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First Year Special Religious Education Program

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FIRST YEAR SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Mary Stasia Stafford

May 1973

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Today's society with all its tensions, trials and problems, requires more than ever before that an individual have recourse to a religion from which can come strength to live in a God and person-loving way.

Our educational system provides some academic programs for the Special Education child. It seems most necessary also, that some provision be made to provide a program for Religious instruction for these same children. In most, and we can almost say all, parishes, Catholic and Protestant, there are no religious education opportunities for mentally retarded children, teenagers or adults. In the area of the size of Omaha, both Catholic and Protestant religious education classes for the mentally retarded can be counted in the one digit numbers. The Catholic programs available are three: The Madonna School, which is ecumenical, Offutt Air Force Parish, and St. Joan of Arc's Parish. The latter began in 1973! The Catholic Office of Religious Education in Omaha, Nebraska, reports there is an extreme need for Mentally Retarded programs in religious education, training of volunteers, resource personel, experimentation and evaluation to meet the needs of the known 10% of the population who are either educationally handicapped, educable or trainable. Through our united church efforts, Special Religious Education classes must be offered and geared for those children who do have a learning

difficulty in a regular classroom situation.

The program provided in this thesis is meant to offer possible guidelines and suggestions for a First Year Special Religious Education Program. Many of the basic tenets of Christianity and its practices are provided. The program could be used by all Christian faiths and adapted when necessary to specific faiths. Incorporated within the program are:

A. Definition of terms,

B. General recommendations:

- 1) in everyday dealing with the mentally handicapped child,
- 2) qualifications needed by a person teaching an E.M.H. child,
- 3) educational aims when working with a mentally handicapped child,
- 4) religious education aims for a Special Religious Education Program,
- 5) spiritual and psychological needs of the E.M.H. child.

C. A possible curriculum for the First Year Special Religious Education Program.

This First Year Special Religious Education Program is being used during its formation and will continue to be used at Offutt Air Force Base on Saturday mornings, 10:00 to 11:30, at the Capehart Chapel for Religious Instruction for our (CHAP) Children Have A Potential Program. Currently, our program serves twelve children from six to fourteen years of age. The lessons are being tried and from evaluations of the program this year and next, I hope to revise and continue into the Second Year Program.

HYPOTHESES

An interested person using the First Year Special Religious Education Program will be able to recognize and utilize the following hypotheses;

1. It is the writer's opinion that every person needs a religion to help him live in a loving way and to help him develop his personage.

2. It is the writer's opinion that today's Special Education child, provided with such a program and opportunity for religious growth and development, can participate in and contribute more fully to life, in his Christian living.

3. It is the writer's opinion that through consistent exposure to simple but basic concepts of Christianity in as many ways enumerated by modern educational methods today, and guided by modern knowledge of retarded persons, we hope to impress Christian concepts, behavior, and experiences upon the children.

4. It is the writer's opinion that the participants of the First Year Program will recall basic concepts, and translate these concepts into their daily living and behavioral patterns.

5. It is the writer's opinion that these children learn for living, day to day living and loving in a Christian way.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

PURPOSE OF CHAPTER II

This Chapter will present a resume, an enumerated more detailed review, of each of the key books and authors, treated in the summary essay. This review is included because of the importance of these individual authors and works, because of their possible help and guidance to those persons involved in a Special Religious Education Program, and to encourage further investigation of these authors ideas.

This Chapter will also contain a summary in essay form of the related literature that is key to the three areas of study used in this First Year Special Religious Education Program: general education literature, religious education literature and literature on mental retardation.

SECTION A.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature for general education

Louis Rath, Merrill Harmin, Sidney Simon, Values and Teaching, 1966.

After thoroughly describing a theory of values, these men define one method of valuing called "Value Clarification Method" which they offer as a somewhat new process of valuing and helping others to value. It is suggested as a possible method that improves or can supplement the traditional types; of indoctrination; setting examples, appeals to conscience, or to cultural or religious dogmatic statements.

These authors are interested in the way students really behave, not how they say they behave and in the process by which students actually come to values. The authors see values as based upon three processes: choosing, prizing, and acting. They set forth some strategies for the classroom to use in developing values according to this new method of clarifying values. The particular value(s) the student chooses at any one time is not considered here, but only the process by which he comes to value.

B.F. Skinner, The Technology of Teaching, 1968.

Direct diagnostic and prescriptive ways of how to work out best possible conditions for learning. Earlier chapters have many concrete examples and references to experimental work, which was most useful.

*One of his best contributions is strengthening his belief that good teaching can control behavior. Instead of punishment, conditioning (train, educate, reinforce) the child to produce best behavior.

Literature for religious education

Dolores Curran, Who Me Teach My Child Religion? 1970.

This book is written by a mother of a family who was interested and concerned about her children's religious training. She and her husband decided not to put off knowledge, answering questions of a religious nature, until their children went to schools of religion. They no longer could sluff off their responsibility of religious development to the church and church teachers. They asked themselves the question, are we capable of taking on the obligation of our

children's religious education? They accepted the challenge over four years previous to writing this book, and wrote it in hopes of sharing with other parents things they have learned.

Mrs. Curran is extremely practical in her suggestions, for example, she recommends that a parent needs a text to serve as a curriculum guide. She also mentions the daily informal lessons of Christianity in the home, neighborhood, TV, and school, which we often ignore. She emphasizes the necessity of appreciation and familiarity with the Bible in explaining questions of religious belief.

Mrs. Curran ends with the quote of Louis Evely, "As I said before, every child wants to be like his parents. If religion is an adult affair in your house, he will want to take part in it. If it is a child's affair, he will be as anxious to outgrow it as you were."

Ronald Goldman, Readiness for Religion, 1970.

Dr. Goldman through research has spelled out the implications of developmental education on religious education. He belongs to Piaget's school in believing that in religious education we have attempted to teach too much, too soon and too often. The aim of Christian education should be directed towards the fulfillment of a student's personal needs as they should be recognized at the various stages of his development. What is needed is to apply accepted education theory and practice for other subjects in primary school to the teaching of religion.

Religion is a search rather than a body of facts to be learned and accepted without question. To explore life and to understand it in depth is to come face to face with God and this is more fundamentally religious education than the telling of Bible stories.

According to Goldman, child centered education must attempt to satisfy the basic needs of developing children at any given time but at the same time through intellectual bridges forward into the future so that these concepts can cross into adolescence. The concepts should be developed in such a way that they all fit together without having to abandon those learned in earlier years. We must take the child on his own level and recognize the crudities of his concepts and accept his limitations but we must never let him remain with these crudities.

R.S. Lee, Your Growing Child and Religion, 1970.

One of the most important books in the area of religion and child development and growth, I believe, is R.S. Lee's book. It is written from the standpoint of a psychologist, it takes for granted the place and value of religion in a

person's life. R.S. Lee stresses throughout, however, that religion and theology and the proponents there of cannot ignore the fact that religious behavior must obey psychological laws. He then goes through the development of the child from babyhood and closing his discussion with a brief description of adolescence. The emphasis is on childhood and its many relationships that are related to its religious development.

The second half of the book deals with more practical advice on how to handle children and on the best methods of religious instruction.

One of my favorite quotes of Lee's is "His (the child's) religion must grow up within him as an integral part of him. It must be his own, not something lived by him at secondhand." Lee edits and makes use of the best of psychology's work in the area of religion, for example, the work and findings of Jean Piaget, Ronald Goldman, etc.

Max Odorff, Teaching Your Child About God, 1970.

As the author says, "Children are not just little grown ups." They live in a strange world. And they live in it on their own terms. Max Odorff relates throughout this book how he believes, with the help of experts as Jean Piaget, that children actually live in their world and how adults can relate to them in a developmental and religiously growing way.

