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A STUDY OF THE RELATION OF THE DRAMATIC METHOD TO THE RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION OF THE JUNIOR CHILD

by  
Mary Esther Reese  
(B. A. Yankton College)

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. The Problem of the Present Study

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
.....  
And one man in his time plays many parts...."  
-----Shakespeare.

In an effort to make the educational process life centered, modern pedagogy gives the child an opportunity to learn to play his part on the world stage by providing a wide variety of experiences in the controlled environment of the classroom. Dramatic activity has been deemed one avenue by which the child may enter upon this wide variety of experiences, since thru it, he is enabled to play a great many of the different parts found on the world stage. Consequently, dramatization has become increasingly popular in public education at the present time. Just now this process of dramatic activity, utilized in secular education, is finding its way into religious education. In view of that development, it is of vital interest to make a study of the use of the dramatic method in relation to one chosen phase of religious education--the religious education of the junior child.

### II. The Purpose of the Present Study

The purpose of the present study, therefore, is to examine the dramatic method from theoretical and from empirical angles in order to determine its values and hence its rightful place in the program of religious education planned for the junior child.

### III. The Plan of the Present Study

In view of the problem and purpose as stated above, the present study will center around an analysis of the dramatic method in its relation to the religious education of the junior child. This analysis will involve a study of modern textbooks (supplemented by current periodicals) in order to discover what present day religious educators are writing in regard to the use of dramatic activity in their field. Such a study will be based upon the following questions which are commonly raised in respect to the problem of this study:

1. Does historical evidence justify the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child?
2. Does psychological data regarding the nature of the junior child and regarding the constituent elements of the dramatic impulse justify the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child?
3. What are the potentialities of the dramatic method as a means of realizing the objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child?
4. What guiding principles should govern the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child?
5. What guiding principles should govern the choice and use of dramatic material in the religious education of the junior child?
6. What are the accepted modes of procedure in the different types of dramatic activity adapted for use in the religious education of the junior child?

Then, following this investigation of the theoretical aspects pertaining to the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child, the second part of this study will be concerned with an empirical verification of the preceding theories propounded by modern religious educators. This second part will include a consideration of these two questions:

1. What reports do present day religious educators make regarding their experiences in the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child?

2. What reports is the writer able to make regarding her own experiences in the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child?

At the close of this study, concerned with both theoretical and empirical considerations, an attempt will be made to summarize the findings in order to estimate the rightful place of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child.

#### IV. A Definition of the Terms Used in the Present Study

##### A.. Dramatic Method

The term, "dramatic method", will involve the implications of educational dramatics which

"purposes to select, control, and develop the impulses of the individual which naturally and spontaneously find expression in dramatic activity. Its special aim is thus to secure the progressive development of religious experience in order that greater social usefulness may be attained."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Meredith, William V.: Pageantry and Dramatics in Religious Education, p. 54

B. The Junior Child

The term, "the junior child", will refer to the child between the ages of nine and eleven inclusive.

PART I

THEORETICAL FINDINGS RELATIVE TO THE USE OF THE  
DRAMATIC METHOD IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE  
JUNIOR CHILD



## Chapter I

### The Historical Basis for the Use of the Dramatic Method in the Religious Education of the Junior Child

#### I. Introduction

In a study of the dramatic method as it may be employed to-day in realizing the objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child, it is well to begin by reference to records of history with a view to finding an answer to the question: Does historical evidence justify the use of the dramatic method as a means of realizing certain major objectives sought in all religious education? In order to answer this query it is necessary to note the specific objectives which the drama has actually achieved whenever it appeared in history as a handmaid of religion, serving as an agent of religious education. This will lead to an examination of drama when it appeared as an agent of religious education among primitive people, the Hebrews, representative Oriental groups, the Grecians, and finally among the Christians. This last portion will include a study of these outstanding types of church drama: the Mass, the Tableaux, the Mystery, Miracle, Morality, and Passion Plays and the Autos Sacramentales. Throughout this survey the purpose will be to detect the specific objectives attained whenever the drama was actually used as an agent of religious education. This discussion will be followed by a brief statement regarding the Puritan condemnation of drama and the modern revival of

drama as an agent of religious education. The chapter will be concluded by a summary statement of the major objectives which the drama has actually achieved whenever it has appeared as an agent of religious education, namely, the impartation of knowledge, the development of attitudes, and the establishment of habits.

## II. The Historical Use of Drama as an Agent of Religious Education

### A. Drama as an Agent of Religious Education Among Primitive People

Primitive people engaged in prayer ceremonies which were essentially dramatic, for these prayers involved the recognition of an intense struggle between opposing forces--the good and evil spirits at work in the universe.<sup>1</sup> The prayer of early man was thus an act of petition and propitiation, accompanied by music and dancing, uttered not in an inner chamber, but before an assembled group.<sup>2</sup> Youth learned the art of prayer thru watching and also thru participating in these tribal prayer ceremonies. Thus, dramatic technique was closely intertwined with prayer and served as a means in its expression, perpetuation, and development among primitive peoples. In early times man did not have a sacred book which contained information regarding deity, religious experiences of the group, ritualistic forms, and standards of morality. As these phases of religion appeared they were preserved and transmitted from generation to generation thru dramas which embodied them.<sup>3</sup> The presentation of such dramas served as a religious school for youth, since

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1. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., pp. 14, 15

2. Cf. Havermeyer, Loomis: The Drama of Savage People, p. 9

3. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., pp. 14, 15

they contained the primary elements of the group religion.<sup>1</sup> As these plays were given, no sharp lines of distinction were drawn between the actors and the audience, for the youth might take part as fast as his learning permitted. Major objectives of religious education stood out clearly in the construction of these plays, for they embodied lessons in right conduct, ideals of courage and honor, beliefs about a great spirit, convictions about the power of prayer and a faith in immortality. Thus, in the very beginning, prayer was dramatic in form and technique; drama was employed as a means of preserving fundamental religious truth from age to age, and as such was used as the primary medium for the religious education of each generation.<sup>2</sup>

#### B. Drama as an Agent of Religious Education Among the Hebrew People

In turning to the Old Testament, it is found that religion and drama existed side by side as inseparable companions, for the Bible reveals that the dramatic instinct was very strong among the Hebrews and was given an opportunity for expression in their religious life.<sup>3</sup> The Song of Moses (Exodus 15) serves as representative evidence on the point under consideration. This song was probably dramatized as was also the Dance of David which he performed before the Ark of the Covenant when it was returned to Jerusalem. (II Samuel 6:14). The book of Job, written in dramatic form, contains a dialogue arranged in such a manner as to convince the reader that it must have been enacted originally. The fundamental qualities of this book which set it apart as individual and distinctive are its dramatic qualities such as change of situation, suspense

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1. Cf. Bellinger, Martha Fletcher: A Short History of the Drama, p. 4
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 8
3. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 16

and calamity followed by relief.<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel may be credited with the launching of a "dramatic project", for the first four verses of the fourth chapter of his book compare with the modern educational device of using toy figures in teaching.<sup>2</sup> The Jewish temple worship involved many dramatic situations: the bringing of the sacrifice by the worshipper, its acceptance by the priests and its final placement upon the altar.<sup>3</sup> Thus, history indicates that drama existed among the Hebrew people in the very warp and woof of their religious literature; that the dramatic method was employed by their prophetic teachers; and that dramatic technique characterized their religious ritual. Thus, Hebrew drama resulted in the impartation of religious knowledge, involving particular emphasis upon the acquaintance with the lives and deeds of its great religious leaders, enlightenment about religious laws and religious duties. Hebrew drama aided in the development of attitudes and habits of both group and individual worship and in the acquirement of prescribed habits of life. Hence, it is evident that the dramatic method, as it was employed among the Hebrew people all during the course of their history aided in the program of religious education in each generation since it proved itself capable of achieving these major objectives of religious education relating to knowledge, attitudes, and habits.

#### C. Drama as an Agent of Religious Education Among Oriental People

Oriental religion was closely associated ~~was~~ with drama from earliest times. For the sake of illustration the drama of India and of

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1. Cf. Bellinger: op. cit., p. 9

2. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 16

3. Cf. Boyd, Charles A.: *Worship in Drama*, p. 7

China may be taken as representative of the general trend among the people of the Orient. As far as Indian drama was concerned, its chief source was in religion;<sup>1</sup> an Indian play opened and closed with prayer;<sup>2</sup> throughout the play was a deep religious feeling; self-sacrifice was exalted as the highest form of self-realization. Chinese plays were characterized by their elevated nature from earliest times;<sup>3</sup> they glorified the virtues and as a rule they were constructed on the axiom that every play should have a clearly discernible moral. Again, historical facts bear out the assertion that religion and drama have a natural affinity, and moreover, that drama has been an efficient agent of religious education since it has actually achieved great objectives involving knowledge, attitudes, and conduct.

#### D. Drama as an Agent of Religious Education Among the Grecian People

Greek drama originated in religious ceremonies in which all of the people participated. Records show that in a period some four centuries before the time of Christ as many as twenty thousand citizens of Athens gathered in the amphitheatre of that city to celebrate the festival of Dionysius with appropriate songs and dances. During this six day festival twenty five or thirty plays were given by the populace as expressions of their religious thought and feeling. This project in religious education was at that time considered so successful by the state that it

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1. Cf. New International Encyclopedia, Vol. 7, p. 435, ff.
2. Cf. Bellinger: op. cit., pp. 100, 101
3. Cf. New International Encyclopedia, Vol. 7, p. 435, ff.

was in evidence for a period of five hundred years. Drama was thus an integral part of the Athenian program of religious education, since it contributed to both spiritual and ethical life.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection it is well to consider a few outstanding Athenian playwrights and estimate their work in relation to the achievements of major objectives of all religious education. Aeschylus, usually considered the first great playwright of the Grecian group, wrote plays characterized by a deep moral earnestness. He portrayed Zeus as the great ruler of the universe and he constantly emphasized the proposition that there are fundamental laws of righteousness and goodness under which men must live.<sup>2</sup> Sophocles, author of the immortal play, "Antigone", presented his theory of life in terms of a conflict between human and divine law.<sup>3</sup> Euripides, the Human, sought to impress his audiences with his own conviction of a Great Mystery and a Great Obligation. It is evident that plays written on this slant were of a vital significance in the development and perpetuation of Greek religion and that their authors may well be dubbed religious teachers, for they used drama as a means by which they might "express their opinion about the riddle of human suffering, the relation of man to the gods, and the destiny of the human soul."<sup>4</sup> Not only these playwrights, but the actors

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1. Cf. Eastman, Fred B.: Religion and Drama: Friends or Enemies, pp.4, 5
2. Cf. Bellinger: op. cit., p. 21 ff.
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 68 ff.
4. Cf. Bellinger: op. cit., p. 68

and singers as well were looked upon as ministers of religion, performing their functions in a theatre which was considered as a sacred place and as holy as any temple.<sup>1</sup> In concluding this brief survey of Greek drama, is it not just to say that the Athenian playhouse existed as a school of religious education in which instruction and worship were so arranged that the program yielded fruit in terms of good conduct and right living?<sup>2</sup> Does it not seem, then, that drama served efficiently as an agent in realizing these major objectives of religious education?

#### §. Drama as an Agent of Religious Education Among the Christians

When Greece was conquered by Rome, Greeian drama underwent a modification which was of a degrading nature. Roman audiences showed not an iota of interest in drama which dealt with soul struggles or which sought to enhance the ultimate values of life. Instead, drama was supported only when it provided amusement as to give an escape from life, when it fairly reeked with both cruelty and obscenity.<sup>3</sup> The Roman theatre degenerated to such a low plane that public taste reveled in acts of cruelty to men and animals. When the persecution of the Christian group was at its peak, great throngs of Romans gathered in the theatre to witness the suffering and death of the martyrs. Remembering the outrages which the drama had committed against the Christian cause, the church, on coming into power in the state, lost no time in condemning drama.<sup>4</sup> And yet, despite this prohibition of drama in the Roman empire by the leaders of the Christian church, it was not long in finding its way into the

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1. Cf. Eastman: op. cit., p. 5
2. Cf. Eastman: op. cit., p. 5
3. Cf. Bellinger: op. cit., p. 77
4. Cf. Eastman: op. cit., pp. 5, 6

church because the inherent urge for dramatic expression could not be denied altogether.<sup>1</sup>

The first appearances of drama in the Christian church were defended on the ground that drama was necessary as a medium thru which the leaders might present the chief facts of the Christian religion with accompanying interpretations. This method proved helpful since the visual elements of drama served to overcome language difficulties encountered in the conveyance of the Christian message.<sup>2</sup> A rapid survey of some of the dramatic efforts which manifested themselves during the course of church history reveals the following facts.

1. During the second century, Ezekiel, a Jew, wrote a tragedy based upon the book of Exodus.<sup>3</sup> Two centuries later, Appolinarius, who was priest of Laodicea, arranged large sections of the Old Testament in dramatic form, while his son, Bishop Appolinarius, wrote parts of the New Testament in similar style.<sup>4</sup> From the time of the fourth century on, drama held a central place in the church service in the guise of the Mass which was rich in elements of symbolic action, narration, definite progression toward a climax, pantomime, and color, all of which elements are fundamental characteristics of pure drama.

