debating team organization and discussion of subject matter for debating. Business part of meeting, games, taps.

February 6, 1947 Theme for month: "Brotherhood" Worship service. Business part of meeting. Announce the Mother-Daughter Banquet. Plan for a valentine party. Introduce Miss Black who will be directly responsible for the handicraft group. Taps.

February 13, 1947 Valentine Party. Give a historical background of Valentine's Day. Games - special valentine games. Group singing of songs appropriate for this particular holiday. Refreshments. Taps.

February 20, 1947 Worship service; business session of meeting, beginning of work with the handicraft group; games - "Numbers" - an African game, Jerusalem Swing Gate, Simeon Said. Taps.

February 27, 1947 Worship Service; business session of meeting, discuss activity of some kind for Easter; work on handicraft materials. Games, taps.

March 6, 1947 Worship Service; business session of meeting--preparation for some form of Easter Play; work on handicraft materials; attempt organization of debating team among boys; games, taps.

March 13, 1947 Worship Service; business part of meeting, handicraft group work, and debating team group discussion; practice for Easter Play; games; taps.

March 20, 1947 Recreation in the form of games. Business part of meeting; handicraft group work. Mock Dr. I. Q. program - Rev. C. J. Gray in charge.

March 27, 1947 Short devotion; ask for suggestions of activities interesting to the group for the month of April. Easter practice. Taps.

April 10, 1947	Worship replaced by some form of program activity by program committee. Business part of meeting; handicraft work to be continued by the girls; wood carving to be begun by the boys if proper materials are secured. Games. Taps.
April 17, 1947	Short worship service; informal talk on Courtship (to be given by Rev. Shockley of Clark College) discussion to follow talk. Games. Taps.
April 24, 1947	Continue work on crafts; games; taps.
April 26, 1947	(Saturday) Picnic
May 1, 1947	City-wide teen age group party--the Jolly Teen Agers as hosts. Folk dancing will be taught this combined group by one of the workers from the Y.W.C.A.
May 8, 1947	Climaxing of work in crafts. Program planned by program committee with parents of the members present.

THE PROPOSED CALENDAR PROGRAM OF THE Y-TEEN CLUB

October 18, 1946	Organization of group after introductions. Explanation of new name of group.
October 25, 1946	Complete organization of committees. Fill out record blanks. Short worship service. Plan for Halloween Party, games, taps.
November 1, 1946	Post Halloween Party
November 8, 1946	Short worship service, business part of meeting; games; taps.
November 15, 1946	Business part of meeting; miscellaneous program planned by the program committee; games, taps.
November 22, 1946	Worship service, business part of meeting; "Story-telling" by two of the members; games; taps.
November 29, 1946	Worship Service planned by program committee. Business part of meeting; games; group singing of Christmas songs. Taps.
December 6, 1946	Special Christmas worship service, business part of meeting--discuss plans for Christmas party and plans for future activities for the group. Taps.
December 13, 1946	Christmas Party.
January 10, 1947	Short worship service, business part of meeting--discuss desired topics for group discussions, games, taps.
January 17, 1947	Worship service, business part of meeting, begin discussion on various phases of "Ettiquette", group singing, games, taps.
January 23, 1947	Business part of meeting, one song and prayer. Continue discussion on other phases of Ettiquette. Games. Taps.
January 30, 1947	Worship service, business part of meeting, make mention of the Mother-Daughter Banquet. Introduction and practice of new Y-teen song of 1947. Taps.

