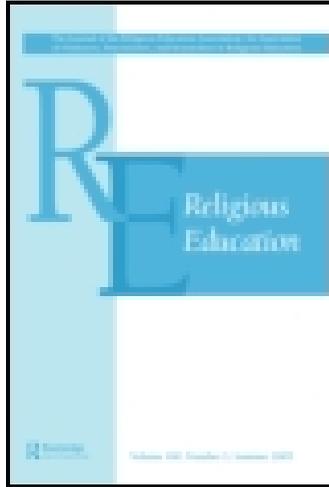


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BOY SCOUTS AND THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

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The president, an older boy, presided at all sessions. Officers are elected once a quarter. Inter-class contests for points on attendance, collection, department, and lesson study, add zest to the program. Various committees are chosen for special work of social, athletic and benevolent character. It is proving a distinct success.

After all is said, the determining factor in the type of organization or the success of the work done, will be the kind of leadership that is available. Strength of character, sympathetic understanding of boy nature, resourcefulness in promoting activities, are essential to any kind of success. These being given, the choice of the particular type of organization may be left to the wisdom of the leader in view of the kind of boys to be reached, the architectural facilities of the plant, and the number of helpers available.

In all our work with boys and girls we are reaching a deeper understanding of ways and means. We started to do things for them, we are learning how to lead them in the effort to work things out for themselves, and this way lies the end of all our striving, the growth of Christ-like character.

BOY SCOUTS AND THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

F. A. CROSBY,

City Director of Y. M. C. A. Boys' Work, Chicago.

If an enthusiast approaches the church worker today and states, with great assurance, that he can furnish that particular worker and his church with the finest organization for church boys' work that has ever been devised, the enthusiast's assurance is liable to a rude shock. The average thinking pastor, Sunday school superintendent, or teacher of a boys' Bible class will, with more positive assurance, and considerable emphasis, answer about as follows:

My dear freind, we have more organizations for boys now than we need. Another such in our church will be only a distraction, a parallel group demanding more thought, machinery, time and leaders, when we can't furnish these requisites

for the work we already have. If you can furnish me with some scheme, method or system which will make more efficient the organizations we already have, then our church will welcome your new suggestion. We want in our Sunday school, as related to the adolescent boy, not more machinery, but more steam and more efficient machinists.

This church worker is right beyond a doubt. The Sunday school and the church boys' club need, and need badly, some scheme of activities which will appeal to and hold the adolescent boy. The Boy Scout movement apparently is such a scheme of attractive activities. It is very young yet and must be adapted in many ways, but where Scoutcraft is being used in Sunday school and club to inject interest and enthusiasm into the work, it is meeting the demand of the churchman quoted above. Existing organizations for boys in the church are being made more efficient, without seemingly any distraction. Have we then possibly, in the Boy Scout movement, a force, scientific and adaptable in its nature and appeal, which, if rightly applied, will bring the older boy and the Sunday school to a better mutual understanding? If Scoutcraft meets the demands of the boy himself as well as the Sunday school worker, we can answer in the affirmative with some degree of assurance.

What is the adolescent boy demanding of the Sunday school today? We can't afford to theorize here,—there has been too much theory in the past. We must know the boy's own viewpoint. Adults are too apt to plan arbitrarily the grouping and methods, the scheme of activities and the plan of promotion. We call such a system scientific, but real science is nature's own plan of work, and the boy and nature are not to be separated. Therefore let us not try "to put ourselves as nearly as possible in the boy's place,"—this is a vain attempt and superficial only—but let us get directly from the boy himself his attitude toward the Sunday school. This will be ingenuous, as the fourteen-year-old boy's feelings and demands come from his inner boy-nature rather than from any studied personal viewpoint. For this reason they are valuable. Following are ideas secured from older boys themselves through an extended experience with such boys.

First of all, his nature demands *a real leader as his Sunday school teacher*. His idea of a trained teacher is vague;

he says he wants one who "mixes with the fellows and makes the lesson interesting." Leadership is uppermost in his hero-worshipping mind and he has struck the essence of all effective Sunday school teaching through this unerring instinct. To be a "mixer," the man (for a man it should be) must be with the boy more often and in more vital a place and moment than in the class on Sunday. To make the lesson "interesting," the teacher must not only know the Bible but he must know boy-life. Only as the man enters the everyday out-of-door activities of the boy, will he fulfill these demands.

Here the Boy Scout movement seems to be ideal, for it brings the Scout leader into close touch with everyday boy-life and gives him an unequalled opportunity to become a leader in the real, vital activities of the lad, and to study boy nature at first hand. The Sunday school teacher becoming a Scout Master and the class becoming a patrol of Scouts make these conditions possible and add zest to the classwork itself without any additional grouping. The leader in the Bible study should also be the Scout leader for his group.