2. The Tableau, sometimes designated as the Living Picture, came as a natural supplement to the Mass.<sup>5</sup> The Tableau was introduced into the services as early as the fifth century, being used originally on special holidays of the church when messages from the Old Testament

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1. Cf. Eastman: op. cit., pp. 5, 6

2. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 18

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 19

4. Cf. Candler, Martha: Drama in Religious Service, p. 133  
Cf. Ibid., p. 143

5. Cf. Ibid., p. 136



prophets seemed especially apropos.<sup>1</sup> It was only a step from the presentation of the Living Picture to the presentation of short dialogues from the Bible utilized to illustrate the teachings of the

Mass.<sup>2</sup> During this same fifth century, the antiphon was modified in such a way that it produced the effect of dialogue between divisions of the choir or between the clergy and choir. The dramatization of incidents from the lives of the early church fathers had found a place in the services of the church by the end of the ninth century, but it was not until some three or four hundred years later that these dramatized incidents were converted into written form.<sup>3</sup>

3. The Mystery play, designated sometimes by various other names, was destined to have a large part in the religious program of medieval times. It originated in the ninth and tenth centuries, growing from the attempts of the priests to vivify the Bible for their parishioners by reading it to them in dramatic form. Tenth century history gives a record of the production of these mystery plays in which the chief events associated with Christmas and Easter were depicted. These plays were given by the clergy who wished to "provide some means of making the great events on which their teaching was based more vivid and more real to their unlettered flocks."<sup>4</sup> The mystery plays, later organized into immense cycles which included the chief scriptural facts and extended from the Day of Creation to the Last Judgment, had a highly important place in the religious education of both old and young. Through such plays, knowledge of the Bible and its precepts were conveyed to the masses who witnessed these performances.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Cf. Bellinger: op. cit., p. 116

2. Cf. Candler: op. cit., p. 137

3. Cf. Bellinger: op. cit., p. 120

4. Cf. New International Encyclopedia, Vol. 7, p. 208

5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 208, 209

4. The Miracle play appeared in the fourteenth century as representative of the second stage of the development of modern drama under the sanction of religion. While the Mystery play, which has just been considered, was confined to the Biblical record for its basic subject matter, the Miracle play was allowed a much wider field, as it included material regarding the lives of the saints.<sup>1</sup> These Miracle plays, produced for both the pleasure and the edification of the common people, were characterized by a spirit of piety and by an attitude of devotion.<sup>2</sup>

5. The Morality play may be traced as far back as the fourteenth century when such a production, centered on the theme of the Lord's Prayer, was given at York. The Morality plays employed an allegorical method in presenting the religious truth which the writer wished to convey. These dramatized fables proved to be a popular and an effective means of religious education, for when abstract qualities of virtue and vice were personified by living actors, they achieved the nature of reality for the actors and audience alike.<sup>3</sup> Morality plays were exhortative in their nature and showed the effects of sin in a startlingly realistic fashion.<sup>4</sup>

6. The Passion play, originally portraying nothing save the passion of Christ, arose from the Mystery plays which were considered in a previous paragraph. The first passion play appeared in Siena, Italy in the early part of the thirteenth century, but it was not until the next century that it was found in England. There its sponsors employed it as a means of portraying the struggle between the spiritual mission

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1. Cf. Bellinger: op. cit., p. 124

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 138, 139

3. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 20

4. Cf. Candler: op. cit., p. 158

of Christ and the forces of the Jewish and the Roman worlds. From these infantile stages in Italy and in England, where it existed in a form of loosely connected dramatic episodes, the passion play suddenly grew by one bound into vigorous adulthood at Oberammergau, manifesting itself there for the first time in 1633. In that year, when the community was terrified by the presence of the Black Plague, its inhabitants vowed that if their lives were ~~not~~ spared by Divine Mercy, they would faithfully present a drama portraying the death and resurrection of Christ. The awful scourge of the plague lifted and steps were immediately taken to fulfill that promise, so that the first performance was given in the following year--1643.<sup>1</sup> Thru the succeeding centuries, performances of this play have been given regularly at ten year intervals with only a very few unavoidable exceptions. Who can estimate what the production of the Passion Play has meant in the achievement of major objectives of all religious education--knowledge, attitudes, character, and conduct?

In the light of this study, concerned particularly with the religious use of dramatics in which the participants are at the center of interest, it is well to see what observable effects the Passion Play has produced upon those who play in it. Those who have intimate knowledge of the production of the play declare that special Biblical training for the players is a feature of the preparation made for the play season and that the members of the cast celebrate mass every day before they take their places on the stage. Miss Candler states succinctly her estimate

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1. Cf. Candler: op. cit., pp. 171, 172

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 171, 172

of the religious values accruing to those who unite to produce this great drama:

"For a year before its performance, the Passion Play is the supreme object in the lives of the villagers....Johann Zwink once took the part of Judas with such conviction that he... actually so identified himself with the remorseful character that he hanged himself and had to be rescued....The rehearsals are conducted over a period of seven months, the actors devoting themselves to their parts with a religious zeal that makes the preparation as well as the production an act of devotion."<sup>1</sup>

7. It was during the early stages in the development of the Passion Play in Germany that the drama of Italy reached the pinnacle of its success. In the fifteenth century the so-called "Rappresentazione Sacra" was produced in connection with the ecclesiastical feast celebrated in honor of John the Baptist.<sup>2</sup> In regard to the history of Spanish drama as it was utilized for religious educational means, it may be said that from the time of the twelfth century on, sacred plays formed a highly popular form of amusement for the Spanish people. The procession, marking the opening of their festivals was always followed by an "auto sacramentale", that is, a play which bore a religious lesson.<sup>3</sup> It is significant, in view of this study, that the great period of Spanish drama was the period when the best playwrights of the day were active in composing dramas for use in the church services. The name of Calderon belongs to this age when Spanish drama, at its greatest glory, was contributing to the vitalization of religion. Calderon wrote plays known as "Autos Sacramentales" which portrayed the mystery of the Eucharist in dramatic form.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Candler: op. cit., pp. 172, 173
2. Cf. New International Encyclopedia, Vol. 7, p. 436
3. Cf. Bellinger: op. cit., p. 130
4. Cf. New International Encyclopedia, Vol. 7, p. 436

The study thus far has dealt with the use of drama as a medium for the transmission of religious teaching; as a method which has been employed in the achievement of major objectives in religious education. In this investigation it has been revealed that drama as an agent of religious education has achieved certain major objectives with their dependent corollaries: the impartation of knowledge, the development of attitudes, and the establishment of prescribed habits of conduct. Although drama actually achieved these objectives from primitive times and among various races, the day came when the drama was condemned as an agent of religious education. This day came when secular influences crept in and established a barrier between religion and drama.<sup>1</sup> By the time of the twelfth century the religious plays had become too elaborate for the chancel of the church and it was deemed necessary to move them onto a platform before the church door. When those plays were once outside of the church there was no reason why the Latin of the ritual could not be replaced by the vernacular.<sup>2</sup> Both of these changes made way for the frequent introduction of new and extraneous matter creative of a different atmosphere and provocative of a different response on the part of the audience. In this way, the drama soon became a "thing of questionable value and decency."<sup>3</sup> Thus, the plays which were originally religious in nature, not only lost the favor of the clergy, but were actually banned by them. In 1642 the London theatres had traveled so far in this downhill course that the English Parliament considered it expedient to close every theatre in that city.<sup>4</sup> For the following eighteen years all London

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1. Cf. Candler: op. cit., pp. 172, 173

2. Cf. Bellinger: op. cit., p. 125

3. Eastman: op. cit., p. 9

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 8

theatres remained nominally closed and it is asserted that no actor or spectator was safe during the days of the Puritan rule.<sup>1</sup> As in the Roman period, drama had ceased to portray the true and the good; it had become irreverent and obscene; therefore, it could no longer be employed as an agent in religious education, but must be forbidden.

#### F. Drama as an Agent of Religious Education in America

Since Puritan standards held sway in American life for some time, it was no wonder that several centuries elapsed before drama became an agent of religious education in America. Just recently the Church and Drama Association, (composed of those who, in the words of Edith Wynne Matthison, are eager for the renewal "of the ancient fellowship between Religion and Dramatic Art" ), has been organized. Dr. Cadman, as president of the organization, has declared that:

"Realizing...that the dramatic, like the religious instinct is deeply rooted in human nature and that these two mighty forces have been closely associated since the days of primitive man, we, the leaders of the church and theatre to-day must re-establish their ancient fellowship."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the day has come when drama is once more officially related to the program of religious education. It has been seen that this relationship was significant in the past in the achievement of major objectives of religious education; therefore, the dramatic method presents a challenge when it re-appears to-day as a means of realizing the great aims of the program of religious education.

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1. Of. Bellinger: op. cit., p. 249

2. Bulletin: Cadman, S. Parkes: Forward Together, p. 1

### III. Summary

In the preceeding pages of this chapter consideration has been given to certain major objectives which drama has actually achieved whenever it appeared in history as an agent of religious education. These major objectives, achieved in varying forms, from primitive man until the time of the Puritan era, might be summarized briefly as follows:

1. Impartation of knowledge regarding:
  - a) The sacred literature of the group
  - b) The deeds of the great religious leaders of the group
  - c) The religious laws and duties of the group
2. Development of attitudes regarding:
  - a) The deity or deities worshiped by the group
  - b) The treatment of fellow creatures
  - c) Sin
  - d) The religious organization of the group
  - e) Immortality
3. Establishment of prescribed habits regarding:
  - a) Formal worship, including the technique of ritual
  - b) Social obligations
  - c) Individual conduct

Hence, this historical survey has yielded evidence to the effect that the dramatic method has been most effectively used in the past in the achievement of these major objectives sought in all religious education.

Proceeding from this point, it is well to take a less extensive, but a more intensive view of the subject; to exchange the telescope for the microscope and consider the dramatic method in relationship to the contents of the dramatic impulse as it exists in the junior child.

## Chapter II

### The Psychological Basis for the Use of the Dramatic Method in the Religious Education of the Junior Child

(A Study of the Relationship Between the Characteristics of the Junior Child and the Content of the Dramatic Impulse as a Basic Consideration Relative to the Use of the Dramatic Method in the Religious Education of the Junior Child)

#### I. Introduction

The first chapter, devoted to a study of drama as an agent of religious education throughout the various stages of history, served to indicate that the dramatic method has proved to be an effective means of realizing certain major objectives sought in all religious education. This chapter, following that general discussion of the dramatic method in religious education, will include a consideration of the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child in particular. Such a consideration is necessary in treating the problem of this thesis, for the methods of religious education must always and at every point be fitted to the needs of the child in question. The dramatic method must be definitely harmonious with the nature of the junior child if it is to be employed in his religious education. Consequently, this chapter will be devoted to a comparative study based on material found in modern text books regarding the characteristics of the junior child and regarding the content of the dramatic impulse. The procedure will involve an analysis of the junior child for his outstanding characteristics, an analysis of the dramatic impulse for its component parts, and a comparison of the resulting analyses at each point in order to discover whether the total correlation is of such a nature as to justify the use of the dramatic method in the religious



education of the junior child. In accord with the modern emphasis upon child centered education, the object of paramount importance in each phase will be the junior child.

## II. The Junior Child and the Dramatic Impulse

### A. Activity

In making an analysis of the junior child on the basis of material found in recent books on child study, the writer found an abundance of evidence testifying as to the energetic activity of the junior child. Powell, in considering the primary interests of junior boys and girls, lists interest in activity as first.<sup>1</sup> She remarks that any one who watches junior children cannot but feel that they are filled with an exuberance of energy and that "our junior, first of all likes activity."<sup>2</sup> M. J. Baldwin says that the junior stage of life is one of "boundless energy and ceaseless activity."<sup>3</sup> In harmony with this assertion, J. L. Baldwin writes of the junior age as one in which "physical vitality with a corresponding irrepressible activity... reaches its highest point."<sup>4</sup> Mary T. Whitley reminds her readers that two thirds of the games played by juniors "involve considerable bodily movements."<sup>5</sup> A host of other writers, including Athearn, Hutton, Betts, and Hawthorne also unite in emphasizing the tireless activity which is characteristic of the junior child.<sup>6</sup> Thus far, then, it has been found

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1. Cf. Powell, Marie Cole: Junior Method in the Church School, p. 37
2. Powell: op. cit., p. 37
3. Baldwin, Maud Junkin: The Juniors: How to Teach and Train Them, p. 9
4. Baldwin, Josephine L.: The Junior Worker and Work, p. 20
5. Whitley, Mary T.: A Study of the Junior Child, p. 18
6. Cf. Athearn, Walter: The Church School, p. 120  
 Cf. Hutton, Jean G.: The Missionary Education of Juniors, p. 19  
 Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: Method in Teaching Religion, p. 234

that motor activity is of primary importance in the nature of the junior child.

An analysis of the dramatic impulse, as explained by present day psychologists, reveals that motor activity is one of the fundamental tendencies.<sup>1</sup> Motor activity, a primary characteristic of all organisms is the first great drive in the dramatic impulse, in the opinion of Wood, Betts, Hawthorne, and Overton.<sup>2</sup> Professor Wood, representative of this group, declares that movement is fundamental in plot and characterization since it is by this means that the player assumes the role which he wishes to portray.<sup>3</sup> Having thus seen that motor activity is a primary characteristic of the junior child, and having seen that it is also a primary constituent of the dramatic impulse, is it not justifiable to declare that in this particular respect there is a close correlation between the results of the two analyses?