February 7, 1947	Short worship service, business part of meeting, discuss preparation for going to the Mother-Daughter Banquet, informal discussion on "Courtship" (question and answer method). Practice new Y-teen song, taps.
February 14, 1947	Entire group to attend the Mother-Daughter Banquet to be given at Booker T. Washington High School.
February 21, 1947	Planned worship service, business part of meeting; discuss possible project work (handicrafts, book reports, etc.). Program arranged by program committee. Games, taps.
February 28, 1947	Short worship service; business part of meeting - discuss activities for spring season. Group discussion on Parliamentary laws. Games. Taps.
March 7, 1947	Short devotion; business part of meeting; beginning of handicraft work, passing out of parts for the Easter Play, taps.
March 14, 1947	Short worship service; business part of meeting; practice for Easter play; work on handicraft material if time allows; taps.
March 21, 1947	Short devotion; work on crafts; business part of meeting; practice for Easter Play; taps.
March 28, 1947	Practice for Easter Play. Taps.
April 4, 1947	Presentation of Easter Play.
April 11, 1947	Short worship service; business part of meeting; work on craft materials; out-of-door games; taps.
April 18, 1947	Group singing; business part of meeting; work on craft material; games; taps.
April 25, 1947	Work on handicraft materials. Out-of-door games; twilight worship service (out-of-doors). Taps.
May 2, 1947	Short worship service, continue work on handicraft materials, games, out-of-doors. Taps.
May 3, 1947	Picnic - place and activities to be decided upon.

May 9, 1947

Exhibition of articles made from handi-
craft materials; business part of meeting;
games; worship service.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROGRAM IN ACTION

In presenting the actual program of the two groups, the Y-teens and the Jolly Teen Agers, it is quite essential to mention first the community in which they are situated, the space used for club rooms along with the objectives as outlined by the worker for the two groups. These objectives were drawn up to be used for both groups since their programs were to be similar and the same goals were to be achieved by each.

The community, a section of Atlanta known as the Pittsburgh area, is the community in which the dwelling for these two groups are located. At the time when the group of Jolly Teen Agers was organized at Ariel Bowen Methodist Church there were no other recreational activities nor recreational groups in this community. That is why Rev. M. J. Jones, pastor of Ariel Bowen Methodist Church suggested this church as a center. At Ariel Bowen the basement was used as the club room. This provided adequate space for the twenty-one members enrolled in this group, and had these facilities in ready use for regular meetings, social activities etc.: a piano, a kitchen, and hymnals for youth. The members of this group included girl and boy teen-agers.

At the Carrie Steele Pitts Orphanage Home the Y-teen Club of twenty-one recorded members is more or less a private club--that is, it is not community wide. This group used for its club room the assembly hall or room which they use for their

Sunday Church School and Worship Services. In this room they have the facilities of a piano, youth hymnals, a variety of popular and classical music and some current youth reading materials. This group was composed of all girls.

The materials for handicraft for the Jolly Teen Agers were paid for through the general church treasurer. The materials for handicraft at the Orphanage Home were paid for by the direct head of the Home--Mrs. Pitts and by the Y-teen department.

These two groups of teen agers had as their objectives:

1. To develop in each person a balanced personality
2. To challenge their abilities for creativity of ideas and actions during the year's program.
3. To make meaningful to them the art of worship through song, prayer and dramatization.
4. To make meaningful and purposeful the recreational and social activities.
5. To help deepen their comprehension of the Christian way of fruitful living in life's many forms of relationships.

The Jolly Teen Agers

As the calendar program shows the first meeting of the Jolly Teen Agers was on October 24, 1946 at 6:30 P.M. A group of seven was present and although there were not enough to begin organization proper a temporary social committee was elected for the purpose of making plans for a Halloween Party to take place on the following Thursday night.

On the following Thursday night, October 31, 1946 a group of thirty was present. The party began by the singing of group songs which seemingly gave that feeling of "togetherness" for all present. Games of various kinds were played--the last one being a Halloween game which was composed of little tasks for everybody present. This made for a very good form of group participation and a night of fun was enjoyed by all. Refreshments were served at the closing part of the party.

November 7, 1947 an informal meeting of the group was carried out by Mrs. Gray in my absence. The following week a group of twenty-one were present. Following the planned worship service on theme in calendar program the organization of the group took place. The officers: president, secretary, assistant secretary and treasurer were elected and the name of the group and a club motto was chosen. The following week the worship service had as its theme "Praise and Thanksgiving." The regular business part of the meeting included the making of club laws and the recording of the names and addresses of each member. A short miscellaneous program was presented by

the program committee after which games were played. The meeting was closed by singing taps.