Odorff uses fundamental and well accepted psychological insights and relates them in an understandable way to a child's developing concepts about God. He warns about many possible misconceptions with religious ideas and God concepts. More importantly, he guides parents and teachers in positive experiences, actions, discussions, and examples that will hopefully affect good images in the child of God, Jesus and things related to God. In fact, one whole chapter is related to "actions, not explanations", showing the activities of the child's whole environment makes more impression upon him and his senses than explanations of God and Godly things. To Odorff, religious education relates "the world of human experience to the area of mystery beyond the visible world we are most directly in contact with - and to the whole of experience in as much as that experience is profound."

Mary Perkins Ryan, Russell Neighbor, There's More Than One Way to Teach Religion, 1970.

This book is a compilation of over thirty articles concerned with new religious education programs and possibilities. The articles were originally published in The Living Light, one of the most respected Christian Education Reviews published in the United States.

Part one deals with possibilities in Teacher Training programs; Part two with adult and parent education; Part three with adolescence; Part four with programs for grade schools of religion, both yearly and summer programs; Part five with approaches for small children; Part six with Community programs, and Part seven with structures. These articles are invaluable collections of the experiences of catechists throughout the United States, and their own ideas, plans, difficulties and successes shared with others. These are practical programs and approaches from which all dealing with religious education programs could benefit.

Literature for understanding mental retardation

Maria Egg, Educating the Child Who Is Different, 1968.

Maria Egg is one of the world's authorities on mentally retarded children. Her new book is an outstanding one and should be of more help than When a Child Is Different. The first part deals with relationships of parents and teachers of a retarded child, and the necessity of mutual cooperation. The second part tells of the practical ways such a child may be taught, taking up the means, methods, and content of what should be taught to such children. Maria Egg tells of the founding of her school in Zurich for retarded children. She says that "the mentally retarded do not grasp what they cannot grasp physically." For that reason, manual arts and skills are developed if the child has the capacity for them. The book is highly recommended for special education collections and for public libraries.

Samuel A. Kirk and G. Orville Johnson, Educating the Retarded Child, 1951.

Kirk and Johnson believe that today it is commonly accepted that the education of the retarded child is a function of the school, not, as in the past, the home or institution solely. Also, they believe this procedure handled appropriately has shown its value both for the individual retarded person and for society as a whole.

Because of the scarcity of organized, educational literature on the subject of retardation and education, Kirk and Johnson wanted to gather information from various sources. They stated that they wished to put the material in a "concise and meaningful sequence, to develop programs of rehabilitation and instruction for these children, and describe the teaching procedures used with them."

The book is well written and needed, especially in the fifties and even in the present. It relates excellent theory and practice to the teacher, parent, or anyone interested in

helping with the education of retarded persons.

These men believe and wrote as early as 1951 that many problems can be dealt with and solved outside institutionalization for retarded persons. This is a concept that has been constantly in need of support here in the State of Nebraska, but which seems more and more to be seen as a fundamental point in our philosophy of help for retarded persons and has been seen in some of our legislative actions.

This book as a whole is an excellent source and reference book to be in any library of those dealing with retarded persons.

Halbert B. Robinson and Nancy M. Robinson, The Mentally Retarded Child, 1965.

The Robinsons are probably one of the most unusual couples who as psychologists have attempted to publish a book for people interested in mental retardation. Their contribution to open up avenues of communication for the college student, those specifically training for special education, and those who are professionals in the fields of social work, clinical work, child guidance centers, schools, public health personnel, and those working in institutions for the mentally retarded—this contribution is invaluable.

Although the Robinsons tend to be technical in areas of psychology, their practical information and insight is necessary for anyone interested in helping or understanding mental retardation.

SECTION B

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An attempt to locate a religious education curriculum for the religious instruction of the retarded proved a disaster. Little is available for those interested in the religious development of the retarded. This lack of available curriculum lead to the creation of the First Year Program.

There is a vast amount of literature in the area of general education; teaching, techniques, goals, methods and helping the students think and value for themselves. There is a good amount of material written on retardation. There is not as much literature available in the area of religious education and development, and even less written on religious education of retarded persons. I will now review these areas through the writings of a few important authors in each field.

Louis Rath, Merrill Harmin, and Sidney Simon have published, Values and Teaching, for teachers. This work is helpful in understanding the process of valuing and it is making an impact today upon educators in religious education circles. The method they propose is called the "Value Clarification Method". The advantages of this method are to improve upon or supplement the traditional types of instilling values, which are: indoctrination, setting examples, appeals to conscience or to cultural or religious dogmatic statements. Valuing is looked upon as a three - fold process:

choosing, prizing and acting. Central to this method of value clarification is seeing the way the students behave and the process by which students actually come to values, NOT how they say they behave. Some strategies for classroom use to help develop values are also included. When working with the students we must remember that in order to stimulate them to learn, we should be aware of good learning conditions. We cannot overlook B.F.Skinner's contribution to education in this particular area of a way to work out the best possible conditions for learning. B.F.Skinner in The Technology of Teaching conveys diagnostic and prescriptive ways of how to make the most out of learning situations. He includes useful and concrete examples and references for experimental work for further consultation. There is no doubt after reading B.F.Skinner that good teaching can also, control behavior. Instead of punishment, conditioning (train, educate, reinforce) helps the child to respond with his best behavior. Louis Raths, Merrill Harmin, and Sidney Simon offer support in this same area of learning situations.

Let us consider parents who have been given sufficient background and information in the area of teaching techniques, why not let them take upon themselves the responsibility for the religious development of their child? Dolores Curran in her book, Who Me Teach My Child Religion? worked out a program for children, their religious development and their religious instruction. Her suggestions are very practical. For example, she recommends that a parent needs a text

to serve as a guide. Also, we should not overlook the daily informal lessons of Christianity in the home, neighborhood, TV and school. There is a necessity of appreciation and familiarity with the Bible in explaining questions of religious belief. Mrs. Curran ends with the quote of Louis Evely,

As I said before, every child wants to be like his parents. If religion is an adult affair in your house, he will want to take part in it. If it is a child's affair, he will be as anxious to outgrow it as you were.¹

Faced with the question, How do I know my child is ready for religious instruction? Ronald Goldman through research has spelled out the implications of developmental education on religious education. He belongs to Piaget's school in believing that in religious education we have attempted to teach too much, too soon, and too often. The aim of Christian education should be directed towards the fulfillment of a student's personal needs as they should be recognized at the various stages of his development.

Religion is a search rather than a body of facts to be learned and accepted without question. To explore life and to understand it in depth is to come face to face with God and this is more fundamentally religious education than telling Bible stories.²

If we explore life and understand it we encounter God and

¹Dolores Curran, Who Me Teach My Child Religion? (Mine Publishers, 1970), pp. 143.

²Ronald Goldman, Readiness for Religion. (Seabury Press, 1970), pp. 204.

God-ness then how true it is to say your child's religion grows as he does. R.S.Lee, a psychologist offers the reader Your Growing Child and Religion. He takes for granted the place and value of religion in a person's life. Emphasis is on childhood and its many relationships to religious development. Practical advice on how to handle children and the best methods of religious instruction. R.S.Lee so aptly sums up religion for the child when he says, "His religion must grow up within him as an integral part of him. It must be his own, not something lived by him at secondhood."³

Thus far the previous sources have given background information for general education and religious education purposes. These two areas when supplemented with information on retardation hopefully, can provide the person with a desire to forge ahead and create a program of religious instruction for the retarded.

