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THE CHURCH FACING FORWARD

THE EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE HYDE PARK BAPTIST CHURCH

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The organization of the educational work of the Hyde Park Baptist Church is in process of development. The work of correlation has been carried on somewhat informally, but is about to be definitely undertaken by the educational committee of the church. The Sunday school is organized into three divisions: Elementary, Secondary and Adult. Each is under the direction of a principal who, with the secretary and treasurer and teachers of the division, regulates its work. The whole is under the general direction of the superintendent, who does not preside over any one of the assemblies, but supervises all, presides over all general meetings of officers and teachers, and is responsible for the policy of the school. Associated with him is the director and assistant director of instruction, who are charged with the responsibility of arranging the curriculum and selecting teachers. The minister of the church acts as director of the spiritual life. He conducts special classes in preparation for church membership. The assistant minister acts as counsellor of the young people's society. There is, however, no correlation between this society and the Sunday school. The assistant minister, who is also the minister of music of the church, is director of music of the Sunday school.

The Elementary division has three departments: Kindergarten, Primary and Intermediate. The first of these holds an entirely separate session continuing from 9:30 to 12:00. The Primary and Intermediate Departments meet together for assembly exercises. The Intermediate retires to its own room for a forty-minute lesson under a teacher and assistants, while the Primary continues exercises adapted to its needs. Conditions of space require the somewhat anomalous condition of an Intermediate Department consisting of only one class, the fourth grade. It would be better if the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades could be united in a Junior Department with an assembly and worship of its own.

The Secondary Division begins with the fifth grade, approximately eleven years of age, and continues through the high school and somewhat indefinitely one or two years beyond. This latter limit is a problem not yet worked out. The division meets for brief assembly exercises at 9:30 and then separates into classes.

After forty minutes for the lesson the whole division meets for a half hour of worship, conducted by the principal. The most significant subdivision of this part of the school is the Boys' Department, an organization composed of junior and senior classes of the high school, and one or two classes beyond. It has a room of its own, and an assembly of some twenty minutes at the beginning of the Sunday school hour. The first part of this is devoted to its business, after which a brief period of worship is conducted by the boys with the assistance of the teachers. The boys unite with the Secondary Division in the closing period of worship. The department has a director who is the senior teacher. There are no boys' clubs in the church except the Boy Scouts. The Boys' Department seems the natural organization for all social, athletic, and philanthropic activities. Whether a similar Girls' Department should be organized is a problem for consideration. The Camp Fire Girls class has a significant life of its own. Again conditions of space are somewhat determining at this point. A teacher training class for young women with two years' course has been part of the Secondary Division. It comes at the end of the regular curriculum.

The Adult division consists of a men's class, a women's class, a young women's class, and a young men's class. These meet in the auditorium, and have no assembly exercises. Each is organized and is self-directing. They pursue various courses of study, Biblical, educational, social and missionary. The courses are usually about three months in length, and are for the most part conducted as lectures by various experts. The most serious problem here is the young men's class, which has at times been very flourishing and has at times disappeared. The successful graduation of the senior class of the Boys' Department into a vigorous and effective young men's class is now the most important matter which the Sunday school is undertaking. The lack of a separate room is an embarrassment.

The curriculum in the Elementary and Secondary Divisions is completely graded, and is in general the Constructive Studies published by the University of Chicago Press, many of which were actually worked out in classes in this school.

The whole Sunday school, from the Kindergarten to about the seventh grade, occupies the front seats of the church during the first fifteen minutes of the public worship, which includes a children's talk by the minister. After the singing of the children's hymn they leave the church. The Kindergarten continues its session and some classes of the older children have been formed for work

through the church hour. It is hoped that this plan may be extended as teachers can be secured.

2. THE CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES, BOSTON

The work of this church has already been noticed in RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. We have called attention particularly to the outline of the school's curriculum published several years ago and to the statement of the social activities of pupils prepared by Mrs. Clara B. Beatley, and published by the American Unitarian Association. Mrs. Beatley is the "Director of Religious Education" in this church and a valuable co-operator in the work of the R. E. A.

The Church of the Disciples places its work of religious education in the charge of a "Committee on Religious Education." This committee has special charge of the Disciples School; it meets on the second Sunday of the month while the school is in session, to visit classes and confer upon the work. It co-operates with the principal and the teachers in keeping the various interests of the school at a high standard; it stimulates an appreciation of music, art, and poetry as important influences in religious education; it fosters the social activities of the young people and establishes a kindly guardianship over them. The committee has established a Home and School Conference, which provides for the mutual helpfulness of parents and teachers.

Through continued recommendations at annual church meetings the financial needs of this work for religious education have been steadily brought before the congregation, with a response which has established a relationship of responsibility. The church appropriates at its annual meeting \$1500 each year for the maintenance of the Disciples school.

Beginning on the third Sunday in September, the school is in session every Sunday morning until the first Sunday in June. The main school assembles at each session for an opening service of worship in the large, sunny library, proceeding to other attractive rooms for class work at 10:15, and returning to the library for a closing service at 10:50. Church attendance is encouraged by the presence of parents in the pews at eleven o'clock. The Kindergarten and Primary Departments meet in a pleasant upper room during the church service. A social service class meets in the library at 10:15.

A graded system of lessons, known as the Disciples School Graded Course, taught by teachers of exceptional training and ex-

perience, gives the pupils a vision of spiritual and moral truth which should tend to high motives of conduct. Biennial promotion and advanced recognition give dignity to the course and increase the satisfaction of progressive studies.

Classes are brought together in organized groups for social service. These groups meet once a month under the guidance of teachers, and are taught simple ways of helpfulness touching the needs of a great city. In doing this work, the young people are bound together socially, through mutual acquaintance and common interest, and become strongly attached to the church. The youngest classes are united as the "Children of the King." These in turn go on to the "Ten Times One," to the "Young Readers' Round Table," and to the "Lend-a-Hand." All who reach the age of fifteen are invited to join the Disciples School Choir, which is under the direction of the church organist, and which serves the school and the church when special music is needed.

Recognition of the play element in childhood and in youth provides for many well-ordered good times, chiefly to celebrate the harvest season, Christmas, Twelfth Night, and May Day. A period of recreation is given at all club meetings. Dramatic instincts are trained by the performance of plays that instruct and elevate.

Christmas, Easter, Whit-Sunday, and Children's Day bring the school to the church in a body to share the services. Whit-Sunday is a special occasion for welcoming the young people to church membership. Children's Day is celebrated as a day of recognition.

Association Day teaches loyalty to church and to denomination. Memorial Day impresses devotion to country through cherishing the ideals of the noble lives of James Freeman Clarke, John Albion Andrew, and Julia Ward Howe, former members of the church. A portrait of John A. Andrew, purchased from birthday offerings, is presented each Memorial Day to one of the public schools of Boston, the master being present to receive the gift and to address the school.

Special attention has been given in this school to the training of children in music and to the preparation of special forms of service. The church organist, Mr. Frank Lynns, has composed a number of special pieces for the use of the school.