The last meeting of the month which was to have been in the form of a Thanksgiving Entertainment was not carried out because of last minute changes on the part of the Youth Fellowship.

Only two meetings were held during the month of December. The theme chosen for this month was "The True Meaning of the Christmas Season, Its Songs and Customs." At the first meeting Christmas Carols were used in the worship service--one central point of this service was the telling of the beautiful history of one of the carols, "Silent Night". This gave much more meaning to the carol as we sang it. The regular business part of the meeting included suggestions for a Christmas Party, Christmas Caroling and the exchanging of Christmas gifts. Games were played and the meeting closed with the singing of Taps. The second meeting involved mostly a continuation of plans for the Christmas Party. The Christmas Party on December 24, 1946 was an actual example of the theme selected for the month. After a very lively party in the home of one of the members where gifts were exchanged, games were played and refreshments were served, the group went through parts of the Pittsburgh area serenading homes with Christmas Carols. The finality of this party was in the home of one of the sick members of the club where they expressed their good wishes for her speedy recovery and left with her a basket of fruit.

At the first meeting in January, the 9th, we had the presence of the Director of the Extension Division of the Y.W.C.A., Mrs. Marguerite J. Butler. A short worship service was held. During the business part of the meeting some activities were suggested (handicraft, debating team, group singing) and were decided upon by the members as activities they would like to participate in. Some encouraging and helpful remarks were given by Mrs. Butler. Games were played. The meeting closed with singing of Taps. The second meeting was quite informal and took the form of group singing. Games were played after which Miss Carrie Black who had consented to lead the handicraft group was introduced and proceeded to show various articles that could be made. The girls decided to crochet little club hats using the club colors, blue and yellow. The meeting closed by singing Taps. The third meeting took the form of a "Stunt Night", affair which was suggested and led by Rev. Jones. This affair was attended by thirty-three young people. Mental, physical and musical games were played and refreshments were served. At the last meeting of the month of January we had a very small attendance of seven members and a late beginning of the meeting, hence, after a short worship service the meeting was closed by the singing of Taps.

At the first meeting in February the worship service centered around "Brotherhood" was carried out after which the business part of the meeting began. Plans were made for a

Valentine party after some discussion and Miss Black made a statement concerning the materials for crocheting. The meeting closed with the singing of Taps. On February 13, the group of seventeen gathered slowly for the Valentine party but after getting there much fun was enjoyed in the playing of the special Valentine games which were taken from the Fun Encyclopedia by E. O. Harbin. These games were: "Making Valentines", "Where's Your Heart" and "Hot Spot". Special valentine songs had also been chosen for group singing but these songs were not sung. A short history of the origin of St. Valentines Day was read by the president of the group in an effort to give some meaning to the celebration of this holiday (this history of Valentines Day was copied from "The American Book of Days by G. W. Douglas."¹ On the third Thursday night the group did not begin their meeting with the planned worship service in keeping with the theme of the month nor did they carry out any form of the program so planned for that meeting. A little work was done on the materials Miss Black had purchased for the crocheting of the little club hats. The meeting closed abruptly when we learned that another meeting had to take place. On the last Thursday night in February the meeting began with a short worship service. Next a short business session of the meeting was held at which time it was decided that an Easter Play be given by this group as a sunrise service on Easter Sunday morning. The handicraft

1. Douglas, G. W. The American Book of Days. New York: The W. W. Wilson Company. 1940 p. 310

group continued work on their beanies. The meeting was dismissed informally.

For each of the first three meetings during the month of March worship services were planned around the theme "Loyalty to Christ", but none of these were carried out by the group in their meetings. Each of these first three meetings were quite informally begun, work was continued in the handicraft group on the beanies. Short devotional services were conducted in the first and third meetings. The Mock Dr. I. Q. program was not fully developed hence could not be carried out. It was during these informal meetings of group singing and crocheting that a decided improvement in the self-expression of individual members was noticed hence allowing for their truthful opinions about how the group now stood in its worth and what they would like to do to improve it. Two new members joined in the second meeting of the month and it was at this meeting that the suggestions for inviting in teen agers from other groups in the city; for a variety of spring activities; and for more interested members were made. These feelings for better meetings were again expressed in the last meeting of the month when, after the worship service, complete response on the part of all members present was given in planning for an Easter Egg Hunt, beginning plans for a picnic and other ideas for thought. An informal dinner was made so that a little time could be given for rehearsal of the Easter Play. At this rehearsal the time was designated for the other rehearsals for the next week.

