

THE ENCOURAGER

Help for Sunday School Teachers— Dedicated to those who take the Word of Life to Children Everywhere

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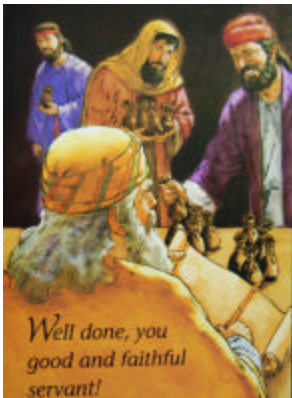
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TEACHERS THAT EXCEL

Rewritten from: The SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS HELPER

It is quite impossible to exaggerate the importance of the teacher's work with the young! Yet sometimes preparation is neglected. Children have keen active minds and there are very seldom wrong doctrines to combat. A teacher must study three things well: his subject, his students, and his strategy. If this work is worth doing (and it is!) then it is worth doing well. How becoming and rewarding it is to give 'due diligence' to our service for the Lord!

SUBJECT

Someone once boasted to Spurgeon, "I never know what I'm going to say ten minutes before I speak." Spurgeon replied, "That is why no one knows what you've said ten minutes after you speak!" The scripture speaks plainly, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently." The words of Solomon describe the ideal teacher: "Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge; weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. The preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth." Eccl. 12:9-10 ESV. Here we see the great necessity for the teacher to work it through. It is important to identify the main theme of the lesson, which should then be written down concisely and kept in mind as you present the truth.

He should read his portion until totally familiar with it, acquainting himself with parallel passages and everything he possibly can about his subject. He should arrange his lesson so that every part of it emphasizes the central truth. When giving the lesson, START with a striking incident or question or fact or picture illustration to gain attention. Make any review of last week's lesson short and pointed to serve your purposes. SPEAK plainly and follow your outline, yet leaving room for the Spirit's guidance. SEEK to illuminate their hearts with illustration. STOP just before time, give a clear conclusion or summary of the main point or lesson truth, leaving time for review, or student's questions. Lesson related homework assignments should be given that are not too difficult. Expect them to do them and don't, by any means, fail to recognize or acknowledge a completed assignment.

STUDENTS

The teacher who excels will not only pray earnestly for guidance and blessing from God, but he will continually pray for his pupils and their families. He will make every effort to visit their homes in order to understand the student's needs, background, habits and capacity. Spending time with the students can bring about illuminating discoveries about the best ways to counteract the residual results of their home environment and past events. These things greatly affect the student's progress and ability to take in truth. Use as many means as possible to contact the family and pursue this objective.

STRATEGY

In this, the most important ingredient is utter sincerity. To this should be added a sprinkling of variety. Over all, there should be order, simplicity, and clarity. For this purpose it is wise to categorize and collect verses, lessons, illustrations, stories and pictures to emphasize specific truths. Don't forget homework. Sending them home with something lesson-related continues the lesson effect through the days ahead. For younger ones, this might be objects (related to your lesson) to colour; for older ones, questions or readings with a short study or a report to the class. These crutches and keys for memory will be of invaluable help.

But there is another important addition to this list! The teacher that excels MUST know the working of the

SPIRIT of GOD within.

Every teacher and worker among children or adults needs to be actively engaged in a growing spiritual life himself. It is the Spirit of God who makes the realities that we teach 'REAL' in the lives of the hearers. It is the Spirit of God who gives a deeper understanding than normal human skill can grasp. It is the Spirit of God who imparts joy in the heart as we tell out the glorious truths of a Saviour's love! It is the Spirit of God who produces conviction of sin. It is the Spirit of God who takes the things of Christ and creates soul thirst for Him. This is something we must experience and know! The Lord Jesus tells us, "It is the Spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing." He said of His own words, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

I've learned—

That it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be!

I've learned—

That heroes are the people who do what has to be done, when it has to be done—regardless of the cost and consequences