#### B. Gregariousness

Returning again to the central point of this study--the junior child, it is found that present day writers stress his gregarious characteristics. The junior child, according to Mary T. Whitley, exhibits a spirit of fellowship as shown by his interest in clubs and gangs.<sup>4</sup> In this respect he manifests a desire to be with others in order to share with them in certain experiences, motives, and interests. Dr. Luther A. Weigle, in agreement with Miss Whitley, says that the junior child shows a love of team play and also a gang instinct.<sup>5</sup> In line with that description, Miss Powell declares that it is a characteristic of the normal junior child to seek for companions,

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1. Cf. Wood, W. Carleton: *The Dramatic Method in Religious Education*, p. 15  
Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: *op. cit.*, p. 232  
Cf. Overton, Grace Sloan: *Drama in Education*, p. 47
2. *Ibid.*
3. Cf. Wood: *op. cit.*, p. 47
4. Cf. Norsworthy and Whitley: *The Psychology of Childhood*, p. 300
5. Cf. Weigle, L. A.: *The Pupil and the Teacher*, pp. 30--33

that he prefers to act in groups rather than alone, that he plays with other children more at this period than at any other, and that a study of his games reveals that he prefers those which necessitate the presence of others.<sup>1</sup> Josephine L. Baldwin, in discussing the influence of the gang, also points out that the junior is keenly desirous of social contact and group activity.<sup>2</sup> Thus, authorities in the field of child study unite in saying that the junior child exhibits a strong tendency to cleave to his gang or club, due to the prominence of his gregarious instinct at just that stage of his development. In connection with the purpose of this phase of the study, it is interesting and significant that Wood as well as Betts and Hawthorne, in analyzing the dramatic impulse place this very quality of gregariousness in a position of high importance. They show that the desire to be in contact with fellow beings is a characteristic of every normal individual and this instinct is of "great importance in considering the human incentive for dramatic expression."<sup>3</sup> Thus, the gregariousness of the junior child finds its counterpart in the dramatic impulse and in this second phase there is a close correlation between the results of the two analyses.

#### C. Desire for Approval

The junior child manifests a distinct desire for approval, related, no doubt to his gregarious tendencies which were discussed above. In a preceding paragraph attention was called to the influence of the gang in the life of the junior child and to the importance which he attaches

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1. Cf. Powell: op. cit., pp. 38, 39

2. Cf. Baldwin, Josephine L.: op. cit., p. 13

3. Wood: op. cit., p. 17

Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 232

to its approbation. Miss Whitley reminds her readers that in the eyes of the junior child "to be applauded by 'the fellows' guarantees internal satisfaction."<sup>1</sup> Miss Josephine L. Baldwin affirms Miss Whitley's statement, by declaring that juniors desire pre-eminence and public recognition.<sup>2</sup> At the same time it is found that the desire for approval is another urge comprising the dramatic impulse.<sup>3</sup> This desire, sometimes known as love of approbation, manifests itself in response to the social demand for agreeable behavior. All thru life the individual seeks the approval and acclaim of those around him; the tiny child watching for his mother's smile grows into the adult seeking recognition in an ever widening circle.<sup>4</sup> This love of approbation is an instinct which is most powerful in motivating dramatic performance at all ages.<sup>5</sup> After studying the love of approbation as found in the junior child and in the dramatic impulse, it is clear that at this third point the results of the two analyses again coincide.

#### D. Loyalty

In the immediately preceding discussion it was noted that the junior child is essentially a social being, closely allied to those of his gang and highly desirous of their approval. Loyalty to the gang, is, in turn, considered a chief virtue<sup>6</sup> and "is developed as far as the group consciousness extends."<sup>7</sup> If the group becomes involved in any difficulty, the loyalty of the juniors is evidenced as all the members face the

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1. Whitley: op. cit., p. 38
2. Cf. Baldwin; Josephine L.: op. cit., p. 21
3. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 15
4. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 15
5. Cf. Beets and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 233  
Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 47
6. Cf. Baldwin: The Juniors: How to Teach and Train Them, p. 13
7. Whitley: op. cit., p. 118

situation as a group and consider it "unthinkable for one to save himself at the expense of the rest."<sup>1</sup> The junior also shows a sense of loyalty for his family, his neighborhood, school, and town, although his strongest allegiance is to his gang.<sup>2</sup> This element of loyalty, so prominent in the character of the junior child is also prominent in the dramatic impulse.<sup>3</sup> An avenue for the expression of this drive may be found in the program of dramatic activity and in that way it may be utilized so as to function to good advantage in the growth of personality. In view of this, it may be said that loyalty, as found in the make-up of the junior child, is congruous with the loyalty which is a constituent of the dramatic impulse.

#### E. Altruism

The junior child, allied with others of his own age in the gang group becomes an enthusiastic and an efficient participant in altruistic works.<sup>4</sup> Leaders have found that groups of junior boys and girls have displayed a keen interest in the promotion of better sanitary conditions and in the service of the sick and old in their communities.<sup>5</sup> Josephine L. Baldwin declares that the championship of a cause always appeals to junior children and she points out that in many schools they organize themselves into clubs for the purpose of carrying on a program which is based on altruistic motives.<sup>6</sup> This trait of altruism is a highly developed form of the social instinct found in the dramatic impulse.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Whitley: op. cit., p. 119
2. Cf. Baldwin, Josephine L.: op. cit., p. 13  
Cf. Norsworthy and Whitley: op. cit., p. 296
3. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 38
4. Cf. Norsworthy and Whitley, p. 302
5. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 15
6. Cf. Baldwin, Josephine L.: op. cit., p. 21
7. Cf. Wood: op. cit., pp. 15, 17

## F. Imitation

As has already been observed, the junior is able to enter sympathetically into the experiences of others. This inward experience of sympathy is closely related to the external act of imitation, since participation in the mental states of another normally results in an expressional response.<sup>1</sup> The younger junior is prone to imitate people of his immediate acquaintance and thru his play experiences he relives the activities of adults around him.<sup>2</sup> The older junior, in his desire to imitate people of a more remote realm, turns to the field of reading and imagination to find the heroes whom he considers worthy of emulation.<sup>3</sup> His active imagination reaches out toward idols found in a world of fairies, nymphs, kings, knights, and warriors; he imitates the actions of an Indian, an outlaw, or a prince on various occasions.<sup>4</sup> His intense admiration for his idols becomes hero worship and he copies a great many points of speech, action, and mannerisms.<sup>5</sup> Imitation, so fundamental in the make-up of the junior child is also fundamental in the make-up of the dramatic impulse.<sup>6</sup> This tendency "to repeat the thoughts and acts of another"<sup>7</sup> is one of the basic human instincts, appearing at an early age and persisting throughout life in various forms according to the age of the individual.<sup>8</sup> These

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1. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 38
2. Cf. Norsworthy and Whitley: op. cit., p. 303
3. Cf. Baldwin, Maud J.: op. cit., p. 11
4. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 40
5. Cf. Baldwin; Maud J.: op. cit., p. 11
6. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 34
7. Cf. Whitley: op. cit., p. 113
8. Cf. Athearn: op. cit., p. 122; 124
9. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 232
10. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 19
11. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 47
12. Overton: op. cit., p. 48
13. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 231

different forms of imitation "variously combined add an important color to the dramatic impulse."<sup>1</sup> Again, there is close correlation between a characteristic of the junior child and a characteristic of the dramatic impulse.

#### G. Curiosity

Boys and girls of the junior age display an interest in the unknown as shown by their tendency to investigate the unfamiliar.<sup>2</sup> This trait of curiosity leads to experimentation in order to discover the how, the why, and the what pertaining to objects within their ken.<sup>3</sup> This adaptive instinct of curiosity, so apparent in the response of the junior child to his environment, is a basic drive in the dramatic impulse. Psychologists declare that curiosity is aroused by the novel and that it gradually develops into interest, attention, suspense, wonder, and awe. Drama is essentially dependent upon the component of the dramatic impulse known as curiosity.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the curiosity of the junior child corresponds with the curiosity found in the dramatic impulse; again there is agreement between the two factors under consideration.

#### H. Manipulation

In discussing the interests of the junior child, Miss Powell declares that "there is none more compelling than the urge to make things."<sup>5</sup> This instinctive interest, often known as manipulation, is evidenced by the junior's incessant strivings to "make things happen, to get results."<sup>6</sup> This constructive tendency common to the junior child is most easily observed as it leads him to activities of building and fashioning

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1. Wood: op. cit., p. 19

2. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 41

Cf. Norworthy and Whitley: op. cit., p. 302

3. Cf. Whitley: op. cit., p. 24

4. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 23

5. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 41

6. Cf. Whitley: op. cit., p. 23

a wide variety of articles. Maud Junkin Baldwin declares that junior boys like to make things such as sleds and wagons; that they enjoy building railroads and bridges; that the junior girl displays this same urge to make things as she cooks food and fashions clothing for her dolls.<sup>1</sup> This characteristic found in the nature of the junior child is comparable to the tendency toward construction which is a constituent of the dramatic impulse.<sup>2</sup> At this point, also, there is harmony between a trait of the junior child and an element of the dramatic impulse.

#### I. Aesthetic Interests

The junior's constructive tendency yields a by-product of aesthetic interest.<sup>3</sup> This aesthetic interest, with its instinctive basis is not so highly developed during the junior age as at later periods, and yet, it must not be overlooked. Juniors respond to the beautiful in art, sculpture, and painting to such an extent that they often enter upon a state of inward rapture after such contacts.<sup>4</sup> According to Professor Wood, this aesthetic interest is included in the dramatic impulse and involves appreciation of unity, emphasis, harmony, symmetry, balance, proportion, and grace.<sup>5</sup> Once more, then, it is found that a junior's interest tallies with a phase of the dramatic impulse.

#### J. Expressiveness

The junior child manifests his expressive instinct in connection with his characteristics cited above under the headings of love of appro-

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1. Cf. Baldwin, Maud Junkin: op. cit., pp. 9, 10
2. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 15  
Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 47
3. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 24
4. Cf. Whitley: op. cit., pp. 118, 119
5. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 24



bation, propensity to imitate, to construct, and to enter upon aesthetic experiences. This urge for expression, revealing itself in gesture and voice is dominant in the dramatic impulse.<sup>1</sup> Again, a characteristic of the junior child and a characteristic of the dramatic impulse are found to coincide precisely.

### III. Summary

In this chapter, then, the writer has set forth data gleaned from modern textbooks regarding the prominent characteristics of the junior child and regarding the constituent elements of the dramatic impulse. This twofold analysis, involving the junior child on the one hand and the dramatic impulse on the other, resulted in the discovery of a close correlation between the two factors at each point of comparison. This brief summary revealed that these outstanding characteristics of the junior child have counterparts in the dramatic impulse: activity, gregariousness, desire for approval, loyalty, altruism, imitation, curiosity, construction, expression, and an aesthetic interest. Since the fact of this congruity has been established it may be asserted that psychology justifies the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child.

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1. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 24

### Chapter III

## The Potentialities of the Dramatic Method as a Means of Meeting the Objectives Sought in the Religious Education of the Junior Child

### I. Introduction

At the outset of this study consideration was given to the use of the dramatic method as it appeared in history as a means of realizing thru the use of various materials the major objectives sought in all religious education--namely, knowledge, attitudes, and skill in living. At this time it is fitting to move from that realm in order to concentrate upon the relation between the specific objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child and the dramatic method. In this chapter the junior child will be of central importance; the objectives for his religious education will be analyzed and reduced to their simplest form; Biblical and missionary data will be selected as two types of material to serve as the media thru which the dramatic method may be tested in order to ascertain its efficacy as one means of achieving the objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child. Thus, the following pages will be devoted to a study of the major objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child and then to an empirical test of the dramatic method as one means of achieving these desired outcomes.

