Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/urea20>

THE TEACHERS' TRAINING CLASS FOR HIGH SCHOOL BOYS

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Published online: 10 Jul 2006.

To cite this article: C. E. Mieras (1914) THE TEACHERS' TRAINING CLASS FOR HIGH SCHOOL BOYS, Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association, 9:3, 296-298, DOI: [10.1080/0034408140090312](https://doi.org/10.1080/0034408140090312)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0034408140090312>

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RESULTS

About three hundred persons are now meeting for instruction in the church and in homes. The effects are visible on every hand. The whole atmosphere of the church has changed. A new spirit is born. A desire to help others is finding spontaneous expression all over the congregation. The stirring of the emotions without adequate outlet may be damaging, but a people who once yield fully to our glorious evangel and are then established on the great trunk lines of principle that traverse the universe, can never go back, can never again escape the compelling charm of the Master's call to self-sacrificing service.

THE TEACHERS' TRAINING CLASS FOR HIGH SCHOOL BOYS

C. E. MIERAS

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The Bible School has many problems. Among the keenest of these is the teen-age boy. How to hold him in the Bible School is the great question that is facing pastors, superintendents and teachers on every hand. At the teen age the desire for leadership strongly asserts itself and can be developed only through responsibility. In the Bible School this can be best gained by placing the older boy in charge of a group of younger boys. This is real leadership, for it not only puts him in a responsible place but places responsibility upon him. Giving him a class is also another way of tying him permanently to the Bible School. If the boy is to meet such a responsibility successfully, he needs to be trained.

It is the privilege of the writer to conduct training courses in connection with Bible schools and the Association. In every case these classes meet at a time apart from the regular Bible school session (generally in the evenings) so as not to deprive the boy of Bible instruction. To do efficient work it has been found wise to limit the number of the group to ten or twelve, thereby affording a better opportunity for discussion and insuring a higher grade of individual work. The choice of a textbook is an important factor in securing interest. At present the text in use is "Starting to Teach," by Eugene C. Foster (Association Press, New York City;

price 40c). This is a splendid teachers' training course with specific and detailed emphasis on the "Boy" and the development of boy leadership. This can be completed in a course of twelve lessons of one hour each. Greater interest is maintained throughout the study of a short course rather than a long one. This is but in accordance with boy nature. He is not unlike the pioneer who wanted "short stories and long ears of corn." It is essential to observe the time limit of each session, being just as punctual in closing as in beginning, thus keeping faith with the boys.

The question naturally arises: "How can you get boys to prepare a mid-week lesson when it is generally conceded that a teen-age boy rarely prepares his lesson for the class on Sunday?" The interest in the training class will be in proportion to the vision of its need as seen by the individual members. However, success also involves method of work. There is much danger of interest being lost through a sameness of presentation of the lesson. The monotony can often be relieved by varying the lecture with the question method, reports, oral and written reviews, and occasionally parallel readings relating to the subject. To illustrate: the lesson in chapter two of the present text deals with "the boy's body." For additional information copies of "From Youth into Manhood" by Winfield S. Hall, and "Adolescent Boyhood" by H. M. Burr, were distributed to the class and reports received the following week. With boy life literally crammed to the brim, an occasional note, short personal talk, or a telephone message may serve to maintain continued interest throughout the course.

While the results of a training class are not always visible, it needs but a few concrete illustrations to prove its worth. In a Bible school where three older boys are teaching younger boys' classes the pastor and superintendent commended in highest terms their appreciation of the training class. In another case two mission classes are being taught on a Sunday afternoon by boys who have completed a course of training. In a school where a class of younger boys had dwindled in size from eleven members to two an older fellow, who had prepared himself for just such an opportunity, had taught the class but a short time when it surpassed its original number. At the Association ten older boys are leading younger boys' groups once a week in Bible study. In each case here mentioned the leader is an older high school boy. What a valuable asset to the church, to the boy himself, and to all concerned, when he can be placed in charge of a class as the teacher with sufficient training to give him that measure of self-confidence which insures

success! As one fellow who became a splendid teacher of a group of twelve-year-old boys expressed it: "I never thought I could teach." He was living in a new world. He had learned the joy of service made possible through the training class.

BUFFALO, 1915

PLANS AND POSSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHURCHES

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The significance of this theme is made more evident by the letter of invitation sent by our General Secretary last January when the topic was worded this way, "What are the immediate problems in our field and how may this department help to meet them?" And to the topic was added this personal remark, "I am specially anxious that we should lay careful plans to make the convention next year count for the churches in Buffalo."

The field of this department is far more limited than its title indicates. There were originally seventeen departments of the Religious Education Association, but not all have needed equally thorough organization. However with fully organized departments under the titles of Theological Seminaries, Sunday Schools and Teacher Training, and Social Service, the latter necessarily including social activities inside as well as outside the church organization and building, the scope of endeavor for this department seems limited unless it invades the activities of other departments. Nevertheless, our present problems are far more numerous than we can profitably investigate, much less solve, and we shall not begrudge the other departments their subjects of discussion.

Buffalo has according to the United States report of 1906, 195,000 Roman Catholics and 64,000 Protestants. Considering the different methods of counting employed by Catholics and Protestants, and counting as Protestants those who declare themselves Protestants and were brought up as such though not actually present church members in Buffalo, the forces of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism are about equal. In any case, the organized ecclesiastical agencies in Buffalo are powerful and efficient. In