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The Development and Use of Learning - Skill Centers in the Bible Schools

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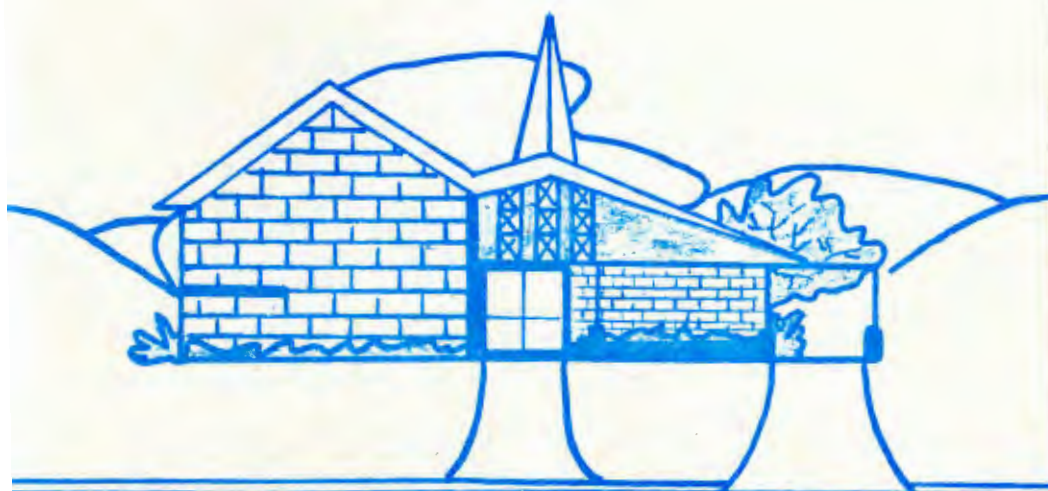
THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF

LEARNING---SKILL CENTERS

IN THE BIBLE SCHOOLS

By

JOE CLINGER

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INTRODUCTION

In days past, throughout the history of the Church a traditional problem faced by almost every congregation is that of developing and conducting good Bible school programs. Through time, we have tried to conduct our Bible school classes much like those of the public schools.

Insomuch, chairs have been arranged in neat, straight rows, the teacher sits in front of the class, and everything is kept in a formal manner.

Everything has been centered around the teacher. Lessons, material, method of application all centered on the teacher.

Our effort is to construct a system of Bible learning that is centered around the children. Through the development of *Learning - Skill Centers*, this task can now be accomplished.

You may now be asking yourself, "Just what is a learning-skill center?" The answer is this, "A *Learning - Skill Center* is a classroom consisting of a minimum of twenty children, being broken into four sections so students can learn and use their skills at their own levels."

The *learning - skill center* is totally new to the Church. No Church, to our knowledge, has ever employed or experimented with this system. We are taking a step into the unknown. The only knowledge we have is that from the public school teachers, where this system originally began.

We have faith that this system will glorify the name of God and He will bless the efforts of those who will employ this method.

In order to develop and conduct a *learning - skill center* personnel is of the utmost importance. Although the class activities will be centered around the student, teachers will either make or break a *learning - skill center* class.

The class will study the teacher, eventhough they are not around him long. They will break through his image he has errected for them and perhaps discover more about their teacher than he has learned about them. His faith, knowledge, and actions will speak infinitely louder than his words.

Choosing the personnel to educate children is a tedious task, especially for this new concept of teaching.

In order for a teacher to be effective he must be a *Christian enthusiast*. He must have [1] FAITH IN GOD, [2] FAITH IN THE WORD OF GOD, [3] FAITH IN HIS TASK.