Samuel Kirk and Orville Johnson realizing the scarcity of organized, educational literature on the subject of retardation and education wanted to gather information from various sources. They felt that if they put the material in a "concise and meaningful sequence" to develop programs of rehabilitation and instruction for these children and describe the teaching procedures used with them, the people interested in working with the retarded could help build programs of

³R.S.Lee, Your Growing Child and Religion. (Macmillian Company, 1970), pp. 57.

educational worth. Using the theory from Educating the Retarded Child by Samuel Kirk and Orville Johnson and the technical information from Robinson and Robinson one can not help but feel like a flame in a fire and put forth great light (knowledge) to help meet some of the very basic needs of the retarded by providing adequate programs. Halbert and Nancy Robinson, both psychologists, give insights that a person, be he a student studying mental retardation, a social worker, a clinician, a director of a child guidance center, school, or public health personnel, or a worker in an institution for the mentally retarded, will find invaluable for their program.

A program for the retarded on any level must always try to meet the needs of the individuals involved. Doctor Maria Egg, in writing, Educating the Child Who Is Different, reminds us of a very important teaching technique when working with the retarded. She says, "The retarded do not grasp what they cannot grasp physically."⁴ This is a very important reminder as we begin preparing to teach our First Year Program. Our lessons must contain religious information and the like but some how, some way, the children need to experience our words. As we begin our First Year Program it will be beneficial to define some of the terms incorporated within this program.

⁴ Maria Egg, Educating the Child Who Is Different. (John Day Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 89.

CHAPTER III

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Mental Retardation: Mental Retardation refers to subaverage general intellectual functioning which originates during the developmental period and is associated with impairment in adaptive behavior.

Sub average: Sub average refers to one standard deviation below normal.

The above definitions are taken from the following source:
Herber, R.F. A manual on terminology and classification in mental retardation. American J. Mental Deficiency, 1961, Monogr. Suppl. p.3.

Religion: Religion refers to the feelings, acts and experiences of individuals so far as they apprehend them apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.

Religious growth: Religious growth refers to the interpretation of all a person's experiences which he relates to what he believes to be the nature of the divine.

The above definitions are taken from the following source:
Goldman, Ronald. Readiness for Religion. Seabury Press, 1970, p. 66.

Religious Education class: Religious Education class refers to the spiritual education that is given by a temple or church to the children, youth and adults who attend it at a time other than during the regular service.

Religious Instruction: Religious Instruction refers to the knowledge the child learns about his God, and how to live in a God-pleasing way, as a social being. (Attending classes with other children will help a child toward this goal of socialization.)

The above definitions are taken from the following source:
Albright, Marlin, and Lois Schoenfeld. Wonder-Full (Religion for Living; Living for God) Milwaukee Association for Retarded Children, 1969, p. 6.

Educable Mentally Handicapped: Educable Mentally Handicapped refers to one having an IQ from 50 to 75; they are expected to eventually achieve academic work at least to the third grade level and occasionally to the sixth grade level by school-leaving age; as adults, they are expected to be

socially adequate and capable of unskilled or semiskilled work.

The above definition is taken from the following source:
Robinson, Halbert, and Robinson, Nancy. The Mentally Retarded Child; A Psychological Approach. McGraw-Hill, 1968, p.461.

Personage: Personage refers to a fragmentary and deformed image, an appearance: I can never grasp the true reality of myself or of anybody else, but only an image.

The above definition is taken from the following source:
Tournier, Paul. The Meaning of Person. SCM Press, 1966, p. 15.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A. General recommendations when working with the mentally handicapped child:

1. Keep in mind the basic definition with all its ramifications and implications;
 - a) always treat the retarded as a human being,
 - b) he is composed of body and soul; take care of both,
 - c) never forget that he is mentally underprivileged,
 - d) do not blame him for his condition,
 - e) remember he is below par in many ways,
 - f) do not demand more from him than he is capable of doing,
 - g) do not try to cure him,
 - h) do try to habilitate, train and educate him,
 - i) use discipline, but moderately; reward as well as punish.
2. Patience is indispensable when working with the mentally handicapped child;
 - a) their attention span and memory recall is short,
 - b) their comprehension is very limited,
 - c) constant repetition is an absolute necessity,
 - d) the simplest possible language must be used,
 - e) demonstration and illustration are most useful.
3. Good example is a powerful influence; children are natural mimics;
 - a) speak kindly to them, speak decently in their presence, speak well about them,
 - b) act helpfully toward them, act properly in their presence, act courteously.
4. Do not disregard the problems of the retarded because they are simple ones:
 - a) listen to them sympathetically,
 - b) give them a solution, even though it seems to be very obvious to you,
 - c) make their concerns yours and answer their questions.
5. Use the avenues of approach which appeal most to the retarded:
 - a) love and affection,
 - b) music and rhythm,
 - c) simple humor,
 - d) color and motion

6. Use a structured system of training, insisting on the simplest material first and until it is assimilated:
 - a) personal habits, coordination, behavior, toilet training, etc.
 - b) religion: God is good, our friend, loves us-love Him,
 - c) simple social habits: being nice to others, friendly,
 - d) elementary prayers: "I love you, God."
 - e) speech patterns,
 - f) rudimentary skills, play habits,
 - g) basic Christian Doctrine,
 - h) identification, rhythm, integration
7. Be kind:
 - a) avoid harshness and sarcasm,
 - b) have rules, but enforce them gently,
 - c) do not push beyond limits: remember he is retarded,
 - d) praise and command frequently,
 - e) always be honest with the children
8. Persevere: the results which can be obtained are often amazing.

B. General qualifications for teachers working with the mentally handicapped child:

1. A sincere interest and special understanding of the exceptional child. Teacher-training workshops, and lectures, etc.
2. A well-balanced personality- a handicapped child prospers with a familiar practice and being able to know what is expected of him.
3. Patience and kindness- do not punish or give-up the handicapped child because of behavior problems resulting from the child's abnormality.
4. Complete acceptance of each child AS HE IS, and a respect for the dignity of the child.
5. Assist the child in reaching his greatest capabilities.
6. Ability to maintain a good relationship with parents.
7. Take advantage of aid from all sources-research; lectures, discussions and observation can be an enlightening experience for teachers in this area of education.
8. Creativeness and ingenuity, so the children will want

to learn.

9. A sense of humor is needed.
10. A desire to help the child develop as a person.
11. A sense of dedication to the educational field.

C. General Educational aims when working with the mentally handicapped child:

1. Education is training and preparing for life, and the teacher has a responsibility to help the child to meet the problems he will encounter.
2. All children can learn something (and the teacher should provide the necessary subject matter to best meet the needs of the child.)
3. Some children are capable of success in the academic area.
4. Special education teachers must make use of the many teaching skills needed for this particular area of education.
5. Routine in special education classes is vital, to give assurance, and in the home, to give continuity to class teaching.
6. Relaxation in special education classes. There should be an atmosphere which reduces pressure and tension since at times these children become fearful and shy. The pace of learning must not be forced on the children. Short periods of time integrated with arts and crafts seem to create a better learning atmosphere.
7. Repetition is necessary because of the children's short attention span.

D. General religious education aims when working with the mentally handicapped child:

1. A growing awareness of God,
2. A growing understanding and acceptance of one's self,
3. Growth in Christian life.
4. Increased maturity and emotional stability,
5. Restrict memorizing to important and useful materials.

6. Always bring out the meaning of the item and the child will be able to better understand.
7. Make the item pertinent to the child's situation.
8. Use concrete teaching aids to make the words and the thought they convey more meaningful.
9. Keep in mind the following learning handicaps which can influence lesson planning;
 - a) poor transfer ability
 - b) poor memory
 - c) short attention span
 - d) low motivation
 - e) little ability to think abstractly
10. Use of the following media might be of help in teaching;
 - a) arts and crafts activities,
 - b) musical activities,
 - c) physical activities,
 - d) stories,
 - e) dramatization or pantomime,
 - f) hand puppets,
 - g) showing movies,
 - h) showing slides of the children themselves

E. General spiritual and psychological needs of the Educable Mentally Handicapped child:

1. The need to know God,
2. Personal acceptance and love,
3. Participation and social experiences.

The above recommendations are compiled from the following sources:

McGettigan, James F. Psychology of Learning Deficiencies in the Retarded. Temple University Press, Pennsylvania, 1971.