### II. The Dramatic Method and the Objectives Sought in the Religious Education of the Junior Child

#### A. The Objectives Sought

In his book, Objectives in Religious Education, Dr. Paul H. Vieth proposed a sevenfold goal as the aim to be apprehended by all modern religious education.<sup>1</sup> These general principles thus set

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1. Cf. Vieth, Paul H.: Objectives in Religious Education, pp. 80--88

forth by Dr. Vieth were paralleled in the statement of objectives for the religious education of the junior child proposed by the committee on the religious education of children. Briefly stated, their seven fold objectives are as follows:

- "1. Religious education seeks to foster in juniors a consciousness of God as a reality in human experience and a sense of personal relationship to him....
2. Religious education seeks to develop in juniors such an understanding and appreciation of the personality, life, and teachings of Jesus as will lead to love for him and loyalty to his cause, manifesting themselves in daily life and conduct.
3. Religious education seeks to foster in the junior a progressive and continuous development of character in harmony with the teachings and example of Jesus...
4. Religious education seeks to develop in the junior the ability and the disposition to help make the ideal of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man a reality in his own world....
5. Religious education seeks to develop in the junior the growing ability and disposition to participate in the organized society of Christians--the church....
6. Religious education seeks to lead the junior into a Christian interpretation of life and the universe....
7. Religious education seeks to effect in the junior the assimilation of the best religious experience of the race as effective guidance to present experience."<sup>1</sup>

An attempt to analyze and synthesize these objectives reveals that suggestions of knowledge, attitudes, and skill in living, (or conduct) aims are woven throughout all of the seven. An individual consideration of each brings these various elements to light:

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1. Bulletin prepared by the committee on the religious education of children--"International Curriculum Guide--Preliminary Draft--Section I (Children's Work), pp. 110--115)

1. "consciousness of God"	KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDE	
"sense of personal relation to him."	KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDE	
2. "understanding of life and teachings of Jesus."	KNOWLEDGE		
"love for him"		ATTITUDE	
"loyalty to him."		ATTITUDE	
"manifesting themselves in daily life and conduct."			CONDUCT
3. "character in harmony with the teachings and example of Jesus"	KNOWLEDGE		CONDUCT
4. "ability and disposition"	KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDE	
"help make fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man a reality"		ATTITUDE	CONDUCT
5. "ability and disposition"	KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDE	
"participate in the church"			CONDUCT
6. "Christian interpretation of life and the universe"	KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDE	
7. "assimilation of the best religious experience of the race as effective guidance to present day experience."	KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDE	CONDUCT

Thus, it is evident that these objectives are based upon the cognitive, emotional, and volitional phases of human personality as they are related to the one end of developing Christian character. Because of the three fold foundation and permeating emphasis revealed by analysis, it is possible to reduce them to Dr. Betts' compactly phrased goal of religious education which he sums up as: fruitful knowledge, right attitudes, and skill in living.<sup>1</sup> Now, having stated this three-

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1. Of. Betts, George Herbert: How to Teach Religion, p. 47

fold goal as comprising the gist of the outcomes desired in the religious education of the junior child, it is necessary to test the adequacy of the dramatic method as a means of achieving each of these objectives. In order to give body and substance to this study, the dramatic method will be tested first when Biblical material, and then, second, when missionary material is employed as the medium thru which to attain these objectives desired in the religious education of the junior child. First, in the religious education of the junior child, how may the dramatization of Biblical material serve to inculcate fruitful knowledge, to develop right attitudes and to promote skill in living?

#### B. The Achievement of the Objectives Sought

##### 1. Thru the Use of Biblical Material

###### a) Knowledge

In the religious education of the junior child how may the dramatization of Biblical material serve to inculcate fruitful knowledge? In order to impart secular knowledge and to instill social and moral principles the public school makes wide use of dramatic activity and is defended in this practice by a host of present-day psychologists and educators.<sup>1</sup> In this regard, Lee says: "The mind first learns things by getting inside of them, by being what it studies."<sup>2</sup> Dr. G. Stanley Hall writes: "Doing is a better organ of knowing than is merely intellectual learning."<sup>3</sup> Miss Edland declares that dramatiza-

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1. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 11  
Cf. Russell, Mary M.: How to Dramatize Bible Lessons, p. 130  
Cf. Miller, Elizabeth E.: Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 5
2. Brockway, Meme: Church Work with Juniors, p. 116
3. Hall, Dr. G. Stanley--quoted by Ferris, Anita B.: Following the Dramatic Instinct, p. 26

tion as a process of learning thru action is of prime importance since that which is learned thru the medium of activity makes a much more lasting impression than that which is learned thru merely hearing or seeing.<sup>1</sup> In this same connection Mrs. Overton writes that the dramatic method "provides a means of getting teaching into action."<sup>2</sup>

If the dramatic method, thus justified, is successfully utilized by public education to impart secular knowledge, may it not also be utilized in religious education to impart religious knowledge?<sup>3</sup> This question leads to a statement of the knowledge aim as it functions in the field of religious education. Dr. Betts, in discussing this aim which he proposes as fundamental, says that since religion must be intelligent, one of the chief objectives of religious education must be to supply children with religious knowledge.<sup>4</sup> Such knowledge must include as fundamental constituents a consciousness of God as a living presence who is actively at work in the world; a knowledge of the divinity of Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup> Since the Bible is the supreme source of information on these matters, it is essential that the Bible be carefully studied and thoroughly mastered in order that its meaning may be intelligently applied to present day life.<sup>6</sup> Now, at this time,

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1. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: Children's Dramatizations, p. 5
2. Overton: op. cit., p. 80
3. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 117  
Cf. Miller: op. cit., p. 5
4. Cf. Betts: op. cit., p. 47
5. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 87
6. Cf. I bid., p. 85

it is apropos to put the question which is the subject of this portion of the study: How may the dramatization of Biblical material serve to give the junior child fruitful knowledge, that is, knowledge which is relative to his needs, problems, interests and activities in this present age? An examination of books by contemporary educators reveals unanimous agreement on this point of the efficacy of the dramatization of Biblical material as a means of giving the child knowledge relative to his every day life.

Meredith points out that educational dramatics serves to impart a necessary knowledge of Biblical geography since such facts may be woven into the fabric of the dramatic production. In this way also, children may learn the vital points of Bible history. Thru such a process, then, drama is able to make the Bible live for the children; as they analyze the Passages which they wish to dramatize they are eager to look up cross references for further light on their work; as they proceed the production takes on the aspects of a problem upon which they may center their interest and as such it becomes a project for the acquirement of fruitful knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Meredith is supported in this position by Mattie C. Blomquist who states that thru the process of studying, writing, and playing the Bible stories, the children become familiar with the Old Testament and the New Testament, and that in this way they learn to love the Bible as a storehouse of literature, history, and dramatic event.<sup>2</sup> In her book, The Dramatization of Bible Stories, Miller declares that when children actually dramatize a Bible story they are enabled to comprehend the life experiences of the

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1. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 19

2. Cf. International Journal of Religious Education, March 1930, p. 17  
(Article by Mattie C. Blomquist)

Hebrew people who are involved and that such a comprehension has a vital influence upon their own standards and ideals.<sup>1</sup> Miss Wilson says that when the children act out an Old Testament incident or a New Testament parable the impression is indelibly stamped upon their minds.<sup>2</sup> To bear out this point, she quotes Clavier who gives the following illustration:

'Martha has acted the parable of the Lost Coin. Her house was under the chair; her coin was hidden in a crack in the floor. Martha has swept and searched in view of all the delighted children; she has found the coin and has shown it to them. All together they have repeated the parable. Martha will not forget it and neither will the others.'<sup>3</sup>

In a bulletin published by the committee on religious education of the Northern Baptist Convention, it is stated that thru dramatization Biblical material takes on new meaning, for if this material is to be dramatized, the unfamiliar phrases and customs must be studied, interpreted, and explained. Then, in that light, the Bible may be brought to bear on every day life and thus become a source of fruitful knowledge.<sup>4</sup> In considering ways in which the Bible may be made vital to children, Margaret Monrad, writing in the Pilgrim Elementary Teacher, suggests that the teacher would do well to utilize the child's dramatic instinct to accomplish that desired end.<sup>5</sup> She asserts that in this way, thru the use of the dramatic method, the child may "live over again in imagination those grand old tales " and that the dramatization may serve to "deepen and vivify impressions made by them and elucidate their interpretations."<sup>6</sup> Miss Eggleston, in writing of the dramatization

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1. Cf. Miller: Dramatization in the Church School, p. 6
- 2/ Cf. Wilson, Dorothy F.: Child Psychology and Religious Education, p. 55
3. Ibid., p. 55
4. Cf. Bulletin: Pageantry in the School of the Church, p. 10
5. Cf. Pilgrim Elementary Teacher, Nov. 1929, p. 483 (Article by Monrad)
6. Ibid., p. 483



of Biblical materials declares that such work is carried on for the purpose of developing within the children "an interest in and an understanding of great and noble Bible characters to stimulate worthy ideals and motives."<sup>1</sup> In writing along this line, Miss Ferris points out that educational dramatics, based upon the child's natural dramatic instinct is a splendid means of making the Bible and its people live for children today. She suggests that dramatic activity may well be utilized to give vividness and reality to much of the Biblical material which might otherwise be difficult to teach to children.<sup>2</sup> She rejoices that thru such dramatic activity, not only Bible stories, manners, and customs may be learned in an unforgettable way, but that thru this avenue Bible truths are imparted and "all in the way of joyous play."<sup>3</sup> In concluding this phase of the discussion it is fitting to call attention to Miss Kimball's view of the matter. She holds that children should be given an opportunity to live out the Bible in order that it may not be merely an intellectual experience, but rather, a life experience.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, these present day leaders in the field of religious education affirm that thru the dramatization of Biblical material the child may acquire knowledge closely related to his life. Consequently, from this test, made on the basis of Biblical material, the dramatic method is deemed an efficient agency in the realization of the objective--

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1. Eggleston, Margaret W.: The Use of the Story in Religious Education, p. 158
2. Cf. Ferris: op. cit., p. 21
3. Ibid., p. 33  
Cf. Benton, Rita: The Bible Play Workshop, pp. 15, 16
4. Cf. Kimball, Rosamond; The Wooing of Rebecca and Other Bible Plays, p. vii  
Cf. Benton: op. cit., pp. 14, 15

fruitful knowledge--sought in the religious education of the junior child.

b) Attitudes

Permeating and underlying the seven objectives proposed as outcomes to be desired in the religious education of the junior child there are several included by Dr. Betts in his statement of the second aim at the heart of religious education:

"Right attitudes; the religious warmth, responsiveness, interests, ideals, loyalties, and enthusiasms which lead to action and to a true sense of what is most worth while."<sup>1</sup>

In view of that, the next problem of this discussion logically follows: In the religious education of the junior child how may the dramatization of Biblical material serve to develop right attitudes?

Before answering this question specifically, it is well to cite general statements which will serve to substantiate statements of a more detailed nature. For example, Mrs. Overton points out that dramatic expression gives the child an opportunity to put himself in another's position and then to gain experience by proxy.<sup>2</sup> When a child actually strives to interpret a noble character he has a morally uplifting experience in that he is moved by the impulse which prompted the character whose experience he is reliving.<sup>3</sup> On this point, Professor James B. Pratt has written the following words:

"So close is the relation between reaction and feeling, between bodily expression and inner state that he who imitates another's

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1. Betts: op. cit., p. 47
2. Cf. Overton: op. cit., pp. 77, 78  
Cf. Weigle: op. cit., pp. 150, 151
3. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 195

action, posture, or expression, is likely to share, at least incipiently, in the mental attitude thus expressed....It is more important that he (the child) should imitate actions which are expressive of religious feelings and thus come to wonder, think, and feel for himself than that he should learn any amount of pious words."<sup>1</sup>

In a preceding section it was discovered that the dramatization of Biblical material serves to impart fruitful knowledge. These statements suggest that the dramatization of Biblical material also serves to develop attitudes glorified in Biblical lore.<sup>2</sup> For example, when children act out the story of Esther, the girl who takes the title role comes to realize anew the devotion required on the part of the real Esther. In working out a dramatization of the story of the Good Samaritan, the participants experience the attitudes shown by the various characters, and in that way they comprehend anew the meaning of the parable as it is involved in the attitudes shown by the various persons who are represented. Those who have portrayed the Nativity scene in a dramatic way will ever afterward be more interested in and more appreciative of the Christmas story, particularly in their feeling of adoration for the Christ-child. To illustrate this point, Kimball speaks of three very lively junior boys who had been assigned to play the part of the wise men in such a production. In the course of the preparation for the play the boys "were not drilled, but filled with a sense of the sacredness of it all."<sup>3</sup> Thru the experience they entered into the attitude of worship.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Quoted by Whiting, Isabel K.: Dramatic Services of Worship, p. x
2. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 112  
Cf. Betts: op. cit., p. 176
3. Kimball, Rosemond: The Wooing of Rebecca and Other Bible Plays, p. 6
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 6

Miss Brockway also illustrates the effect which dramatization of Biblical material produces upon the attitudes of the participants. She writes of a group of junior boys who enacted the life of Daniel at a week day session of the church school. After representing the story in four scenes, each of which had ended in an ascription of praise to God, she then asked them how they might express the meaning which the story had had for them. In response, one boy said: "Let's sing: 'Holy, Holy, Holy!'" The request for that song sprang out of the dramatization of that particular portion of Biblical material showing Daniel's attitude of praise. Thus, thru the dramatization, these junior boys achieved a new and a deeper appreciation of God's holiness and responded in a desire to praise him.<sup>1</sup> In this connection, Miss Powell says that it is one thing for a child to hear the teacher tell about the generosity of David in sparing Saul's life, but that it is quite another thing to portray the role of David and in so doing to assume the generous attitude.<sup>2</sup> She continues her discussion of the relation between the dramatization of Biblical material and the formation of right attitudes by saying that,

"If we are seeking to get the child to live all of his life in a religious spirit, how can we better do it than by letting him really share the life experiences of people who lived with this God consciousness vivid and ever present."<sup>3</sup>

In view of these facts just presented, it is apparent that thru the dramatization of Biblical material the child may develop

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1. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 117  
Cf. Benton: op. cit., p. 20
2. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 348
3. Ibid, p. 348

right attitudes " which lead to action and to a sense of what is most worth while." <sup>1</sup> Consequently, in the case of this second test, made on the basis of Biblical material, the dramatic method has proved to be an effective means of realizing the second objective--right attitudes--sought in the religious education of the junior child.

### c) Conduct

Thus far it has been pointed out that in the religious education of the junior child the dramatization of Biblical material serves to impart fruitful knowledge and to develop right attitudes. The emphases of the seven-fold goal established for the religious education of the junior child which are not contained in those two objectives are contained in the third aim proposed by Dr. Betts as "skill in living" which he considers as

"the power and will to use the religious knowledge and enthusiasms supplied by education in shaping the life and conduct of the daily life."<sup>1</sup>

In stating the implications of this third and last aim, Dr. Betts declares that it was included in the first two and that it signifies conduct and right living. He announces quite definitely that knowledge and attitudes achieve their true goals only as they are realized in worthy actions and that conduct is the ultimate test of education.<sup>2</sup> Now, with this in mind, it is possible to proceed to the third test of the dramatic method in relation to the presentation of Biblical material: In the religious education of the junior child how may the dramatization of Biblical material serve to promote skill in living?