The first Thursday night in April was spent in practicing for the Easter Play. Miss Black was directly in charge of the rehearsals. The practices were not as good as they should have been and the Easter Play was not given on Easter Sunday morning because of very heavy rain. On Monday April 7, the group had its Easter Egg Hunt at the Bethlehem Center on Gammon's Campus. They hiked from the church to the campus hence upon arrival resting was in order. Games were played later. The eggs were eaten and a hike back to their several homes climaxed the hunt. On Thursday night April 10, the meeting opened with a short devotion led by one of the members of the group. A discussion was had and plans were made for a picnic on Saturday April 26, at the county line; the city-wide teen-age party which had been discussed sometime before.

The other meetings will include working on the crafts already begun; one meeting in which they will hear a talk and ask questions on "Courtship", and one or two out-of-door meetings where mother nature can lend to the simple worship services planned in giving us a full appreciation of this glorious season of spring.

THE Y-TEENS

The group of Y-teens at the Carrie Steele Pitts Orphanage Home had their first meeting on October 18, 1945 at 6:00 o'clock at which time Mrs. Bell, the Director of the Y-teen Department of Phyllis Wheatley Branch Y.W.C.A. was present to introduce me to the girls and to help with the beginning of the club for this school term. At this first meeting a few group songs were sung after which the organization of the group began and the main officers; President, Vice President, Secretary Assistant Secretary and Treasurer were elected. An explanation was given by Mrs. Bell of why the former title "Girl Reserves" had been changed to the present title "Y-teens." Games, led by Mrs. Bell were played and enjoyed. The meeting closed with the singing of Taps.

On October 25, 1946 the meeting was opened by the president with a short worship service centered around the theme of "Prayer". The other officers were elected for the various committees and then some rules and regulations were decided upon. Another part of this meeting was spent in filling out record blanks for files. Plans were made for a Post-Halloween Party. Games were played after which the meeting closed with the singing of taps.

The first meeting of the month of November 1946 took the form of a Halloween Party. Much time was spent in decorating for the party. Some of the artistic members made skeletons of cardboard and other paper designs to dangle from the lights

and the door-way. The party was kept alive and full of enjoyment by all with games, dancing and refreshments. All of the children of the Orphanage Home were invited to the party as well as a few outside friends of some of the members.

The next three meetings of this month had as their main interest "Story Telling". A program of solos, poems, duets, etc. was planned and carried out at each of these meetings by the program committee. Games of various kinds were played at each meeting. The last meeting of November had as its theme for worship, "True Leadership". After the worship service the business part of the meeting was begun at which time a suggestion of a Christmas party was made. After a little discussion it was decided that they have a Christmas Party and a few plans for same were discussed. After a few games the meeting was closed by the singing of Taps.

The first meeting for the month of December 1946 had as its theme for worship "The True Spirit of Christmas". Following the short worship service and the business part of the meeting in which excellent plans were made for the Christmas party a short story "Christmas Eve In Bethlehem" taken from the December Issue (1946) of the Religious Digest was told. Some comments were made at the end of this impressive story which showed that the members had been benefited by the main thought in the story. It was in this meeting that an interesting observation was made. One of the members asked to make suggestions concerning future activities for the group. "It had been their

former policy" she said, "to do some form of craft, to play games and to do group singing but this was not enough". "We would like to have some activities that would be of more educational value to mix with these activities we have been accustomed to". At once I wondered what she meant by "educational value". She was ready to explain without knowing my thoughts that some of the main things they were interested in knowing were the most recent views on Etiquette (the particular phases will be mentioned later) and on Courtship. Other activities (sewing, weaving and book reports) were suggested and discussed. The meeting closed with the singing of Taps. The second meeting took the form of the Christmas Party at which time group singing of Christmas Carols interspersed with lively games and dancing was enjoyed by all. Refreshments were served at the end of the party.