Now in order for a teacher of a learning - skill center to be effective he must be more than a Christian enthusiast. Not only must he have the three areas of faith mentioned, but he must also have:

1. *Personality* *He must love children and be able to communicate well with them.*

2. *Desire* *There must be a definite want to do a good job.*

3. *Dedication* *This style of teaching will require more time and thus requires people who are willing to devote that time.*

4.	*Knowledge*	*They must have a knowledge of God's Word, and what God has to say to man.*
5.	*Education*	*This is a new style of teaching. No-one should enter it without being educated as to how this system works.*
6.	*Ability*	*There must be a God-given talent present in the people who teach learning-skill centers.*
7.	*Flexability*	*This means the ability to instruct children incorporating more than one method.*
8.	*Experience*	*The learning-skill instructor must have experience in working with children.*

Lives and souls are at stake in a Bible class, this is why it is imparitive that each *learning - skill center* teacher meet all of the qualifications listed and not just some of them.
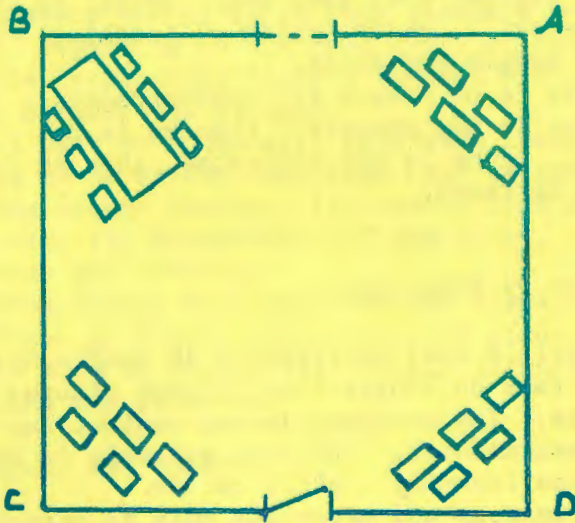
II
PREPARATION

The success of any Bible teacher depends on his zealousness for his work, the amount of love he has for his students, and his thoroughness in preparation.

Preparation of the classroom.

Most classrooms are shaped in the typical square fashion. The seats must be arranged in each corner of the room. Since twenty is our minimum number of students for proper use of a *learning - skill center*, we will use it for our model.

In three of the four corners an equal number (5) of chairs and desks will be placed, neatly and in an orderly fashion, facing the wall; leaving the immediate corner for the teacher to stand in.

In the fourth corner a table should be set-up with chairs around it for the students.

(Figure A) -- A view from top of class prepared for a learning - skill center.

Preparation of the teacher.

As we said before, it is the utmost importance that the teacher met all of the qualifications mentioned. A large amout of the success of *Learning - skill centers* rests on the dedication of the teachers.

Each class must be prepared for. The teacher must know the material to be presented. He must have it prepared in such a way that the maximum amount of information is given in the minimum amount of time.

Not only must the teacher be prepared lesson-wise, but also example-wise. He must look neat, and act properly at all times. He must be the example of the right way to dress, talk and act.

The teacher must know every detail to the *learning - skill center* system of teaching. There can be no margin for error.

There is no reason for unpreparedness. If the teacher is not prepared, then he is not dedicated. If he is not dedicated, then he is not qualified to teach.

Preparation of materials.

Materials must be prepared in such a way that they take no longer than fifteen minutes to complete. The teachers lesson mustnot run over fifteen minutes. The time schedule is the *heart* of the *learning - skill center.*

All lessons and materials must be prepared, reviewed, and ready in advance. No class time should be taken to finish something that should have been done the day before!

III
DEVELOPMENT

Grouping the students.

There are four groups of children in the room. It is best to place the children in groups with others on their own level of learning. (i.e. Section A & B = SLOW, C = MODERATE, D = EXCELLERATED) If there are students who misbehave together -- SEPARATE THEM!

Developing the sessions.