Kerrigan, Henryetta. Teaching Religion Through Gestures. CCD Curriculum Board, Los Angeles, California, 1969.

General reference reading for the preparation of this thesis.

THE CURRICULUM

PART I

THE CHILD AND THE COMMUNITY.

1. Self-Awareness - I am a special person and I am made and loved by God my Father
2. Awareness of Others - You and the others are all special people and are made and loved by God our Father
3. Happy Times Come When We Work Together- God made us to work happily together
4. Together We Help Others Feel Happy. God made us to help others
5. A Happy Time Is A Sharing Time - God made us to be happy sharing together
6. Review of the first five sessions- Who Am I ? core theme
7. We All Are Different But Yet We Belong To One Family, God's family of loving, happy and sharing people

PART II

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

8. God Our Father Gave Us His Son, Jesus to help us build God's family, the Church -- Jesus is present
9. We Are Loved By Jesus - We experience Jesus in members of God's family
10. Jesus Helps Us To Know God Our Father

PART III

THE REVELATION OF GOD OUR FATHER

11. God Our Father Is Very Good To Us
12. God Our Father Is Great and Kind- As seen by Jesus sharing His Father's love with our Christian community
13. God Our Father Is Present As seen through His Son, Jesus
14. God Our Father Is Present to each of us as seen through His Son, Jesus
15. God Our Father Loves Each Of Us

Suggested Time Schedule

10:00 to 10:05	Greeting
10:05 to 10:35	Lesson for the day
10:35 to 10:50	Recreation and snack time
10:50 to 11:15	Self-Expression time
11:15 to 11:25	Summation of the day's lesson
11:25 to 11:30	Prepare for dismissal

General Goals for First Year Program

1. To bring the child to a knowledge of himself and of others in community.
2. To bring the child to a knowledge that the living Jesus makes us one.
3. To bring the child to a knowledge that God, the Father of Jesus, is our Father also.
4. To bring the child to a response of love and joy through the Christian community.

Lesson Plan Format

Title
 Specific objective
 Materials needed
 Teaching suggestions
 Prayer or reflection
 Recreation - game and refreshments
 Self-Expression
 Summation

General suggestions for physical environment

The importance of a good physical environment for religious education is imperative: in order to establish the atmosphere for learning, prayer, worship services, music, listening activities etc., one suggested environment could be: a carpeted room, one area with a sofa, soft and comfortable chairs, (living room style) another area of tables and chairs, with portable blackboard, display bulletin boards constructed specially, for the children's height; and a third area with wide open space. The first area would be for activities such as listening activities, story telling, etc. The second area could be for such things as writing, drawing, workshops and art activities. The third area would be for such things as music, drama and role playing, worship service area, and many of the physical activities. Possibly, this room would have close access to outside, to playground and grass and flower and tree areas.

LESSON ONE

Title

Self-Awareness- I am a special person and I am made and loved by God my Father

Objective

Knowledge for the child to recall the fact that he is unique and special, made and loved by God. The child will comprehend this message as he sees and experiences the teacher's love and respect for him and by being encouraged to use his own unique modes of expression in various art forms.

Materials


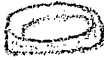
Record player, Sadlier record, Our Father, drawing paper 12 by 18, name cards, crowns (one for each child), crayons, large chart paper on which a class chart can be made and displayed, seven pictures from magazines which illustrate different expressions on the faces of little children.

Teaching Suggestions

The teacher will arrange chairs placed in a semi-circle away from formal everyday classroom set up or sit in living area. Have a "WELCOME" sign on the board with a smily face.


As the children arrive for class greet each one personally and guide them to their chair. Welcome the children as a class and then call them individually. Afterward, each child should say his name for the others to hear.


When finished the teacher calls each child to her activity center and each child receives a crown with his name on it,

example,   . Children may color their name by tracing the large letters. Point out the importance of making "your" name special, perhaps by choosing your favorite color or colors, etc., While decorating his crown ask the child to think about the many things he can do as a person.


When completed each child wearing his crown moves to an area where a class chart will be made, noting all the different activities the children can do.

WE CAN DO

Tom can draw a box. 

Patty can hop. 

Sue can bounce a ball. 

Joe can skip. 

Have the children read the story "WE CAN DO" together. Upon completion have the children clap for each other.

Prayer or reflection

Teacher reflects with the children in somewhat the following way, "There are many things you can do all by yourself. You are very special to be able to do all these different things." Mention the particular things each child did and positively praise him for his talent(s). Each one of us is very special and that is a wonderful thing. God made and loves each one of us as we are right now. Sing the song, "I AM SPECIAL" from the Sadlier record, Our Father. Period of silence.

Recreation - games and refreshments

Go outside, play games, and have a snack. Children should be taught more and more according to their abilities to set the table for the snack, pass and serve each other foods and drinks, and then to clean up after the refreshment time.

Self- Expression - experience

Have a piece of drawing paper for each child and have him draw a picture of himself. Remind him to note his color of eyes, hair, and what he is wearing. When each child is finished, he goes to the front of the room and shows and tells about his drawing. This is a key time for the teacher to thank and praise each child. A fun activity is for the teacher to collect all the drawings and then have a "Name the picture game" to see how well they can recognize their own pictures and the other childrens pictures.

Summation

Review the various activities and how happy and joyful

the children were while doing them. Each one of you learned about yourself. God our Father loves us very much and has made each of us "very special". Let the children take home their pictures and use the "I AM SPECIAL" song at the end of the class day. The child needs to feel loved, accepted and a joyful experience can do much for a child's security.

LESSON TWO

Title

Awareness of Others- You and the others are all special people and are made and loved by God our Father

Objective

As the child experiences that he is special he should then be taught to recall his friends and fellow classmates as special in their own personage. If he can recall that his fellow classmates are respected by the teacher this "awareness of others" will be a natural consequence of this coming together experience. Impress upon the child God's love and constant care.

Materials

Paste, makings for a collage (magazine, scrap paper, material scraps, rice, coffee grounds, seeds, etc.) crayons, scissors, string, red construction paper with an outline of a heart and the child's initials within (one for each child), plain drawing paper, record player and Sadlier record, Our Father.

Teaching Suggestions

Place chairs in a semi-circle or in living room area. Welcome the children, sing the "Name Game" song, call roll and comment on the talent of each child as noted upon the class chart from the previous lesson.

When completed assign the children partners and impress upon them the necessity of knowing their partners name. Give each child a piece of drawing paper asking him to trace his hand on the paper and then trace his partner's hand on the same paper. Using the various collage materials the children can decorate the traced hands on their papers. (Glue from the outside of the hand inward to retain the original shape of the hand.) The teacher should print the child's name below each picture and collect the pictures. Display the childrens work in the room.

Prayer or reflection

God our Father has made each one of us very special people as we can see from our hand prints. Every hand is different and that makes us special too. As we get ready for our "Fun Time" let us think of some other little things which make our partners special. Sing, "New Friends", Sadlier record, Our Father.

Recreation - games and refreshments

Snacks can be enjoyed by all, the great outdoors would be an added treat when weather permits.

Self- Expression - experience

Have each child cut out a red heart, (pre-drawn heart shape for each child), trace over his initials and give it to his partner as a sign of friendship. (To hole punch the hearts to wear on a string is easier than pinning them.)