At the first meeting in January 1947, the meeting was conducted in the regular order: worship, the business part of the meeting, games, and the singing of Taps. As new business they discussed specific topics that they would like to learn more about. The next three meetings in January were spent mainly in enthusiastic informal discussions on various phases of "Etiquette", which included topics on "Balls", "Dances", "Sports and Games", "Public conduct": "At the theater, Opera and other public gatherings", Table manners", "The correctly set everyday breakfast, lunch and supper table."¹ It was

1. All of this material was secured from the 1945 edition of Emily Posts' book on Etiquette.

quite interesting to observe the interest of all the girls in wanting to know the right way of doing things, and in actually asking for the latest authoritative views on these things.

The first meeting in February was mainly a continuation of the discussion series--the main topic for discussion being "Courtship". This topic of course was of unusual interest to the girls hence question after question was asked concerning its various aspects. Some of these questions were quite easy to answer, the others were answered through direct ideas of Ralph E. Blount in his book entitled "Love Loyal" which was written for the benefit of youth.¹ After this discussion the group began practice on their new Y-teen song of 1947. Games were played and the meeting closed with the singing of Taps. On their next meeting night February 14, 1947, this group of Y-teens joined Y-teen groups from all over the city at Booker T. Washington High School for a Mother-Daughter Banquet which was being sponsored by the Y-teen Department of Phyllis Wheatley Branch Y.W.C.A. One of the members of our group played a part of the music for the banquet. The banquet was an elaborate affair. The third meeting of this month centered its worship service around the theme chosen for the month "Brotherhood". Two short stories about the religious ideas of a little African boy and a little Dutch girl expressed in youths' language a true feeling of "Brotherhood".

1. Blount, Ralph E., Love Loyal. Nashville, Cokesbury Press 1940.

The prayer and songs were selected numbers which added to the effectiveness of the service. Possible group activities were again discussed, a short program was given by the program committee. An African Game, "Numbers" taken from Children's Games From Many Lands¹ and a musical game "Jerusalem Wing Gate" were played after which the meeting closed with the singing of Taps. At the fourth meeting in February after the short worship service (centered around "Brotherhood") discussion of spring activities was begun. Suggested activities included: an Easter Play, Easter egg hunt, a hike or picnic, some form of sewing or weaving. The only final decision was made on the suggestion of an Easter Play. An informal discussion was had on Parliamentary Laws--their main interest was in the proper way to conduct a meeting--the question and answer method of discussion was used. The meeting closed with the singing of Taps.

The first meeting in March was not held because of continuous hard rain. In the second meeting gym material was cut for the purpose of making necklaces after which the parts for the play were given out. A short devotion was held after which the meeting closed with the singing of Taps. The next two meetings were spent mainly in practicing for the Easter Play and dates during the week were decided upon for rehearsals.

1. Miller, Nina, Children's Games From Many Lands. New York Friendship Press. 1943. p. 17.

On the first meeting night in April, Good Friday night, the girls presented their play entitled "The Children Hear About Easter" to a very appreciative audience after which the entire audience played games, sang a few Easter Hymns and enjoyed refreshments which were given by Mrs. Pitts (Sponsor of the Orphanage Home). The second meeting in April was begun with a short devotion led by the president. In the business part of their meeting plans were made for a picnic to take place May 3, 1947 at Washington Park; out-of-door meetings as soon as the weather permits, continued work on the necklaces, and the desire to make bracelets out of this same type of material were other ideas considered and decided upon for the spring meetings.

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The group of Jolly Teen Agers at Ariel Bowen Methodist Church was an experimental project sponsored by the Church with the cooperation of the Extension Division of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch Y.W.C.A. Hence much time was given in considering the group's possibilities before the group actually began the meetings.