Be sure what we teach is actually what God is saying!
Lessons can be taken from anywhere in the Bible. Depending on the creativity of the teachers, periodical lessons (*Graded Bible Lesson Series*) can be used.
It must be remembered that each lesson must be able to be broken down into four sections [1] *Main lesson (story),* [2] *Memory work and Bible use,* [3] *Application of the story,* [4] *Games and handwork.*
Each lesson must apply to the lives of the students. No lesson should ever be given just for the sake of giving it. People learn best when they see relevance.

Developing the system.

As stated before, there are four stations consisting of an equal number of children in each (if possible). The minimum number of students is twenty (20).

The average length of a Bible school class
is one hour. Therefore each station will
consume fifteen minutes for presentation of
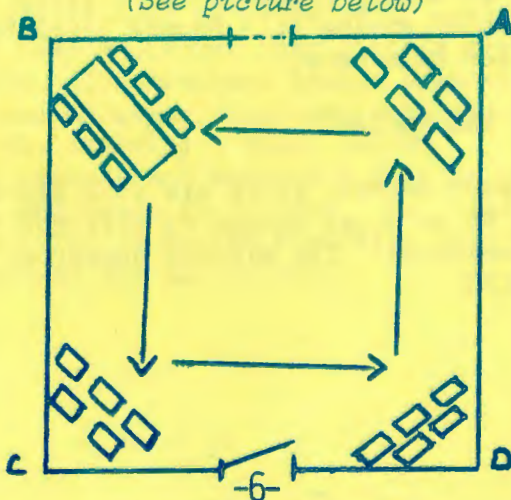it's material.

A minimum of three teachers is needed to
conduct a successful and orderly class. Two
teachers will teach the main lesson and the
application of the lesson, while the other teaches
or rather supervises the activities and material
in the games/handwork and memory work/Bible use
sections.

As aforementioned, students should be
grouped according to learning levels. These
groups should be permanent.

In order to demonstrate the development of
the system we will use the minimum number of
students (20) and the average length of time (1 hr.).

[1] Every fifteen minutes the students will
rotate to the left, to the next station.
[2] Sections *A* and *C* will present the main
lesson, while *B* has games/handwork and
D does memory work/Bible use.
[3] When fifteen minutes are up, those in A
go to B, B goes to C, C goes to D, and
D goes to A.
[4] Only the students rotate, not the teachers.

(See picture below)

Now let's develop a *learning-skill center* class using a time schedule.

TIME	SECTION	ACTIVITY
7:00	All	Opening prayer
7:02	A	Main lesson
	B	Games/handwork
	C	Main lesson
	D	Memory work/Bible use
ROTATE		
7:15	A	Main lesson
	B	Games/handwork
	C	Main lesson
	D	Memory work/Bible use
ROTATE		
7:30	A	Application
	B	Games/handwork
	C	Application
	D	Memory work/Bible use
ROTATE		
7:45	A	Application
	B	Games/handwork
	C	Application
	D	Memory work/Bible use
8:00	All	DISMISS

If the lessons are prepared and delivered properly, if application of the lesson is meaningful, if proper grouping of students has been done, if the games/handwork and memory work/ Bible use is inspiring; discipline will be no problem.

SUGGESTIONS

For using the system.

1. Keep your goal in mind-- to instill the most knowledge in the least amount of time according to each groups learning level.
2. Be prepared for everything imaginable.
3. Have a list of class rules and punishments for disobedience hanging on the wall for everyone to see.
4. Materials for Games/Handwork might consist of: *crossword puzzles, films, jigsaw puzzles, find-the-words, etc.*
5. NEVER READ THE MAIN LESSON STORY!!!!
6. Make sure the lesson is relevant in the lives of all the pupils.
7. Make sure the lesson is flexible enough to adjust to the different learning levels of the groups.
8. The system may not go exceptionally well the first few times it is used. Do not give up. It will take time for everyone to adjust.
9. Don't jump into this system. Think about it, pray about it, plan for it, work with it. Be a blessing to it and let it be a blessing to you.
10. Watch your students. From time to time ask them how they like the system. Find possible problems before they happen.