Summation

Because God our Father made and loves us we can learn many things about our friends. We have many things alike and yet as we saw today there are many talents, gifts, that make us different but special in God's eyes. Always return the children's art work and encourage their continuance in their good work. Sing "New Friends" for the end of class.

LESSON THREE

Title

Happy times come when we work together- God made us to work happily together

Objective

To develop and recall an awareness in the child of the beauty and the joy of having people, little and big, children work together. Because God our Father made us all so different He hoped that we could work together and have fun doing our jobs. We can show God our Father our love for Him when we share our toys, tools, and our talents with each other. In this way we will have a happy time together.

Materials

Scissors, paste, magazines, pre-selected pictures of children or families working and doing things together, shelf paper for a mural, soft music and a record player, the book Little Blue and Little Yellow by Leo Lionni, and or Swimmy, also by Leo Lionni.

Teaching Suggestions

Children sit in a semi-circle. Teacher and children reflect on last weeks class where the children were made to think of each others gifts or talents given by God our Father who made and loves each one of us. Help the children recall what they remember about the session. Seek information about the children's families when they respond to this or if they do not respond, show them the previously prepared pictures of families doing things together. This will help elicit comments. To emphasize the idea of working together play "London Bridge" song with actions. Read the story of Little Blue and Little Yellow and or Swimmy.

Prayer or reflection

The teacher initiates such comments as, "We have just talked about how different we are and we have played games together. Now let us think about how much we really need each other. In our games we needed another person to help make the bridge; this is togetherness and helping one another we call "Community". Community is when people work and do things together. Some examples of Community are school children and teachers, families, and Church groups, and

city groups. Let us sing a song about Community. It goes to the tune of "London Bridge":

Community means we are one, we are one, we are one;
Community means we are one, halleluia!

Recreation - games and refreshments

Snack time and outdoor recess.

Self - Expression - experience

If possible, form three or four small groups and give each group a large sheet of shelf paper and have the group work together to make one big picture. To avoid confusion assign a theme such as things we can see, things we can ride, things we wear, or things we can hear. The children might even need a pre-drawn picture and then their task could be to color it together. Then place on display together all the groups drawings.

Summation

Review the concept of working together, fun times can be had when we work together. Family living is a working together. Recall how we can sing a song together, and close the lesson with the "Community Song". (above) Look for possible use of current popular songs that might fit into your theme, for example, "Living together, working together," by Burt Bacharach.

LESSON FOUR

Title

Together we help others feel happy. God made us to help others

Objective

Knowledge for the child to appreciate his own worth and allow others to join him in the building of Community without having it become a threat to his own self-concept, or worth. Recall through experiences; it makes God happy when we can enjoy the people He has made and loves.

Materials

Construction paper (large), record player, Sadlier record Our Father, other records to provide soft background music, crayons, scissors, magazines or poster pictures showing signs of people greeting one another. Read the book The Giving Tree by S. Silverstein. (If possible use transparencies of the picture book or use an opaque projector.) Allow all the children to see the pictures while the story is being told.

Teaching Suggestions

Review the concept of Community from the last session, then read the story of The Giving Tree. Upon completion of the story ask the children to act it out. Perhaps one child could remember the story and narrate as the others act it out, a good reader may read it, or the teacher or assistant could read it while acting proceeded. Drama and role playing are excellent means of learning, and involving the whole person.

Prayer or reflection

The children can reflect on the story and the dramatization. Remember how the tree welcomed the little boy? We too, can greet and welcome our friends, we can give to others and they in turn can share with us. Sing the song, "Back Together", Sadlier record, Our Father.

Recreation -games and refreshments

Snack and break time. Educational playthings and games are good resources for this break time.

Self- Expression - experience

Have each child make a place mat with "WELCOME" on it, or "HELLO". When completed, he should give it to a friend in the class. "This is a gift and it should be done very carefully because it is for one of our friends. This is our way of saying Welcome to my larger Christian family. If anyone in Christ's family, which means anyone in the whole world, needs anything we would be happy to help."

Summation

Recall what we did in class, we read a story about a Giving Tree and we made a gift for a friend. We all had a happy time being together and helping our friends. God our Father made us so we could have fun times together and helping others can be fun. Sing the song, "They'll Know We Are Christians (God's children) by Our Love," Sadlier record, Jesus Our Lord, or Our Father.

LESSON FIVE

Title

A happy time is a sharing time - God made us to be happy sharing together

Objective

To help the children recall what a happy experience it is when they share their God-given talents. Children need to feel the joyfulness of being and being together as part of the Christian community.

Materials

Scissors, paste, drawing paper, construction paper 12 by 18, scraps of drawing paper and old magazines, tempera and paint brushes, records, and record player, Sadlier record, Our Father. Mounted pictures of children playing, working and helping each other, these are from magazines.

Teaching Suggestions

Semi-circle arrangement, teacher shows the mounted pictures to the children and at this time explains the main points of the previous sessions. We drew, sang, talked, played together, we had a happy time - we know one another, we have friends, we need one another, we all have something to give. "We can share what we are with others." Sing the "Joy Song" or the "Community Song" (Sadlier record). It is a good time to introduce the song "Here We Are All Together..."

Prayer or reflection

God our Father loves us so much that when we are together we can have a happy time. Because we are together we are happy. We are happy being together. Sing, "Here We Are..."

Recreation - games and refreshments

Snack and recess time. Suggestions for outdoor recess when the weather is good: physical activities such as skipping, different types of races, jump rope, climbing bars, hopping, ball games, balance beams and different balance activities, are excellent muscle and brain developers and should be encouraged.

Self- Expression - experience

Children are instructed on making a mosaic design (using several pieces of paper or colored pages from magazines to make a design.) They will all be so different reflecting the uniqueness of each child. When finished the children can help a friend. Upon completion hold the mosaic up in front of the class turn it many different ways so the children might be able to see a variety of shapes in the designs. (Keep the children's mosaics for use at a later time.)

Summation

Recall what a happy sharing session we had. Just as it took many pieces of paper to make a mosaic picture, our class is like a mosaic made of many different children. God our Father must be very happy when He sees us working and sharing together to make His Community a good one. Dismiss class with the song, "Here We Are", or "Joy", or "Community".

LESSON SIX

Title

Review of the first Five Sessions- "Who Am I?" core theme

Objective

To help the child recall a sense of self- of worthiness, as a special person with a secure place for himself in the world. To give the child opportunities to develop skills in observation by comparing similarities and differences among people. To stimulate a child toward thinking about himself and to value the unique qualities of others.

Materials

Filmstrip "Who Am I?" Scholastic Magazines, Kindle Series, projector, drawing paper, crayons, paints, Just Me, by Marie Hall Ets.

Teaching Suggestions

Create an awareness for the boys and girls, "What is a boy? What is a girl? How many boys and girls in this class? etc." View the filmstrip, listen to and discuss the childrens comments.

Prayer or reflection

-God our Father made us and loves us so very much that each one of us is very different. We are learning how to be aware of the gifts God our Father has given to each of us. Read the book Just Me.

Recreation -games and refreshments

Snack and recess time.

Self- Expression - experience

Invite the children to draw a picture of himself when he is happy, when he is sad, when he is angry, when he is thinking. If possible create the particular mood with and for the young child. Sing, "Show Me the Picture", from the Sadlier record, Our Father.

Summation

Today we viewed a film about ourselves, "The Joy of Being You". We saw how happy we can be and we can make others happy when we enjoy doing something. We are all people made and loved by God, and how happy this makes us - To be loved as we are by our Father.

LESSON SEVEN.

Title

We all are different but yet we belong to one family, God's family of loving, happy and sharing people.

Objective

To introduce the notion of function. To acquaint the children with basic ideas of social organization the need for clothing and shelter. To help the children recall the shape and design of ordinary things about them. To develop skills in observing and categorizing.