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1. Betts, op. cit., p. 47
2. Cf. Ibid, p. 46, 47

The following concise statement regarding dramatic activity will serve as a basis for this discussion of the dramatization of Biblical material as a means of realizing this goal: "Dramatization is the working out by the child of his constructive images in terms of action."<sup>1</sup> Re-phrased, this simply means that thru dramatic activity, knowledge and attitudes may become vivid realities to the children as they portray them. In this connection it is important to note the view-points set forth by modern educators regarding dramatic activity in general as an aid to the acquirement of skill in the activities of living.

Grace Sloan Overton writes that constant practice is necessary in order to acquire skill in conduct. Then she refers to Welton's<sup>1</sup> assertion that it is possible to learn virtue only thru action.<sup>2</sup> Continuing this discussion of the necessity for the transformation of ideals into action in order to achieve desirable conduct, Mrs. Overton states succinctly: "The dramatic method of teaching provides means for doing this very thing."<sup>3</sup> In this same connection Bagley says that ideals become crystallized in the process of dramatic expression and that "courage, perseverance, magnanimity, courtesy, charity, and a host of other virtues may in this way be endowed with sufficient emotional force as to carry them thru life as effective controls of conduct."<sup>4</sup> In thinking further of the educational value of dramatic activity, Overton

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1. Norsworthy and Whitley: The Psychology of Childhood, p. 164
2. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 82
3. Ibid., p. 82
4. Bagley, William C.: Educational Values, p. 170

~~Overton~~ says that when the dramatic method is used

"definitely raised problems may be presented in which principles governing right conduct may be actually employed. Thus, the child gains experience in developing skills in living. The dramatic method provides a means for getting teaching into action."<sup>1</sup>

Mary M. Russell has put the gist of this thought into these words: "Dramatics render virtue real thru action."<sup>2</sup> Professor Wood agrees perfectly

with these authorities for he also contends that the dramatic method serves to transform principles of ethical teaching into moral action.

He insists that it is by means of this method that ethical teaching gathers force thru instinct, emotion, and will and thus becomes vital

in every day living.<sup>3</sup> In line with this opinion, Meredith, after declaring that educational dramatics serves to determine character, writes

that the dramatic method serves to move men to action since it involves the bringing into activity of the vital elements composing character.

In view of this, knowledge must be put to use thru dramatic expression, and then sympathy may find an avenue for expression, carrying over into

actual conduct.<sup>4</sup> Finally, as Professor Wood points out, it is thru such living experience as is made possible thru dramatic activity that character

is really achieved.<sup>5</sup> This same opinion is expressed in these words by

the committee on religious education of the Northern Baptist Convention:

"The acting of a good deed on the platform tends to stimulate its repetition in practical every day affairs."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Overton: op. cit., p. 90

2. Russell; Mary M.: Drama as a Factor in Social Education, p. 130

3. Cf. Wood: op. cit., pp. 46, 47

4. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 19

5. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 120

6. Bulletin: Pageantry in the School of the Church: An Experiment in Religious Education, p. 13

Speaking more in detail on this matter, Miss Miller lists these six characteristics making for more skillfull living which may be acquired thru dramatic activity: the ability to co-operate; a respect for the rights of others; an appreciation of all honest efforts put forth by others; a wholesome feeling of self confidence; a conquest of self consciousness; an achievement of self control.<sup>1</sup> Miss Powell, in considering the dramatic method in relation to skill in living, points out that thru the medium of dramatization the child is given an opportunity to meet and solve the problems of other people. She feels that thru this process the child is enabled to form his own standards and to acquire techniques of conduct, and that as a result, he will achieve new and greater skill in meeting life situations in the right way.<sup>2</sup>

These writers agree that the dramatic method serves to promote skill in living thru affording experiences in right relationships and practice in the performance of good deeds. Other writers note that the dramatic method also serves to promote skill in living when it places emphasis upon the highly undesirable results of evil doing. Miss Brockway feels that when a child has portrayed the part of an unworthy character he will hate the conduct of such a person to the extent that he will be held from like actions in his own life.<sup>3</sup> Meredith writes with this very same viewpoint, asserting that thru dramatic activity lessons may be learned in the inhibition of wrong conduct. This experience will have an important meaning in the child's life as he moves from the rather controlled environment of the classroom out into the larger and the uncontrolled environment known as "the outside world."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth E.: Dramatization in the Church School, p. 65
2. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 348
3. Cf. Brockway: op. cit.; p. 116
4. Cf. Meredith: op. cit.; p. 195



Thus, it appears that there is unanimous agreement among these educators on the point that dramatic activity is an aid toward the acquirement of right conduct--skill in living.

Now, after having established these foundation principles, it is well to illustrate them by citing actual incidents which bear them out. In her book, Church Work Among Juniors, Miss Brockway says that children acquire new ideals as they enact the lives of great heroes, and then she tells of the little Mexican lad who had just finished playing the story of David as he spared the life of King Saul. As this little boy waited outside of the mission school building following the class session, another child, who was also waiting, annoyed him by little pokes and pinches. Instead of retaliating in the way customary in his group, the little Mexican boy reached out his hand in a gesture of magnanimity and then declared: 'I'll not hurt you; I could, but--I'm just like David.'<sup>1</sup> Miss Eggleston tells of an instance in which a classroom dramatization served to achieve the objective of right conduct in a child's life. She says that when the story of Abraham and Lot was dramatized in a certain class the teacher assigned the major roles to two brothers who were always quarreling, hoping that the playing of the story would produce an improvement in their conduct. Several days after the dramatization of this story the teacher was greatly delighted to hear the boy who had played the part of Abraham make this comment: "I like those words that Abraham said: 'Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me for we are brethren.' Since we played the story I've thought of those words every time that I started to quarrel with Bill."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 125

2. Cf. Eggleston, Margaret W.: The Use of the Story in Religious Education, p. 155

In the light of the data set forth in these immediately preceding paragraphs, it is only logical to conclude that thru the dramatization of biblical material the child may acquire skill in living which will issue in desirable forms of conduct. From this third test, on the basis of biblical material, the dramatic method stands as a helpful means to be employed in the achievement of the objective--skill in living--sought in the religious education of the junior child.

By way of summary it may be said that thru the dramatization of biblical material the child acquires fruitful knowledge, right attitudes, and skill in living; he comes to know his bible in such a way that it "may be of actual use to him in life situations."<sup>1</sup> This three-fold test of the dramatic method on the basis of Biblical material has, then, at each point yielded the conclusion that the dramatic method is an efficient means of realizing the objectives desired in the religious education of the junior child.

## 2. Thru the Use of Missionary Material

Now, at this point, it is well to test the adequacy of the dramatic method when missionary material is employed as the means thru which to attain the objectives desired in the religious education of the junior child.

### a) Knowledge

In the religious education of the junior child how may the dramatization of missionary material serve to inculcate fruitful knowledge? Since, as was noted in the preceding chapter of this study, the junior child is a worshipper of heroes, he will eagerly

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1. Athearn, Walter: The Church School, p. 263

reach out toward knowledge when it is presented in terms of attractive personalities. Professor Wood suggests that the lives of missionary heroes, both of the past and of the present age, are full of dramatic possibilities which may well be recognized by the teacher of religious education who wishes to impart missionary knowledge in a vital fashion.<sup>1</sup>

The junior's intense curiosity, as discussed in chapter two, is a valuable asset in the presentation of missionary knowledge, for the junior child wishes to know about the world in which he lives.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the junior child responds readily to dramatization thru which he may, in a measure, satisfy his consuming curiosity about the world as he studies the habits, dress, and manner of life common to people of other lands.<sup>3</sup>

It is by means of dramatization involving information along these lines that the child may come to know alien peoples almost as well as he knows himself and really act as those others might act.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, Mrs. Elizabeth Miller Lobingier writes that missionary dramatization "makes vivid to a degree impossible in any other method, the every day life and experiences of children of other lands or racial groups."<sup>5</sup>

In stating this same conviction, Miss Powell voices the opinion that when a group of junior children have studied about life in India or in China and then have woven the results of their study into dramatic form, the knowledge thus acquired becomes intimate, vivid, and there-

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1. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 75
2. Cf. Hutton: op. cit., p. 7
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 32  
Cf. International Journal of Religious Education, February 1927, p-23  
(Article by Elisabeth Edland)
4. Cf. Ferris: op. cit., p. 21
5. Lobingier, Elizabeth Miller: Informal Missionary Dramatization, p. 7

fore fruitful, in that it is definitely related to the interests and comprehension of the children themselves.<sup>1</sup> Miss Hutton, in her book, The Missionary Education of Juniors, writes of the relation between dramatic activity and the impartation of fruitful knowledge regarding those in other lands. She points out that junior children are led toward an intelligent conception of those in foreign lands when allowed to act out in an informal manner some of the customs found in those regions. Then she adds that at times this informal demonstration may be easily developed into a simple play written and staged by the children themselves in spontaneous fashion.<sup>2</sup> Although such spontaneous dramatizations are worked out with no audience in mind, it often happens that they may be profitably shared with another group in the promotion of missionary knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

In summarizing the connection between the dramatization of missionary material and the impartation of fruitful knowledge, it is fitting to remember that dramatization is one of the most attractive means of presenting information about the missionary enterprise;<sup>4</sup> that "dramatization furnishes an avenue thru which individuals are able to actually see and feel missions";<sup>5</sup> and that dramatization provides a channel thru which life in foreign lands and actual conditions on the mission fields may be presented in concrete fashion.<sup>6</sup> Thus, it is apparent that the dramatization of missionary material is a genuinely

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1. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 348

2. Cf. Hutton: op. cit., pp. 67, 68

3. Cf. International Journal of Religious Education, Feb. 1927, pp. 23, 24  
(Article by Elisabeth Edland)

4. Cf. Ibid.

5. Meredith: op. cit., p. 205 (Quoting Dr. George Mecklenberg)

6. Cf. Ibid, p. 215

useful method in giving the junior child fruitful knowledge--the first of the three objectives proposed as goals to be sought in his religious education.

#### b) Attitudes

In the religious education of the junior child how may the dramatization of missionary material serve to develop right attitudes? In general, it may be said that after a child has engaged in a dramatic project involving a study of peoples of other races, it is only natural that he achieves a growing appreciation of them.<sup>1</sup> Thru presenting a missionary dramatization which requires search thru books and pictures in order to learn about the customs, habits, modes of dress, and manner of life among a certain people, the child comes to think of them in an attitude of sympathetic understanding.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the dramatic portrayal of missionary material widens the child's experience and deepens his sympathies;<sup>3</sup> participation in a missionary drama yields knowledge which reveals the good qualities present in all races.<sup>4</sup>

In particular, it must be remembered that during the junior stage of life, the child is especially facile in his ability to comprehend and enter into the life of other peoples thru the medium of dramatic activity. In view of this, dramatization of missionary material gives him a rare opportunity to develop an appreciation of all peoples.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 164
2. Cf. Candler, Martha: Drama in Religious Service, p. 33  
Cf. International Journal of Religious Education, July--August, 1925, p. 46 (A rticle by Robert Moulton Gatke)
3. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 116
4. Cf. Bulletin--Deseo, Mrs. Lydia Glover: Dramatics--Why and How, p. 4
5. Cf. Hutton: op. cit., p. 8

As Miss Ferris writes of the utilization of the dramatic instinct in the missionary education of junior children she says that between the years of nine and eleven "impressions are made and attitudes of thought assumed which will last thru life."<sup>1</sup> In concluding this paragraph concerned with the function of dramatic activity in the realization of right attitudes toward those of other races, attention is directed toward Mrs. Elizabeth Miller Lobingier's summary of the matter. This writer says that the dramatic method employed in missionary education leads the child to a better understanding and appreciation of races other than his own and helps to develop a friendly attitude toward them.<sup>2</sup> In conclusion she declares that: "Any method that so readily leads to the accomplishment of this important objective is to be commended--and used."<sup>3</sup>

In these respects, then, the dramatization of missionary material serves to develop right attitudes. Thus, it is evident that in this way the dramatic method is an effective means of realizing the second inclusive objective sought in the religious education of the junior child--right attitudes.

#### c) Conduct

Thus far it has been seen that the dramatization of missionary material serves to impart fruitful knowledge and also to develop right attitudes. At this time it is well to test this method on the basis of missionary material in regard to the third objective proposed by

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1. Ferris: op. cit., p. 34
2. Cf. Lobingier: op. cit., p. 7
3. Ibid., p. 7

Dr. Betts--skill in living.<sup>1</sup> At this time, then, it is apropos to state this question: In the religious education of the junior child how may the dramatization of missionary material serve to promote skill in living?