Next to leadership and inseparable from it, the boy nature demands *action with tangible results*. He wants more than mere book Bible teaching connected with his Sunday school life. Unconsciously, his nature is craving all-round development, just as Jesus, as an adolescent boy, "advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." The religious development of an adolescent boy cannot be divorced from his play life, and his play life includes the moral and social, with the broadly educational.

The growing boy is right in expecting that the Sunday school shall have as broad and full a conception of religious education as that term implies. The whole wonderful, expanding life of the adolescent, as God ordained it should unfold, can be attained through nothing less than religious education. This is synonymous with all-round development, and this latter can not be reached without expression through intense activity, tending to definite results.

The Boy Scout scheme of work—scoutcraft, as it is termed—makes a schedule of activities, combining play and work, easily possible for Sunday school leaders, and furnishes, if properly guided, an opportunity for unlimited expression. The variety of activities composing Scoutcraft, and

the fact that they are all virile, out-of-door things to accomplish, affords an inexhaustible field from which a teacher can choose. Camping, games, nature study, tracking, first aid, woodcraft—the mere naming of these attracts the attention of the boy. They spell recreative education, and with the right leader imply the religious, for the religious life of the boy is inseparable from the moral and physical.

Beside leadership and purposeful activity, the boys from twelve to sixteen years of age demand *grouping by themselves*. The rich red blood of manhood is beginning to surge through the veins of the boys; they have great ambitions and high ideals, and recognize instinctively their difference from the boys under twelve years. The average Sunday school is "geared" to suit the pupil of average age, and must be so unless logical grouping is made. When two-thirds of the school are girls and the average of the boys is nine to twelve years, the "gear," obviously, is not suited to the adolescent "speed." The songs sung, the entertainments, the general exercises, are apt to seem childish to him unless great care is exercised. The older boy wants to be away from the "kids" and the girls. Who is going to blame him?

Any plan of work which will bring these boys together, not only as a class group, but as an entire school group, is well worth study and experimentation. The Boy Scout troop, composed of three or more patrols of a dozen boys each, offers opportunity and purpose for such a gathering, and a basis of operation. Only boys over twelve years of age can become Scouts and this is thoroughly recognized now by all boys. When a Scout patrol is mentioned, no one connects with it any but live young "men in the making." Such a grouping, with such a sentiment, for the mid-week activities of the Sunday school (may such activities become the rule instead of the exception), if not for a part of the Sunday work itself, will mean much toward the attendance of the older boy. This is a principle to be recognized whether the Scout movement will or will not be an aid. A Boys' Department of the Sunday school is a growing demand and must come.

The adolescent boy asks in no uncertain tones for a *progressive scheme of work* in connection with the Sunday school. In reply to a direct question he complains that there seems to be an endless round of routine, never reaching a

definite end. To his eager nature, craving achievement, there is apparently no plan of promotion. He looks to promotion in the public school; he covets the more important positions on his athletic team and knows that by hard effort he can get from right field to first base, if he has it in him. This desire for progression in every walk of life is thoroughly American and should be catered to in our Sunday school plans of work, as in athletics or business.

The Boy Scout movement teaches us a great lesson here, and its adaptability to the plans for boys' work in all constructive agencies should help the Sunday school to offer the older boy a scheme of activity which holds always something ahead, demanding the best that is in him. The Boy Scout Manual will show even a superficial reader that the system of promotion and awards in Scoutcraft is admirable. Beside tenderfoot, Scout of the second degree, and Scout of the first degree, there is a splendid list of merit awards for which the first class Scout may strive. A boy of fourteen disdains an easy task where his interests are involved. Is it possible that the average Sunday school schedule of activities is too easy as well as too monotonous for the ambitious, ever varying, excitement-loving, adolescent lad?

An inner prompting to *altruistic service* is inherent in adolescent boy-nature. It is the divine in him asserting itself and groping for Christlike expression. The older boy, deep down in his soul, is seeking opportunity for such expression, but hardly understands the impulse back of his groping. He does not understand that the unfolding sex life and the social consciousness are impelling him to generous action. A lack of opportunity and encouragement to help others may early stifle this God-given element in the boy's life. Our Sunday schools cannot overestimate this characteristic of the boy. It is not sufficient merely to teach the beauty of altruistic service in lesson and talk; the boy must be given worth-while avenues of expression, brought to his attention in the most natural way. No other one thing is more essential to character-building, and in connection with nothing else other than the Bible and Christian leadership, can this quality be so well developed. But no amount of mere Bible facts will take the place of service.