Materials

Filmstrip- "People Packages", (Scholastic Magazine, INC,) projector, magazines for pictures of people doing things, May Garelick's book, What's Inside? Record, Our Father, and player.

Teaching Suggestions

View the filmstrip, use Follow-up Questions which accompany the guide for the filmstrip.

Prayer or reflection

God our Father made and loves us so much that He has given us many packages of beauty to enjoy, people are like packages, animals, toys, buildings. With all these different packages we are to use them and together help build a loving and sharing Christian Community for all of God's children to enjoy and love. "God Made You and God Made Me", Sadlier record, Our Father.

Recreation - games and refreshments

Snack and recess time.

Summation

Review the past session, how good we feel when we get together and share and talk about God, Who made many beautiful things for us to enjoy in this world.

LESSON EIGHT

Title

God our Father gave us His Son, Jesus to help us build God's family, the Church -- Jesus is present

Objective

To help the children recall an awareness of Jesus living with us today, here and now, in his people- the Church.

Materials

Construction paper, 12 by 18, crayons, tempera paints, brushes, records, Jesus Our Lord, Sadlier record, record player.

Teaching Suggestions

Semi-circle arrangement of chairs. Recall the happy times we have had together. Have the children mention what they liked best of all. Sing songs to actively reinforce the previous themes. After a brief recapitulation have the children close their eyes, to experience briefly a meditative mood.

Prayer or reflection

Today we have a secret to share- lead right into the message Jesus Is With Us, He is with us NOW. When we made the crowns, drew the hands, made the mosaics, sang songs, listened to stories, He was with us. Jesus is with us while we work, play and pray. He is with us when we are happy and even when we are sad. He is here. When we come together and share our talents, gifts and toys He is here. Sing, "The Spirit of Jesus", Sadlier record, Jesus Our Lord.

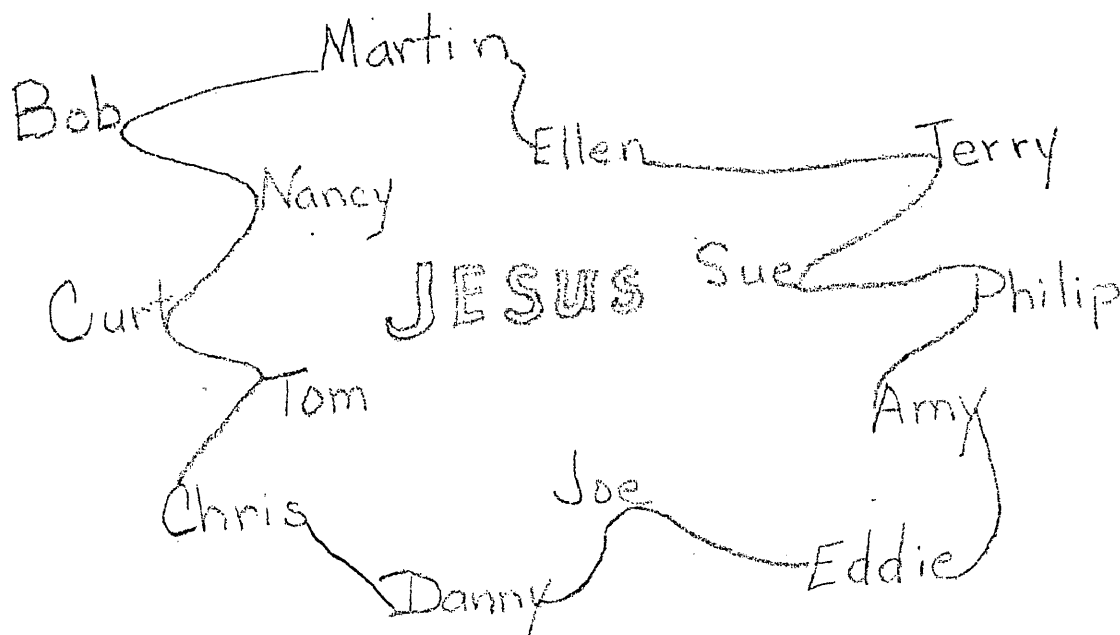
Recreation - games and refreshments

Use the childrens mosaics as a placemat for their snack break.

Self- Expression - experience

Each child has a sheet of construction paper, children

print 'Jesus' (teacher should do it for those who can not manage.) Decorate each letter; when finished the children exchange pictures so they can all sign their names around the letters Jesus. After they all have their names on each others they are returned to the owner who then takes a crayon and connects all the names (to form a circle around 'Jesus'). This symbolizes unity (togetherness) in Jesus



Summation

Jesus is with us- can you tell me of the times when Jesus is with us? Good time to introduce prayer of thanksgiving...

For our family and friends
 For being with us today
 For bringing us together

Thank You, Jesus
 Thank You, Jesus
 Thank You, Jesus

End the session with the song, "The Spirit of Jesus", Sadlier record, Jesus Our Lord.

LESSON NINE

Title

We are loved by Jesus- we experience Jesus in members of God's family

Objective

To apply our knowledge of Jesus' love for us in and through the love of the members of the community.

Materials

Drawing paper 12 by 18, crayons, pencils, records and player, pictures from magazines showing people expressing love for one another. A Friend Is Someone Who Loves You, Joan Walsh Anglund. Parables from Nature, Series I, "Bushy, the Squirrel," Filmstrip and the projector. Sadlier record Christ Our Lord.

Teaching Suggestions

Recall who is with us. To capture the spirit of love, relate practical questions to the children: "Who woke you up this morning and sent you to class? Who bakes the cookies and good things you eat? Who brings home the money to buy the food?" Show the pictures to the children and let them comment about them. Watch "Bushy, the Squirrel" filmstrip.

Prayer or reflection

Reflect on the idea of people being loved. How happy we are when someone listens to us. How happy we are when someone takes us along with him. Love is a wonderful feeling that stays inside your heart for the rest of your life. Read, A Friend Is Someone Who Loves You. Mention the Bible reference, John 15:9 - 13 when Jesus says; "I love you with an everlasting love." Jesus loves each one of us, Sing, "The Kingdom of God", Sadlier record, Christ Our Lord.

Recreation - games and refreshments

Snack and recess time.

Self- Expression - experience

Children draw a picture of themselves and someone who loves them. They can print around the picture - WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Summation

Love is good, Jesus loves each one of us, He loves us when we are kind and helpful to others. Join in on the prayer for the day

For loving us	Thank You, Jesus
For our parents love	Thank You, Jesus
For our friends love	Thank You, Jesus
For all peoples love	Thank You, Jesus

End the session singing, "We All Need One Another", Sadlier record, Christ Our Lord.

LESSON TEN

Title

Jesus helps us to know God our Father

Objective

Recall the knowledge of Jesus leading us to His loving Father, God.

Materials

Writing paper, pencils, drawing paper, crayons, record player, record, Sadlier Jesus Our Lord, magazine pictures of people caring and helping each other, some of the pictures can be a bit subtle.

Teaching Suggestions

Review the previous sessions, we are loved by Jesus. Using the pictures, discuss how the people show their love for others by caring, helping and sharing with them.

Prayer or reflection

Being together, with Jesus, makes us happy. When we love others, we like to show them we love them. We give our love to our friends. We also, receive love from our friends. Think of some man you know who cares for you. How does he care for you? (Allow for a brief discussion by the children.) People who love and care show it by the things they do for others. They care for others. Brief comment about Mass as a time, set aside for people coming together, with Jesus, to talk to God our Father. Listen to "Tell Me More", Sadlier record, Jesus Our Lord.

Recreation - games and refreshments

Snack and recess break.

Self- Expression - experience

Given a sheet of drawing paper the children are instructed to draw a picture of their father or a man who cares for them. Children may print 'God Is My Father' on their picture.