In writing of the necessity of the transformation of knowledge and attitudes into action in the case of missionary dramatization, Miss Hutton declares that when the junior child has learned of the world and its needs and has been stirred to a feeling of sympathy, it is necessary that he "react in deeds" and that he "show himself a brother and a helper else it were better for him that the impulse had never come."<sup>2</sup> Then this same writer points out that the teacher who attempts to develop the true missionary spirit of world brotherhood and friendship toward all races must be alert to the evidences of that spirit as the children of her group actually mingle with those of other races in their home communities.<sup>3</sup> Just at this point dramatic activity is useful in serving to break down the prejudices which prevent children from carrying over the missionary spirit into actual conduct as they meet with those from other countries.<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Deseo gives this concrete example of the use of the dramatic method as an instrument to achieve the expression of the missionary attitude in behavior. She says that a group of junior children who lived near to a large park displayed contempt for the Italian caretaker, even going so far as to call him "Dago". Their teacher, sensing this, guided them in a dramatization of the play, "The

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1. Cf. Betts: op. cit., p. 47
2. Hutton: op. cit., p. 46
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 110  
Cf. Vieth: op. cit., pp. 213, 214
4. Cf. Church School Journal, November 1927, p. 585  
(Article by Lydia Glover Deseo)

"Unveiling" by Helen L. Wilcox. This play told of another group of children of their own age who came to respect and admire the Italian man who took care of their park because they found that he was from the same country as Columbus, a status of whom was soon to be unveiled with much honor. As a result of that dramatic experience, the children who participated in the play developed an entirely new attitude and behavior pattern toward the Italian caretaker, never calling him "Dago" again.<sup>1</sup> Miss Edland presents an illustration which is a close parallel to the one given by Mrs. Deseo. The former tells of Harry, an American boy who displayed anything but the missionary spirit of world friendship toward Tony, the little Italian boy in his class. When the group played the story of Columbus, the teacher, knowing the situation, chose Harry and not Tony to play the role of the great explorer. As time went on, Harry's appreciation of Columbus grew by leaps and bounds. One day when the teacher said: "Harry, do you know that our Tony came from the land of Columbus?", Harry was amazed. However, the dramatization brought the desired results in Harry's conduct, for from that day onward his treatment of Tony was in accord with the missionary attitude.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in the light of these last statements and illustrations it is evident that the dramatization of missionary materials (supplemented as the situation requires) serves to develop skill in living.

In concluding this second portion of the chapter it may be said that this threefold test of the dramatic method on the basis of mission-

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1. Cf. International Journal of Religious Education, January 1929, p. 22  
(Article by Mrs. Lydia Glover Deseo)
2. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: Children's Dramatizations, pp. 16, 17



ary material, has, then, at each point yielded the conclusion that the dramatic method is in this way, an effective means of realizing the objectives of fruitful knowledge, right attitudes, and skill in living--desired in the religious education of the junior child.

### III. Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to study the dramatic method as a means of realizing certain major objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child. At the very outset of this chapter the seven objectives proposed for the religious education of the junior child were listed and then reduced to their three essential elements, namely, fruitful knowledge, right attitudes, and skill in living. Then two types of material--Biblical and missionary--were selected as media thru which the dramatic method might be tested as to its efficacy in achieving the essential elements sought in the religious education of the junior child. The first portion of the chapter centered around the question: In the religious education of the junior child how may the dramatization of Biblical material serve to inculcate fruitful knowledge, to develop right attitudes, and to promote skill in living? Then these two tests, both of a threefold nature, yielded the same type of result in all instances, leading to the conclusion that the dramatic method is, by empirical verification, an efficient means of realizing the major objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child.

Thus far in this study of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child these facts have been brought to light:

1. According to historical data, the dramatic method has been an effective means of realizing thru the use of various materials the major objectives sought in all religious education.

2. According to psychological data regarding the nature of the junior child and the constituents of the dramatic impulse, the dramatic method is well adapted for use in the religious education of the junior child.

3. According to a study of data found in modern textbooks regarding the objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child and the outcomes achieved thru the use of the dramatic method, it was discovered that this method is an efficient means of realizing the objectives desired in the religious education of the junior child.

Thus, thru this foregoing study it has been shown that the dramatic method, discerningly used, is an efficient agent in the religious education of the junior child. The following chapter will be devoted to a consideration of guiding principles which are listed by modern writers in connection with the use of the dramatic method in religious education.

## Chapter IV

### Guiding Principles Relative to the Use of the Dramatic Method in the Religious Education of the Junior Child

#### I. Introduction

The first chapter of this study indicated that the dramatic method has been an effective means of realizing certain major objectives sought in all religious education throughout the ages. Following this general treatment, the dramatic method was then studied in relationship to the junior child. A comparative study of data from modern text books regarding the nature of the junior child and the content of the dramatic impulse led to the conclusion that the dramatic method is specifically adapted for use in the religious education of the junior child. In the first two chapters, then, the validity of the dramatic method as a means of religious education was established: first, on general, historical, and then next, on specific, psychological grounds. The third chapter, was devoted to a study of the potentialities of the dramatic method as a means of meeting the objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child. From an examination of materials found in modern text books and in current periodicals on religious education it was discovered that the objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child may be achieved thru the use of the dramatic method.

Now, after these considerations, it is fitting to search for guiding principles which pertain to the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child. In view of that, the succeeding para-

graphs will be devoted to a presentation of suggestions made by modern religious educators regarding the use of dramatic activity. A detailed study of these various suggestions will be carried forward with the hope of bringing to light principles which modern religious educators deem as of basic importance relative to the use of the dramatic method in religious education.

## II. Principles Governing the Use of Dramatic Activity in Religious Education

### A. Fundamental Postulate

A survey of modern text books on religious education reveals that the child centered emphasis of modern pedagogy (as noted in a previous chapter) is of outstanding significance. This emphasis is in striking contrast to many of the older systems of education which were material centered, or teacher centered, or method centered, but rarely child centered. Various writers indicate that this stress had a marked effect on dramatic work in education. Grace Sloan Overton calls attention to the fact that in the past, dramatic activity was not child centered; under the old educational scheme, the child became merely a puppet in the dramatic performance; he was controlled by the director, having no idea what the drama was all about save that he must do the director's bidding in order to please the audience.<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Miller speaks of the older method in much the same way, characterizing it as a formal exercise which was superimposed upon the child by an adult; as a system in which children were trained in order to entertain adult spectators which meant that the dramatization as such became an end in itself.<sup>2</sup> Formerly such a method as that was considered perfectly legitimate.

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1. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 105

2. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth E.: Dramatization in the Church School, p. 7

for it was consistent with the then prevailing concept of education. Today, however, the modern educator begins with the child and works outward with him toward a constantly enlarging experience.<sup>1</sup> At the present time the child is of supreme importance. With this new conception of the center of the educational process, a change has been inevitable in the theory and practice relating to dramatic activity as a method in religious education. It may be said that as a direct result of this modern pedagogical emphasis upon a child centered program, drama, as utilized in religious education has been re-christened and is now known as educational dramatics.

In the words of Meredith:

"Educational dramatics purposes to select, control, and develop the impulses of the individual which naturally and spontaneously find expression in dramatic activity."<sup>2</sup>

Following the above definition, the same writer proceeds to further describe this child centered method by declaring that it is a very natural means of teaching in that it harmonizes with the child's instinctive desires and that it attracts the whole attention of the child to such an extent that he actually lives out for the moment the life which he is portraying.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, with the rise of educational dramatics, Shakespeare's immortal phrase, "The play's the thing", has been revised to read, "The pupil's the thing."<sup>4</sup> By way of summary at this point it may be said that on the basis of the material cited above, the modern teacher who employs the dramatic

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1. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 105

2. Meredith: op. cit., p. 54

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 55

4. Cf. International Journal of Religious Education; January, 1929, p. 22  
(Article by Lydia Glover Deseo)

method is supremely concerned that it shall be employed in order to promote the development of the child, rather than to stage an interesting public performance; that dramatization in education is no longer an end, but is simply a means used in the achievement of a far greater end, which, is, according to Mrs. Lydia Glover Deseo, "to leave the child more Christ-like than he was before."<sup>1</sup> Thus, this study has revealed that present day educators have re-instated drama in education under the term "educational dramatics" with its predominantly child centered aim, approach, and method.

Such data as has been given above leads to the enunciation of a fundamental postulate, namely; Dramatic activity employed in the religious education of the junior child must always be child centered in every respect.

#### B. Related Principles

Now, after having found that present day educators base all their pedagogical theory and practice on this child centered foundation, it is well to pause for a consideration of their emphases which relate to and grow from this view.

##### 1. Concerning Gradation

One of these emphases is in regard to the matter of gradation, and as such falls into two general divisions: gradation in respect to the instinctive tendencies of the child and with respect to the mental characteristics of the child.

##### a) With respect to the instinctive tendencies of the child

In this regard, Betts and Hawthorne write that dramatic activity must not only be child centered in general, but must also be child centered in particular by being so organized and utilized that it

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1. International Journal of Religious Education, January 1929, p. 22  
(Article by Mrs. Lydia Glover Deseo)

is adapted to the child at each stage of his development.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Grace Sloan Overton writes that since each stage of the child's life is characterized by certain needs and capacities peculiar to that specific stage, the teacher must discerningly select materials and types of dramatic activity appropriate for each stage.<sup>2</sup> In such a selection it must be constantly borne in mind that there is wide variation in the expression of the dramatic impulse at different stages in the child's life and that what might be appropriate for the kindergarten child would be highly unsuitable for the junior child.<sup>3</sup> In this respect, Miss Edland declares that the dramatic method must be as carefully graded as any other method used in the teaching process. She points out the absolute necessity of gradation in connection with subject matter and is seconded in this emphasis by Mrs. Overton referred to above.<sup>4</sup> The latter writer, in speaking of the adaptation of material says that when the child is very young the ideal material for the basis of his dramatic activity lies within the range of his every day life without reference to historical setting. As he grows older, dramatic characters and events may be chosen from an enlarged circle, while still later on, specific phases of Biblical literature, history, and morality may be chosen with a focus of attention upon the historic setting, manners, customs, and laws involved.<sup>5</sup> In writing of the child's natural ways of expression, Miss Edland points out that

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1. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 357
2. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 105
3. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 231
4. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: Children's Dramatizations, p. 6
5. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 107

the child's first way of expression is thru gesture; this is followed by tonal responses and later on takes the form of words and finally issues in a combination of all three modes of expression. These variations according to appropriate materials and various modes of expression result in the gradation of dramatic activity with reference to the dramatic form employed, proceeding from the pantomime to the play and then to the pageant.<sup>1</sup> "The form used should always be one which is natural to the children for their period of play."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, on the basis of the above material gathered from textbooks written by leaders in the field of religious education, it is possible to deduce this guiding principle relative to the use of dramatic activity in connection with religious education: Dramatic activity employed in religious education must be adapted to the child in respect to his instinctive tendencies at each stage of his development.

Now, after having established this general principle as it applies to the use of the dramatic method in all religious education, it is now possible to relate that same principle to the religious education of the junior child. In the second chapter of this study a comparison was made between the nature of the junior child and the content of the dramatic impulse with the result that it was discovered that the two coincide in such a way as to validate the psychological soundness of the dramatic method in teaching the junior child. With this theoretical foundation as a basis it is well to build a superstructure composed of elements visible thru actual practice. To restate this same thought, it

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1. Cf. Edland: op. cit., p. 7  
Cf. Ferris: op. cit., p. 38
2. Edland: op. cit., p. 9



is important to consider precise points at which dramatic activity is to be modified and adapted with reference to the religious education of the junior child.

It was pointed out in the second chapter that the junior child is a creature of intensive activity. Thus, in using the dramatic method for the religious education of the junior, the teacher must constantly keep this in mind, remembering that long complicated materials cannot be employed since they would require a period of attention beyond the active junior's power. Because of this it is best to choose a single incident or a short scene as the center of the junior's dramatic activity. In view of this fact it is always preferable to work for a brief period with interest at white heat rather than to labor thru long sessions while the children become restless and show a lagging of interest. As the teacher proceeds to use the dramatic activity the junior's exuberant energy must be allowed to express itself in a helpful way at each point in the procedure. For example, in working thru the conversation relative to a given episode the children themselves should be encouraged to participate actively, using their Bibles to find the original wording and then allowed to re-word it in their own way.<sup>1</sup> Thus, this specific quality of activity, characteristic of the junior child, means an adaptation of dramatic activity as it is employed by the teacher of religious education.

Closely allied with the junior's tendency to act is his tendency to construct. Since the junior is naturally prone to make things it is

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1. Cf. Ferris: op. cit., p. 33

possible for his teacher to capitalize his manipulative interest thru dramatic work. Anyone who has ever worked with junior boys and girls knows that at this age they are particularly interested in making the scenery and costumes for their dramatizations.<sup>1</sup> Despite certain limitations of skill they are able to design and fashion their own costumes in a simple manner.<sup>2</sup> For example, boys and girls of this age take keen delight in studying the Tissot pictures in order to find out what kinds of clothing will be appropriate for those representing Biblical characters. They eagerly search and ingeniously contrive as they fashion such costumes for their plays.<sup>3</sup> Again, the junior's peculiar age response means an adaptation of the dramatic program arranged for him.