Sunday school leaders have been looking for ways through which to emphasize service among boys and are finding now in the Scout movement something distinctly encouraging. The genius of the Boy Scout movement is "helpfulness toward others at all times" and is expressed in the "good turn daily." Scoutcraft educates a boy along such varied practical lines that he finds many more opportunities to "do a good turn" than does the average boy. Besides this, his pledge—"upon my honor I shall try my best to be helpful to others at all times"—is a constant incitement to thoughtfulness and watchfulness.

The Scout movement incorporated into the Sunday school groupings of older boys is proving to be a great stimulation to altruistic service and is also opening up ways to keep boys busy doing good deeds. Care must be taken, of course, that there be no forced action. The nature of the boy and the good judgment of the leader must be relied upon.

One other demand of the older boy needs to be mentioned. He asks *that men be present in the Sunday school*. If they are not there, he stays away, as the enrollment of adolescent boys in many schools indicates. Not until virile young men—fathers, older brothers, friends—enroll in Bible study and service in the church and Sunday school may we with reason expect the fifteen-year-old boy to be attracted to and remain in the Bible school. When this "man in the beginning" can look over the heads of the crowd of "small fry"—"kids and girls," he disdainfully terms them—and sees beyond, in that other room, a group of strong, earnest men studying the Word of God; when he can see virile men serving in the school; then, and then only, is he going to be interested. He will then "be among his own kind," as he feels it. Perhaps one of the greatest by-products of the Boy Scout movement will be young men attracted to the church because of a definite and interesting line of work which the church can furnish them, the work of the Scout Master. This result is already being attained in many churches.

Some one is heard to say that the Church is not designed to take up the all-around development of the boy; that the recreative and educational life of the boy must be turned over to other institutions. There is but one answer to give to such a statement: if the Church does not recognize that

the play life, the social life, the spiritual life of the adolescent boy are all one to be developed symmetrically, then the Church will not have the older boy to work with at all, even in the so-called religious life. It is simply a matter of choice. There is no room for argument, as every thinking boys' worker in the land will substantiate. Let us use every worthy means and new device, if there be value in it, to secure the *religious education* of our boys.

So much for the application of the Boy Scout movement to the church plan. We presuppose some acquaintance with Scoutcraft, but in closing a summary of the purposes of the movement should be given. The movement is not an independent organization to parallel or rival any existing agency. It is intended to be rather a force, a method of work, to supplement such constructive institutions as the Church. The best plan of promotion is recognized to be in connection with the church, playground, Y. M. C. A., and kindred organizations. This intent and spirit puts the Scout movement at the disposal of any agency working with boys, and its value will be in its becoming an integral part of the organization of such an institution.

There is no reason why church men should complain of the slight military element in Scouting. The old Boys' Brigade which has served its day, and which the Scout movement is fast superseding, was vastly more military in its nature and did not have the great variety of educational features which the Scout movement has. The movement in America is a recreative-educational scheme, progressively arranged to accomplish results in a truly scientific, yet attractive manner. Its genius is out-of-door life to bring the plastic youth into touch with God's handiwork, and through a careful system of ideas and practice, to teach him to observe and reverence nature.

The Boy Scout movement is not designed as a religious organization to teach any doctrine or creed, but is left purposely pliable so that it may be adapted to any religious faith as a supplementary force in work with boys. However, its first great pledge recognizes the spiritual. This pledge reads: "Upon my honor I shall try my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout law." The law includes this statement: A Scout is reverent toward God.

The Boy Scouts of America, now thoroughly organized as a movement for character-building among adolescent boys, is at the disposal of the Christian Church. Is the Church going to take advantage of a force which offers great possibilities, or is it to leave to other non-religious agencies the utilizing of Scoutcraft with all its attractiveness for the boy? Likewise, the Boy Scout movement needs the Church. Only when the churches throughout the land take up and promote Scouting, will the movement grow as it should in quality and extent. Any force dealing with boys must have the religious ideal, and the Boy Scout movement is no exception. The church and the school are the only agencies dealing with the boy, which are found in every community. The school can not easily promote Scouting, so it is through the Church that Scoutcraft is to reach the thousands of little towns and hamlets where often the greatest need of boys' work exists.

RAISING THE STANDARDS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

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1. *In Relation to the Church.*

The Sunday school should be supported by the Church. If the church uses the budget plan, the Sunday school should have a generous place. Surely the education of the future church is as important as the aesthetic enjoyment afforded by the salaried quartet of the prosperous city church. Yet it is doubtful whether the average city church is willing to pay one-fourth as much for the maintenance of its educational work as for its choir. The strange blindness of such an attitude on the part of those who hold the purse-strings astonishes one when he considers that the same neglected Sunday school furnishes eighty-five per cent of the total increase to church membership.

Yet this is a low basis on which to justify a higher standard in the church in its relation to the Sunday school. "The child in the midst" in the thought of Jesus, has been pushed