Summation

Recall the theme of the lesson, allow the children to add their comments about their experience. Stress the care and concern that God our Father has for us. He loves us so much He shared His Son, Jesus, with us. Jesus helps us to know God our Father. Sing, "Tell Me More", Sadlier record, Jesus Our Lord.

LESSON ELEVEN

Title

God our Father is very good to us

Objective

To lead the child after recalling past knowledge of Jesus to discover that God, Jesus's Father, is our Father too. He is good, as seen by the gifts of nature that He has given us.

Materials

Crayons, drawing paper, pencils, writing paper, tempera paint, brushes, records, Sadlier, Our Father, record player, nature items; tree, branch, plant, fish, water, and a stone any items of nature will do.

Teaching Suggestions

Last session we made pictures of a man who cared about us- Who were some of the men that we drew pictures of? Allow the children to recall their person and talk briefly about the person if they want.

Prayer or reflection

God our Father loves us so much that He gave us His only Son, Jesus. Today we are going to learn a little more about the things we can use to help us love God and His Son a little more. Today I have brought some things with which you are familiar. We can use our senses, eyes, ears, hands, nose, mouth, to learn a little more about them. (Giving the children one item at a time for observation let them become aware of the unique qualities of each item.) The awareness can lead to an appreciation of the object, and ultimately, to an awareness that this object, and all of nature is a gift from our loving Father. (Later the children will learn that the greatest gift from the Father is His Son, Jesus.) Having the children learn to appreciate the natural gifts they can soon realize that these natural objects are gifts from Another. After reflecting on the beautiful qualities of the objects mention how beautifully people are made. We have eyes to see many colors, ears to hear many sounds, legs with which to move from place to place. We can think and we can choose. Try to make each child more aware of the natural object itself,

as well as help him respond in appreciation for it. Gather the children around the Bible and have each one place one of the gifts around the Holy Word. The Father has given us many wonderful gifts. I would like to mention in particular the gifts of bread and wine. There is a very special time when these gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar as a gift from the Christian Community. We take the bread and wine and give them back to the Father. We have been given a great gift, we have been given Jesus. Let us thank our Father for all His gifts, but especially, let us thank him for Jesus. Let each one take a few moments and silently thank Him in his own heart.

"Father, you are so good. Thank you for your gifts. Thank you for the gift of Your son, Jesus."

Recreation - games and refreshments

Snack and recess time

Self- Expression - experience

The children return to their desks. Since they have come to some awareness of the gifts of the Father to his children, and most especially, the gift of His Son, Jesus, they may draw one of the gifts of nature that they have observed and discussed; or any gift which they feel they can draw. They may print on the paper 'God gives us gifts. Jesus is His best gift.' Allow the children to share their drawings with one another.

Summation

Have the children gather around the Holy Word with their drawings and as they place them around the Bible have them say something similar to this, "Father, I thank you for... (the object he drew). I thank you most of all for Your Son, Jesus." End the session with the song, "Simple Gifts", Sadlier record, Our Father.

LESSON TWELVE

Title

God our Father is great and kind as seen by Jesus' sharing His Father's love with our Christian community

Objective

To give the children an experience of admiration and reverence at the greatness of the works of God and man.

Materials

Pictures from magazines of creation, or slides to illustrate the greatness of the works of both God and man. Crayons, drawing paper, records, Sadlier, Christ Our Lord, record player, slide projector, tempera paint, sponges or brushes with which to paint.

Teaching Suggestions

Allow the children to share in acting out the following poem:

GOD MADE THE EARTH (describe a small ball)
 AND GOD MADE THE SKY (large circle over your head)
 GOD MADE THE FISH (waving crisscross movement with your hands)
 AND THE BIRDS THAT FLY (flap your arms on your sides)

ANIMALS (touch the floor with hands)
 FLOWERS (describe a bouquet)
 TREES SO TALL (point to tree tops)
 GOD MADE EVERYTHING, GREAT (extend your arms)
 AND SMALL (hands brought almost together)

GOD MADE ALL (arms outstretched)
 THAT I CAN SEE (shield with hands, look from side to side)
 GOD MADE YOU (point to the others)
 AND GOD MADE ME (hands on breast) Sadlier, Book One

Show the pictures of creation or the slides and allow the children to experience the excitement and amazement at the works of man: rockets, jet planes, skyscraper, etc. By contrasting the child's smallness to the greatness of creation, he can be led to an appreciation of the greatness of God.

Prayer or reflection

Today we have experienced great things in nature; the sun, sky, mountains, I know a quiet game. Look at the beautiful pictures. Listen to the soft music and imagine you are right there. Now close your eyes and think for a few moments. How wonderful it is! Now open your eyes look at the picture again. It might seem so great you can not speak. You might want to whisper. Listen to the song, "More Than Any of These", Sadlier, Christ Our Lord.

Recreation - games and refreshments

Snack and recess time

Self-Expression - experience

Review with the children some of their experiences from the Teaching Suggestion selection. Let them tell some of the experiences that they liked. They can draw pictures of nature or something that impressed them. Try to encourage them to draw pictures of creation which show majesty and greatness. Allow them to make a mosaic, or paint or use any one of the art ideas thus far used. They can print, 'God our Father is Holy', on their papers.

Summation

Recall some of the experiences of the session and allow the children to comment on them. Return their Self-Expression papers to them. End the session with the song, "More Than Any of These", Sadlier, Christ Our Lord.

LESSON THIRTEEN

Title

God our Father is present as seen through His Son, Jesus .

Objective

To create a deeper awareness of the presence of God as seen revealed to us in Jesus.

Materials

Crayons, drawing paper, tempera paint, colored construction paper, or tissue paper, paste or glue, scissors, pipe cleaners or drinking straws, pencils and writing paper, record player, Sadlier record, Our Father, fresh flowers and a vase or a picture of a flower.

Teaching Suggestions

We have many great signs of God in this world, and the one symbol in this session is the beauty of flowers. The children should look very closely at the flowers, experience a closeness to creation. The beauty of the flowers leads them further to the Creator of all beauty who is present with us. Help the child become more aware of this beauty. Their response in praise to God, Our Father, who is with us should come naturally. It might also be good to review the past lessons with the use of pictures, etc., then move on with this lesson. Let the children admire the color, shape, and size, weight, touch, and smell of the flowers. Remember that the children intuit more from your manner, words, gestures, and personal appreciation than from explanations.

Prayer or reflection

How beautiful flowers are all together. When I see all these beautiful flowers, I want to get close to them. They call me, and I want to hold them. I am very happy. Sometimes when we pray to God together in Church, we put flowers on the table (altar) to show our joy. The flowers tell us that God, our loving Father is present. Flowers help to bring us to God, near to God, our loving Father. In the Bible Jesus said, "You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me." (John 14:11) "And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time." (Matt. 28:20b). Jesus and the Father are one and they are with us always. End this

session with a little prayer: O, God, our Father, you are with us today. Sing the song, "I Want To Learn More About You", Sadlier, Our Father.

Recreation - games and refreshments

Snack and recess time.

Self- Expression - experience

Allow the children to draw, cut or tear flowers from various colored tissue or construction paper. Pipe cleaners or drinking straws may be used for stems. They may print on their writing paper, "Our Father is here". After the printing is completed they may decorate the paper with small flowers. Let them share their pictures with the group. Comment on the color, size, etc. Collect these pictures until dismissal.

Summation

Today we experienced the beauty of the flowers. We looked at them, felt them, and shared times when we liked or enjoyed flowers. Flowers help to bring us near to God, our loving Father. Flowers tell us about our loving Father's presence. Jesus speaks to us and says that the Father and Jesus are one. They are with us now and always. End the session with the song, "I Want To Learn More About You".