So concerned was Rev. Major F. Jones (minister of Ariel Bowen) with the beginning of this group that he led in the organization of a Board of Directors consisting of Mrs. Mai Gray, who is leader of Religious Education at Ariel Bowen, Mrs. A. Louis Taylor, Executive Director Phyllis Wheatley Branch Y.W.C.A. Mrs. Marguerite J. Butler, Director of Extension Division Y.W.C.A., Professor P. A. Taylor, Head of Department of Religious Education at Gammon Seminary and Rev. M. F. Jones. Rev. Jones said, "There is a great need for the Church, in its fight to save the world, to reach out beyond its Sunday Service and extend its influence to meet all of the needs of the community. We feel, therefore, that religion is more than education or worship. It is also the utilization of all those forces which will make for strong christian personality and development. It is a collaboration of worship, education and recreation".

With this thought in mind the recreation group which later named themselves the "Jolly-teen Agers" was gradually developed. It was his hope to begin such a program with three different

age levels. I am concerned only with the youth. His proposed activities for youth included indoor games, dramatics, study groups, handicraft, forums, visual education, and health lectures.

Considering the objectives given at the beginning of Chapter IV, the outline ideas of Rev. Jones, and the actual program as it was developed weekly by the writer, an evaluation of the group would come to this: through mental, quiet and physical games--the majority of which were chosen for a purpose, that is, to fit into the theme and plan of each meeting, games became more than just an aimless diversion. This conclusion has been drawn from the fact that in the beginning the majority of the members were non-responsive even in games but after being constantly made aware of the fact that these games would prove beneficial to their several abilities in leading, sharing and cooperating as well as many other factors the lack of response gradually changed and now it is just a matter of getting to this part of the meeting, for all enjoy the fellowship gained.¹ Planned worship services were used throughout several meetings but not all of them were effective. This I feel is due to the fact that not enough participation on the part of the members themselves was had. It is interesting to note that in the past

1. The games for each meeting were selected from "The Fun Encyclopedia" by E. O. Harbin; "Children Games From Many Lands" by Nina Millen along with suggested games by the members and the worker.

two months when because of lateness of arrival for meetings and because an effort was made to observe their main interest for worship services the group has participated much better in short devotions and worship services in which not too much time has been devoted, and in which they have the actual lead. This does not mean that they have not developed an appreciation for planned worship service because those centered around holiday themes especially, proved quite successful but it does mean that they too enjoy less formal services. Through handicraft the writer can say, that the group showed decided improvement in fellowship one with the other, their former signs of immediate self-expression gradually faded and though they have not completed their articles they have learned the skill of crocheting. It was during the time this group was working hardest on its articles that the members began to discuss things they would like to do in the future as a group and it was also at this time that the leader was able to actually feel more than before that there was a keen interest on the part of the members for the group because of their discussions and questions on things that were objective and subjective.

The debating team was never fully developed because of the decrease in the attendance on the part of the young men during the first month and a half after this activity was chosen. Now that the young men have begun to attend the meetings regularly their interest has changed from that of the debating team to woodcraft. Since one of the members is

quite skilled in this field it is hoped that within the next month a few articles will be made. The Easter Egg Hunt proved quite clearly that the group as a whole has much appreciation for the works of nature. It is hoped that at the picnic planned for the last Saturday in this month (April) that an experience of worship through nature will be had by each member as we roam the wooded section of the site chosen for the picnic. Plans are made to bring about this effect. The Easter Play that was attempted as a means of dramatics as well as a means of preparing an early morning Easter Service was not successful due to a lack of rehearsals, interest on the part of the children and continued rain. The lecture on courtship, the picnic, the joint teen-age party and the out-of-door meetings should prove to be a suitable climax for the work of this group. The attendance of this group averaged about eighteen members per week until the latter part of the month of January. A community Y-teen canteen opening on the same evening of our meeting may be considered one main reason for this decrease. The attendance however has gone back up to an average of sixteen and seventeen each week.