In the second chapter it was pointed out that the junior is not only prone to act and to construct, but that he is also prone to investigate, due to his insatiable curiosity. A recognition of the presence of this trait of curiosity in the make-up of the junior child is of utmost importance as the teacher seeks to adapt dramatic activity to meet the junior's particular needs and interests. At the junior age, the child is no longer contented to merely dream about an imaginary world; instead, he longs to know the real world.<sup>4</sup> In connection with dramatization this bent to "find out things" may well lead to the study of manners and customs of people represented in the bit of drama which is

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1. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 234  
Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: Principles and Technique in Religious Dramatics, p. 63
2. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 354
3. Cf. Ferris: op. cit., p. 33
4. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 60

studied.<sup>1</sup> When Biblical material is used, inquiry into Bible manners, customs, geography, and history may prove to be an intriguing quest.<sup>2</sup> Again, it is clear that this instinctive tendency of curiosity must be considered in planning the entire program of religious activity for the junior child.

The developing aesthetic sense of the junior, as described in a previous chapter, must be recognized by the teacher who would adapt dramatic activity to the junior child. At this period children may well be encouraged to create their own plays, basing these plays in some cases upon stories told to them and at other times upon their own findings on assigned subjects.<sup>3</sup> As they do this creative work they may be led to put their own original dramatic arrangement into as beautiful English as possible.<sup>4</sup> Thru such experiences they may find a satisfaction in their longings for perfection and harmony of form.

The junior children's interest in heroes means in turn, that dramatic activity planned for them must be unusually rich in the heroic element. "This interest in heroes and heroines may be utilized with profit" by the religious educator.<sup>5</sup> Boys of this age like to portray the lives of great men and "the currents of emotion which tingled thru the nerves of these men and made them great will stimulate their under- studies to...honorable action."<sup>6</sup> In this instance, also, dramatic

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1. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 354
2. Cf. Ferris: op. cit., p. 33
3. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 71  
Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: Principles and Technique in Religious Dramatics, p. 64
4. Cf. Lobingier: op. cit., p. 13
5. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 234
6. Meredith: op. cit., p. 72

activity must be adapted to the junior's tendency--this time to his tendency to worship that which is heroic.

The gang spirit, so characteristic of the junior, is described by Meredith as a quality which makes it possible to undertake dramatic activity on a larger scale than hitherto possible in the religious education of the junior child. The junior's spirit of group loyalty becomes at this stage a brand new asset which may well be utilized thru dramatic activity in the program of religious education.<sup>1</sup>

In summarizing the content of the immediately preceding paragraphs it may be said that these six points considered are focal points in the relationship between the instinctive tendencies of the junior child and the program of dramatic activity, namely: the junior's propensity to act, construct, and investigate; his interest in the aesthetic and in the heroic; and his gregariousness. If the teacher of religious education notes these instinctive tendencies of the junior and provides a properly adapted program of dramatic activity he may direct the expression of these junior tendencies

" along lines that will idealize morally heroic conduct, teach right attitudes toward God, human beings, and the animals and fix wholesome habits of behavior."<sup>2</sup>

b) With respect to the mental characteristics of the child

As was stated before, present day writers discuss the gradation of dramatic activity in respect to the mental characteristics of the child. In this regard Betts and Hawthorne declare that it

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1. Cf. Weigle, L. A.: The Pupil and the Teacher, pp. 30--33  
Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 72
2. Wood: op. cit., p. 58

is only when a player is put into situations which resemble or which are akin to his own life (and thus within his comprehension) that he is able to achieve entrance into new and larger realms of life.<sup>1</sup> Brockway points out that with this enlargement of experience will come a growth of understanding and sympathy.<sup>2</sup> At most periods in the child's life he is able to apprehend the abstract only as it is presented in terms of the concrete; he can embrace an ideal or an attitude only after he has actually observed and imitated a person who has performed a deed illustrative of that specified ideal or attitude.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the mental abilities and capacities of the child at each stage must be carefully considered by the religious educator who desires to use the dramatic method.

Then, in the light of this conclusion resulting from an examination of the above views, the following principle may be evolved: Dramatic activity employed in religious education must be adapted to the child in respect to his mental characteristics at each stage of his development.

Now, at this point, it is fitting to relate this general principle to the junior child in particular, considering his general mental characteristics which must be noted with reference to the use of dramatic activity in his religious education. In the text book, "Psychology of

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1. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 361  
Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 106  
Cf. Lobingier: op. cit., p. 9  
Cf. Raine, James Watt: Bible Dramatics, p. 7
2. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 116
3. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 106

Childhood by Norsworthy and Whitley, the authors summarize the junior's mental characteristics in this way: his creative imagination, constructive imagery and attempts to imitate are not idealistic, but realistic; his memory is concrete, rather than abstract; his interest in history is centered around deeds rather than motives or movements; his ideas of conduct are seldom generalized; his ideas of morality are always related to the concrete and the immediate; his grasp of aesthetic and ethical values is possible only when these values are made specific and concrete.<sup>1</sup>

In view of these mental characteristics peculiar to the junior child, his religious training thru the avenue of dramatic activity must be imparted thru types of dramatic activity which embody the desired ideals and virtues in a form which is realistic, concrete, pragmatic, specific, and immediate, rich in action and feeling rather than in ideas and abstractions.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Concerning Adaptation

A study of modern textbooks regarding the use of the dramatic method in religious education reveals that various leaders write of the adaptation of dramatic activity. This matter is considered with respect to the individual child, with respect to the child's entire program of religious education, and with respect to the normal process of the child's free expression. At this time, then, it is well to examine the materials presented on these points, studying them in

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1. Cf. Norsworthy and Whitley: op. cit., pp. 304; 250, 304
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 249

the order named.

a) With respect to the individual child

In writing of this emphasis upon the individual child Miss Powell says that:

"Although certain tendencies to action appear in almost every child at about the same age, nevertheless instinctive reactions can never completely account for any person. We are above all else, individuals, and each personality offers a new problem."<sup>1</sup>

In view of this truth, then, children's individual differences may not be ignored, but must be taken into account. Present day educators in writing of the use of dramatic activity in religious education are unanimous in this insistence that the individual child shall not be swallowed up in theoretical classifications. Miss Russell says in this respect: "Every child's needs must be considered."<sup>2</sup> Professor Wood asserts that as the leader proceeds he must use dramatic activity only where it will serve to capitalize the instinctive tendencies of each individual in his group and that the underlying motive of that method should be the development of good conduct, right attitudes, and Christian living on the part of each child under his leadership.<sup>3</sup> Meredith tells the teacher that he must never fail to regard each child under his direction, while Edland is a little more specific by declaring that every child must have a part in the dramatization.<sup>4</sup>

When a teacher thinks of each personality within his group in the light of the above statements he will give special attention not

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1. Powell: op. cit., p. 35
2. Russell: op. cit., p. 91
3. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 58
4. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 85  
Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: The Children's King, p. 11

only to individual abilities, but also to individual needs. Formerly, when dramatic activity was organized with the view of pleasing an audience, the individuals of native ability were given primary consideration, while those of lesser gifts were forced into the background. Since the rise of educational dramatics in which dramatization is carried on for the education of the individuals rather than for the entertainment of the spectators the teacher centers her dramatic program around each of the individual children with a view of developing their latent abilities and meeting their needs.<sup>1</sup> Since the teacher who uses dramatic activity wishes first and foremost "to teach children and not to produce plays",<sup>2</sup> great care must be exercised in the assignment of parts. For this reason, it is sometimes well for the teacher to select arbitrarily certain children to take/certain roles, not because they are able to perform them especially well from a purely artistic standpoint, but because in their own lives they need the experience of interpreting a certain character.<sup>3</sup> In such experiences in which the child assumes the role of another character he may be greatly blessed in feeling the beauty and depth of this other person's life to such an extent that his own character is "molded and strengthened and the eyes of his spirit opened."<sup>4</sup> In the words of Edith Lovell Thomas, such an experience gives the child an opportunity "for the practice of right deeds and kindly graces."<sup>5</sup> Miss Thomas continues by saying that in assigning the various parts to the different

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1. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth E.: The Dramatization of Bible Stories (Introduction written by E. S. Ames, p. 2)
2. Edland, Elisabeth: The Children's King, p. 10
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 14
4. Kimball: op. cit., p. 8
5. Thomas, Edith L.: "Music, Drama, and Art in Religious Education" from: Studies in Religious Education, p. 231



children careful attention must be given by the teacher to the susceptibilities of the various players. She reminds her readers that emulation of <sup>any</sup> desirable characters may result in the case of some of the "weaker brethren", should they be assigned to the parts of a villainous or negative character, the representations of which may have a detrimental influence.<sup>1</sup>

In her book, "Children's Dramatizations", Miss Edland gives an example showing the effect which dramatization may have upon individual growth and development, telling of the growth which came in this way to a girl called Chira. Chira lived in the midst of squalor and sordidness where her only contact with the good and the beautiful came thru a story hour. After one of these hours when an old velvet dress had been used as the queen's robe in the story playing, Chira lingered behind the rest to touch the robe thoughtfully and softly. As she did so, the teacher was arrested by the expression of wistful longing in the girl's eyes and at the next story hour, Chira was assigned the part of queen. True, she was awkward, ungainly, and extremely self conscious. As time went on, Chira grew in grace, ease, and poise; at the final playing she took the queen's part, although there were many other girls who could have handled the part in a much more polished fashion. The teacher wanted Chira to have the part, however, because it meant more to her than to any other one member of the group.<sup>2</sup> Following this account, Miss Edland summarizes the point of her illustration by saying:

"Children are given parts in a dramatization, not because they are fitted to play them well, but because the playing of the part will be an aid in some phase of their development."

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1. Thomas, Edith Lovell: op. cit., p. 231
2. Edland, Elisabeth: Children's Dramatizations, pp. 1--3
3. Ibid., p. 4

In another book, "The Children's King", Miss Edland rephrases the same thought in this way:

"We do not teach children something which they already know or which they can already do. We teach those who do not know and who cannot do....it is not the value of the child to the part that guides our selection, but the value of the part to the child."<sup>1</sup>

Meredith even goes so far as to assert that in educational dramatics the child may well be cast for a part for which he is dramatically unsuited, provided that the part furnishes a stimulus in desired growth.<sup>2</sup>

In "The Book of Play Production", Milton M. Smith stresses this same idea by referring to the "educational value that lies in the student's playing a part that takes him out of himself"<sup>3</sup>, such as a bashful boy assuming the role of a braggart, or a too forward girl interpreting the part of a timid country cousin.<sup>4</sup> Miss Ferris expresses the same conviction by advising her reader that it is better to have the shy child play the part of a bold person in order that he may become more confident, rather than to have the self confident child take the same role which would be natural to him.<sup>5</sup> Mattie Crabtree Blomquist declares that when a child, thru the process of dramatization, achieves an understanding and a love of a noble Christian character he will experience a broadening of sympathy and a deepening of spiritual life.<sup>6</sup>

By way of summary it may be said at this point that present day

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1. Edland, Elisabeth: The Children's King, p. 17
2. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 125
3. Smith, Milton M.: The Book of Play Production, p. 29
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 29
5. Ferris: op. cit., p. 19
6. International Journal of Religious Education, March 1930, p. 17  
(Article by Mattie Crabtree Blomquist)

educators feel that the teacher dare not rest content when he has chosen a form of dramatic activity deemed appropriate in general for the average child of a particular age group; that it is essential to move from the large, rather vague circle enclosing "the junior child", for example, to a smaller circle enclosing "Billy" or "Fanny"; that in the last analysis the individual child is unique and of supreme importance. Thus, the testimony of the authorities cited above serves to unfold this third guiding principle applicable to the use of dramatic activity in the religious education of the junior child: Dramatic activity employed in religious education must be adapted to the needs of the individual child.

- b) With respect to the child's entire program of religious education

As was said at an earlier time in this discussion, present-day writers consider the adaptation of dramatic activity with respect to the child's entire program of religious education. Betts and Hawthorne, in writing along this line, say that sometimes dramatic activity is spasmodically employed in order to stimulate lagging interest in the regular program of the church school.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it has been crowded into an already full curriculum. At other times, it has suffered at the hands of unwise enthusiasts who have used it upon any and every possible occasion without discrimination. In such instances as these, dramatic activity was brought into the church school program as a separate feature and stood quite unrelated to the other features and to the total unit. In speaking of this unfortunate state of affairs in which dramatic expression was not connected with instruction, Grace Sloan Overton avows:

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1. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit. , p. 353

"There must at least be an attempt to secure correlation between the instruction and the expression. The teaching may be excellent, but so unrelated to the expression that it cannot be assimilated."<sup>1</sup>

At this point Mrs. Overton illustrates her thought by saying that a missionary drama which actually grew out of a mission study course would be much more meaningful than if it were introduced out of a clear sky as an independent project.<sup>2</sup> Miss Ferris is also of the same opinion, for she remarks that dramatic activity must always be considered as a concrete part of the program of religious education; that it must never be regarded as a mere incident, but instead "should be constructively correlated with the educational program as a whole."<sup>3</sup> All of these statements are related to the modern aim of religious education as it strives "to meet the full needs of the individual to be taught"<sup>4</sup>. Since this can be accomplished only thru a diversified, yet unified program of religious education, all the various proposed activities must be harmonized and correlated. In view of this, dramatic activity has a right to a place in the program of religious education only as it is related to the "constructive projects of the departments and their courses of study"<sup>5</sup>, assuming that such projects are related to the whole life of the child and not to just a mere portion of it.

From the presentation of the above views held by various leaders in the field of religious education, it is possible, then, to discern another guiding principle which is applicable to the use of the

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1. Overton: op. cit., p. 94
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 94
3. Ferris: op. cit., p.
4. Overton: op. cit., p. 93
5. Ferris: op. cit., p. 3

the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child:

Dramatic activity employed in religious education must be an integral part of the child's entire program of religious education.