LESSON FOURTEEN

Title

God our Father is present to each of us as seen through His Son, Jesus

Objective

To create an awareness of the presence of God to each of us as revealed or seen through Jesus, His Son.

Materials

Crayons, drawing paper, tempera paint, brushes, record player, and records, Sadlier, Our Father, filmstrip, "Bootsie, the Lamb", (Parables from Nature, Series I), and filmstrip projector.

Teaching Suggestions

When we are with another person, one whom we love, that person is present to us or with us. Show the filmstrip, "Bootsie, the Lamb". This illustrates how very much God loves and cares for us, (Matt. 22:1). If something should happen to one of us, we are to be concerned and care for the person who is lost, or having problems. The teacher tells the children about a personal friend or loved one. He tries to make this person alive and very present to the children. He gives a vivid description of his friend and speaks of some of his personal traits. He tells stories of his friend's goodness, unselfishness, and love for children. Cite examples of times when his friend was especially loved and appreciated by him. The more you relive the experience of your friend the more deeply the children will feel his presence. If possible allow the children to draw a picture of your friend using any art media they wish from the available materials you prepare, or have in the art section of the room.

Prayer or reflection

Today I told you about my friend. It is as if he is with us now! What is his name? Can you tell me what he looks like? Is he a happy person? What did you like most of all the things I told you about him? If you were taking a walk and met him, would you recognize him? How? When you are with someone, and he tells you of a very good friend, that friend can be present to you. It is as if he were with us now! When we are gathered

together in worship, Jesus is present to us and we are present to him. Jesus says; "My Father and I make our home with you." (John 14:23). Thank You, Father, for being with us. Listen to the song, "The Lord Be With You." Sadlier, Our Father.

Recreation - games and refreshments

Snack and recess time

Self- Expression - experience

View the filmstrip "Bootsie, the Lamb", and let the children comment on the message. Then allow them to illustrate the theme of the filmstrip and how they can help another person.

Summation

Today, I spoke about a very good friend of mine. I told you many wonderful things about him. It was as if he were present to us. You listened closely to me as I told you of him. And because you did, and because he means so much to me, he was present to us and we are present to him. End the session singing, "The Lord Be With You", Sadlier, Our Father.

LESSON FIFTEEN

Title

God our Father loves each of us

Objective

To lead the child to discover through Jesus that God our Father loves each of us.

Materials

Record player, Sadlier record, Our Father, pictures of men who love and care for people, clay, paper plates or plastic to be used when working with the clay.

Teaching Suggestions

Recall the last session and the showing of the filmstrip, "Bootsie, the Lamb", the element of love which was ever present. Most of the children will have experienced some love from a grandmother, older sister, friend, teacher, or just in his family. However, this experience hopefully, will not replace the advantages of a united and stable home, yet they offer a real compensation for the children. Be careful when speaking of a "caring person in the life of a child" to always use discretion, tact, and delicacy. Always treat the less fortunate child with particular affection and respect. By means of pictures, discuss with the children men who show love by caring for others, especially, for the children. Deepen the child's love, admiration, and trust in this person. Then go one step further by reminding them of the loving relationship that they now enjoy and by helping them to interiorize the truth that when we come into a relationship with another, we enjoy the love proper to that relationship.

Prayer or reflection

When a father cares for you, he has a father's love for you. When a brother cares for you, he has a brother's love. When an uncle cares for you, he has an uncle's love. "When someone cares for us, we feel his special love for us." Remember when we went to church - Jesus was there. We were with him. Jesus has said, "...the Father himself loves you." (John 16:27) Thank you, Father for loving us. Let us join in to sing the song, "God Loves Us All", Sadlier record, Our Father.

Self - Expression -experience

Using clay allow the children to make two figures: one of the child himself, and one of the loved person. When completed invite the children to place the clay figures of themselves near the Holy Word, then let them say, the Father himself loves me very much.

Summation

Today, we talked about someone special who loves and cares for us. We all made a statue of ourselves and this person. We thought about how he loves and cares for us. Some of us made figures of our fathers and ourselves. When a father cares for us, he has a father's love for us. When someone cares for us, we feel his special love. How lovely our clay figures are around the Holy Word. Many times we have gathered around the Holy Word to pray to our Father. Jesus was with us. Today Jesus is with us. The Father loves you, each one is very special to the Father. Let us end our session with the song, "God Loves Us All", Sadlier record, Our Father.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD OF EVALUATION

-- USE OF THE CURRICULUM --

One of the best methods of evaluation for a Special Religious Education Program is to use it with a group of teachers, assistants and children to see whether it is workable and of benefit to the children.

The Catholic Parish at Offutt Air Force Base has had a Special Religious Education Program for over five years. Currently, we have twelve children (TMR and EMR) in our program. Our CHAP Program provides an ideal situation for experimenting, working out and evaluating this First Year Program.

Religious education classes begin in October. The month of September is used for teacher training, planning, and workshops etc. All of our workers are volunteers, we are fortunate to have volunteers who have had experience working at the Bellevue Chap School. They are dedicated people greatly interested in helping our MR children gain understanding and appreciation of our Christian religion. We are also fortunate to have as consultants, Mr. Jim Johnson, Sister Evangeline, and other professional and interested people. The Chap School also provides us with an excellent opportunity to observe teaching and training methods and the guidelines for working with these children.

Our teachers meet one half hour before class each week to provide a means of further communication and a review of planned events and activities. After each session the teachers meet to provide for immediate evaluation and revision, also, planning for the next session that is scheduled in the First Year Program.

REVISION OF THE CURRICULUM

Built into the program is the opportunity for immediate evaluation and revision as mentioned in the Use of the Curriculum section. However, also very necessary to our program is the need for long range, weekly and monthly planning and workshops. Evaluations with individual teachers, helpers, and parents and with the total staff groupings could be very beneficial to our program. Some of the following improvements have been suggested and will be implimented in the future if possible: 1) better physical environment, 2) more training of teachers, helpers, and parents, 3) need for more professional literature in related areas for the teachers, helpers, and parents, 4) the need for a Second and Third Year Program to provide a follow up for this year's program.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

-- RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS --

The children, parents, teachers, and helpers are reasonably pleased with the program. Some of the following improvements have been suggested and will be implemented in the future if possible: 1) better physical environment, 2) more training of teachers, helpers and parents, 3) the need for more professional literature in related areas for the teachers, helpers, and parents, 4) the need for a Second and Third Year Program to provide a follow up for the First Year Program.

The First Year Program provides 15 lessons; the first seven are for the Fall session and the remaining eight are for the Spring session. Every five lessons approximately are interspersed with an informal and special worship service in which as many children as possible are involved in its preparation and enactment, such as, simple readings done by the older children, servers, gift bearers, simple songs sung by all, and accompanied by guitars. Also, interspersed during the year are field trips to various localities that would reinforce particular concepts. Manden Park, Hanscome Lake and the Platte River, could be visited after a study of creation (both God's creation and man's creation). A visit to the Base Lake, Missouri River and the Aero Space Museum

at Offutt Air Force Base can also provide areas of interest and learning situations for the children.

Let us reiterate one of the main hypotheses: every person needs a religion as a help, aid, and strength to live in a loving way and a way that will help him develop more fully as a human person.

Our united church efforts are beginning to look for programs to further Christian education for Special education children. However, more research, study, experimentation, and evaluation are needed in the areas of curriculum development and religious education for the mentally retarded persons.

This First Year Program is only meant to be a beginning for one specific parish. Other parishes, churches, and communities will need to develop, adapt and work out curriculum and religious education experiences for their own particular situations.

Hopefully, this paper will be of service as a guideline or suggestion in the field of Special Religious Education.
AMEN.

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