Considering the problem child whose influence played a dominant part over the other members of the group at first and considering her now since through casual counseling and occasional responsibility she has become a cooperative member; considering the fact that this was an experimental program with the trial and error method as its best attempt for success;

and considering the lack of janitorial service to add to the constant comfort of the clubroom plus the inexperience of the fieldworker in this type of work--it is the opinion of the worker and the other interested leaders that this experiment has worked not to the point of perfection but to the point of a successful beginning of activities, fellowship and personal attitudes which have potential opportunities for future success.

The group of Y-teens at the Carrie Steele Pitts Orphanage Home is far from being an experimental program. The beginning of this group for the school year 1946-47 was merely a re-organization of a group of girls who, being brought up under the same roof with the same kind of discipline, have worked together for at least the past three years. There were of course a few who were entering the group of Y-teens for their first time because they had just become of age to join but they too had been trained to the rules of the group. A suggested program of games, worship services, story hours, group singing, handicraft, outdoor activity, and social affairs was mentioned by Mrs. Bell (Director of Y-teen Department Y.W.C.A.). As their program in action shows, these young girls had ideas and suggestions which through continuous self-expression and consideration they achieved.

Their worship services for the most part were planned around the suggested themes by the president of the group, the vice president and the chairman of the program committee except

in cases of holidays or special days when the worker planned with them so as to make these services more effective. Complete participation was shown in each of these services which made the worker feel they were in some way meaningful to the girls. During each meeting the order was comparatively good partially because of the fact that they were trained to this point of obedience and partially because they are a group who believe in keeping close the rules that they make and record. An example of what I mean is that during the month of January two girls broke one or two of the rules the group decided upon. One of the incidents happened in the meeting, the other happened out of the meeting. These two incidents were brought before the group by their president, the worker was consulted and the house mother was consulted. It was agreed by the group that these two be expelled for a limited amount of time. They are back in the group now but their conduct is much better. The games played by the group were selected from the same books used in the program of the Jolly Teen Ageds plus those that the members themselves suggested. A cooperative spirit on the part of the whole group was sometimes not shown but for the most of the group the games were meaningful, purposeful and enjoyable. A study of Sportmanship in Emily Post's "Etiquette" was helpful to the success of this activity. This group for the first time since its existence undertook one form of dramatization--a play, which was presented at Easter time and with which they were comparatively successful. There was

a lack of proper time for rehearsals but through the initiative of the president they rehearsed two and three times weekly between times for actually planned rehearsals. They feel along with the worker and the housemother that the play was quite successful. It was a play written in the language of children their age and with the permission of the worker they added their own phraseology to some of their parts. This made it that much more interesting and effective. The social affairs of the group were successful to the point of making for fellowship, cooperation, sharing, originality in the planning of the affairs, not only among themselves but with others. The business parts of their meetings were conducted in a very nice way with their wide awake president carrying each part of it out very concisely.

This group, from the beginning was quite alive, alert and anxious to be doing something. The study through discussions that they made on "Etiquette" and courtship was for educational as well as social value. They are now about to complete work on some handicraft articles made of gymp material after which they will make bracelets, and then they will begin on articles of varied kinds made from variegated sea shells. The other activities of the school season will include more of out-of-door activities wherein as in the other group they may worship and play through the beauty of nature. This group had a constant average of eighteen to twenty-one members.

The writer is happy to include here personal gain in the

evaluation of these two groups. This being her first time to do actual group leadership work of any kind, she began this project with a sincere desire to learn as she worked with what she deems the most interesting of age groups--teenagers. Time did not allow for home visitations nor for a complete fulfilment of the program as planned but working with these groups, despite difficulties, has been one continuous process of learning and attempting to lead these youth through some of the rich experiences which a program of religious education offers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As possible aids to the students of religious education who will follow me, I hereby make the following recommendations:

1. That when possible a class in crafts be put into the curricula as a means of teaching the future students actual activities for their group work.
2. That an earlier start be made in the project work on the part of the students so that the project work may end with the turning in of the report. This will allow for a full report of results.
3. That still more academic credit will be given for the project work carried out.

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