Now, passing from the statement of this principle, it is well to give consideration to its application. In other words, it is wise to note specific, concrete ways in which dramatic work may be made an integral part of the child's entire program of religious education. Because of this, the following paragraphs will be devoted to a study of the manner in which dramatic activity may be introduced into the program of religious education, not as a separate unit, but as an integral part of the work carried on in already existing units.

Professor Wood advocates the use of dramatic activity in the class instruction period of the church school, suggesting that the informal method of procedure is the most suitable in such a situation.<sup>1</sup> Miss Ferris, in writing of the place of dramatic activity in relation to instruction gives an example of a group studying Old Testament history. She suggests that at the outset a play centering around a group of Old Testament characters may be selected and then studied in connection with the regular lesson. In the course of such a study attention would be accorded to each character from two approaches--that of the lesson material itself and that of the play. As a result of this "double barreled attack" the impression made by the study would be clarified and deepened.<sup>2</sup> Meredith writes of the value of using dramatization in connection

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1. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 51

2. Cf. Ferris: op. cit., p. 12  
Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 101

with instruction in these terms:

"Results measured by interest in the curriculum and in the development of the scholars indicate the practicability of this new program of class activities."<sup>1</sup>

Oftentimes the use of dramatic activity in the class instruction period of the Sunday or week day sessions of the church school reveals a need of more of this kind of activity. Miss Miller tells of a church school class in which a certain amount of dramatization had been attempted at the time of the regular Sunday session. The children's enthusiastic response and eager demands resulted in the formation of a club which met for half an hour on Sunday afternoons to dramatize Bible stories.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of the formation of this club group, dramatic activity was not introduced as a separate unit, but was introduced in relationship to the regular courses of instruction in such a way as to vitalize and intensify its significance. Candler, in writing of the place of the dramatic method in religious education, says that in the instructional work of the vacation church school and in the week day church school there is rich opportunity for the dramatization of bible stories as they are studied. Miss Candler feels that religious educators must increasingly use this mode of instruction in the program of religious education.<sup>3</sup> At this juncture, Meredith points out that in the week day school where attendance was optional dramatization proved to be an attractive method, and because the children were so eager to participate in it

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1. Meredith: op. cit., p. 182

2. Miller, Elizabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 7

3. Cf. Candler: op. cit., p. 125

that they were glad to attend the school.<sup>1</sup> Edgar B. Gordon also writes in support of this use of dramatic activity in the class room of the week day church school. He says that when children are encouraged to act out every lesson which has any dramatic possibilities, the lessons become so vital as to result "in a larger attractiveness for the school and a more normal approach to the child mind."<sup>2</sup> Since the story is usually at the heart of class room instruction, in all departments of the church school, these sentences written by Miss Powell relative to the dramatization of the story are of vital importance just in this connection:

"The child who not only reads and hears and talks about a situation, but who, in addition, actually lives thru it in dramatic form, makes himself a part of it, enters into the experiences of others, and assimilates desirable attitudes until they become a very part of himself."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, there are many religious educators who feel that the dramatic method, as employed in the class instruction period, serves to make dramatic activity an integral part of the entire program of religious education.

When it comes to the matter of the departmental assembly, Professor Wood points out that the theme of the assembly may well be embodied in dramatic form, such as a tableau, a pantomime, or a sacramental drama. Such a presentation may well be assigned to different classes or departments. When this is done, the production by one division before other divisions of the group strengthens the bond of unity and sympathetic understanding.<sup>4</sup> Meredith declares that this type of activity is an aid in making such a service "both attractive and educative."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Cf. Candler: op. cit., p. 183
2. Cf. The Church School Journal, April 1920, p. 83  
(Article by Edgar B. Gordon)
3. Powell: op. cit., p. 119
4. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 52
5. Meredith: op. cit., p. 183

In writing of effective methods in connection with the juniors of the church school, Miss Powell declares that there are times when the dramatization of a story proves a helpful portion of a worship unit. She suggests that such a dramatization should be simply done with a maximum of interest upon the spirit of worship throughout, unhampered by any unnecessary interruptions of distracting preliminaries.<sup>1</sup>

Brockway lists suggestions as to suitable times and places for dramatics in the junior program of religious education, naming first of all the pre-session period as an ideal time. In this connection she says that dramatic activity increases punctuality; that in such a plan classes prepare the story in advance sometimes, and on other occasions the story is given in pantomime, while those observing try to guess the names of the characters represented. At times a number of the teachers may utilize the entire group in the presentation of some story known to all before the time for the formal opening of the church school session. When a dramatic presentation is part of the program planned for a club group, this pre-session time may be used for the telling of the story to be dramatized, the selection of a cast, the choosing of scenes, and the enlistment of properties. Continuing to suggest times when junior dramatics may be vitally related to the entire program of religious education established for the junior, Miss Brockway asserts that at junior parties dramatics may supersede games in popularity, and that in the case of mission clubs the members often dramatize the stories which deal with the life of some outstanding missionary hero. When ~~it~~ it

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1. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 186



comes to the matter of dramatization in the vacation church school this same writer declares that this form of activity is very useful in this department of religious education.<sup>1</sup>

The above paragraphs present in summary fashion a statement of some of the ways in which dramatic activity may be utilized in religious education in such a fashion that it is an integral part of the entire program and as such ministers to the full needs of the junior child.

c) With respect to the normal process of the child's free expression

As was indicated above, present day religious educators show an interest in the adaptation of dramatic activity with respect to the normal process of the child's free expression. Miss Wilcox, in discussing this matter, writes first of the act of impersonation, saying that it is a highly important aspect of dramatic activity, provided, of course, that it is guided according to educational principles.<sup>2</sup> In discussing this act of impersonation, the same writer says that it is a type of spontaneous self expression in which the individual endeavors to enlarge his own experience by living, for a time, at least, in a different personality and a different environment. She points to William James' conception of impersonation as "a stretching of the ego to take in a strange personality"<sup>3</sup> and then defines it as "the voluntary assuming of a temporary personality different from ones own."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., pp. 118, 119  
Cf. International Journal of Religious Education, July--August, 1925, p. 46 (Article by Robert Moulton Gatke)
2. Cf. Wilcox, Helen L.: Bible Study Thru Educational Dramatics, p. 77
3. James, William--Quoted by Ibid., p. 81
4. Ibid., p. 81

Following this, Miss Wilcox presents the outline of the normal process by which this dramatic personality is assumed, according to Emma Sheridan Fry's analysis. As long as this process is fundamental in the case of all types of dramatic activity, it is meet to include a brief statement of it at this point.

In the act of impersonation the first step is analysis with attention to the "who and what elements", or, in other words, a primary inquiry into the characters and their actions. Following this, there comes an awakening of dramatic imagination which naturally follows intellectual apprehension of the matter in hand. Next, there is an arousing of dramatic instinct which manifests itself in a desire to express in action what has just been imagined. The fourth step is the primary attempt to impersonate and includes only elemental factors such as standing position, general movement, and perhaps (in the case of some dramatic forms) a few words. The climax of this process is reached when the individual actually achieves characterization. The distinction between the fourth stage--impersonation--and the fifth stage--characterization--is rather hard to define, due to the prevalent confusion of those two words, so it is well to cite Miss Wilcox's illustration of the difference. She says that when Bobby first played the part of Atlas in a purely spontaneous dramatization in his play group, it was observed that he stood with his hands upraised as though he might be holding a tray of flowers. Later, when Bobby had thought of the meaning of his role as the supporter of the world, he stood with feet firmly planted and hands upraised in a position to indicate that he actually felt the weight of the world bearing down upon him. At that last point he had reached the stage of character-

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ization, whereas, he was merely impersonating in the first instance. After giving this illustration, Miss Wilcox says that the expression of characterization is of major interest in educational dramatics, for:

"It is not until some degree of characterization has been achieved that the dramatic instinct is genuinely fulfilling its function."<sup>1</sup>

After noting that principle, then, it is well to investigate in more detail the nature of the normal process by which the child arrives at the outward expression of characterization, since it is deemed to be the heart of the process involved in all forms of dramatic activity.

In this connection Miss Wilcox refers again to theories set forth by Emma Sheridan Fry who observed that in the case of children's spontaneous dramatic play, the processes leading from perception to action "followed the natural law and the normal order."<sup>2</sup> In view of this observation, Emma Sheridan Fry outlines the process by which the child naturally and spontaneously achieves an expression of characterization. Since dramatic expression realizes its full educational value only as the process is in line with the natural law and the normal order it is well to list the chief points of the process in this present connection.

According to Emma Sheridan Fry there are seven steps in the achievement of characterization. Contact is the primary experience in which the individual experiences a perception of the thing imagined. Normally a period of investigation follows which may vary widely in ex-

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1. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 83

2. Ibid., p. 90

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 90

tent of duration; during this period curiosity is a strong force and different types of sense perception manifest themselves while attention is focused upon the object which is perceived. Following investigation there is an experience of identification in which there is apperception involving the establishment of a relationship between the idea of the object and other ideas already in the mind. Emotional re-adjustment succeeds investigation and results in a re-conditioning of the organism which leads to action. This action shows itself in the next step resulting in the generation of energy. At this stage the potential energy lying dormant in the body becomes a dynamic sort of energy which normally expresses re-adjustment in the feelings or in both the intellect and the feelings. The place of impulse in the process may be summed up in this way: There is no voluntary action except as it results from impulse; the only impulses to be regarded as genuine are those actually experienced by the person concerned.<sup>1</sup> In conclusion of this outline, expression is named as "everything which an individual does in response to stimuli which come to him."<sup>2</sup>

Now, after presenting this outline it may be observed that the seven steps listed lead naturally from initiation in sensation on thru to completion in action. In this phase of the study devoted to the normal process of the child's free expression these points are of high significance<sup>1</sup> in that they represent the natural course which is peculiar to the mode of expression taken by the dramatic impulse.

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1. Cf. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 87
2. Ibid., p. 87

In order to clarify and illustrate the naturalness of this succession from sensation to action, or from contact to expression, Helen L. Wilcox reports her own observation of a little girl who in spontaneously interpreting the part of a pioneer woman in her play group proceeded naturally along the course set forth in the immediately preceding outline, thus describing the natural law and the normal order followed by the dramatic impulse.<sup>1</sup> First, the little girl acted as though she saw an Indian lurking behind a tree, making ready to shoot her "child"; in just the twinkling of an eye she glanced around in order to investigate what the Indian intended to kill and then she identified her "child" as the target; this was followed by a re-adjustment, both of an intellectual and of an emotional character; her genuine impulses then found outward expression as she made a dash for her "child" and ran off screaming.<sup>2</sup> Froebel synthesized the significance of such an observation for educational purposes when he wrote: "Watch the child and he will show you how to teach him."<sup>3</sup> It is useless to dwell further on the high value of such observation and well to summarize the data presented thus far.

From the immediately preceding paragraphs it is clear that in any process of dramatic activity used for educational purposes the procedure must be such that the player is enabled to establish genuine contacts with the dramatic environment in his initial perceptions; to engage in a process of investigation and then of identification; to experience emotional and intellectual re-adjustment; to feel a genuine impulse arising from the emotion experienced and then to express this

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1. Cf. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 89

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 89

3. Quoted by Brockway: op. cit., p. 115

impulse.<sup>1</sup> Now, a summary of these immediately foregoing emphases takes the form of a principle which may be stated in this way: Dramatic activity employed in religious education must be so planned that it is adapted to the normal process of the child's free expression.

### III. Summary

The purpose of this fourth chapter has been to study modern textbooks regarding the use of the dramatic method in religious education in order to formulate basic principles for guidance in the use of the dramatic method in connection with the religious education of the junior child. At the outset it was found that all writers insisted upon a child centered scheme of education and in view of this, held that the dramatic method must no longer be employed to gratify an audience, as of old, but rather, to develop the child. This overwhelming stress which all writers placed on this point led to the statement of a fundamental postulate: Dramatic activity employed in religious education designed for the junior child must always be child centered in every respect. Further investigation of contemporary opinion along this line led to the emergence of five principles related to this fundamental postulate, two of these principles concerning gradation, and three concerning adaptation of dramatic activity with respect to the child.

As far as gradation was concerned, these two principles were discovered:

1. Dramatic activity employed in religious education must be adapted to the child in respect to his instinctive tendencies at each stage of his development.

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1. Cf. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 90

2. Dramatic activity employed in religious education must be adapted to the child in respect to his mental characteristics at each stage of his development.

As far as adaptation was concerned, these three principles were discovered:

1. Dramatic activity employed in religious education must be adapted to the needs of the individual child.

2. Dramatic activity employed in religious education must be an integral part of the child's entire program of religious education.

3. Dramatic activity employed in religious education must be so planned that it is adapted to the normal process of the child's free expression.

By way of review of the study thus far, the following points may be listed as those of major importance:

1. The first chapter revealed that records of the past prove the historical validity of the dramatic method as one means of achieving the goals common to all religious education.

2. The second chapter, devoted to a comparative study of the nature of the junior child and the content of the dramatic impulse, indicated the psychological validity of the dramatic method in respect to the religious education of the junior child.

3. The data of the third chapter served to show that the dramatic method is an effective means of realizing the objectives sought in the

religious education of the junior child.

4. This fourth chapter set forth guiding principles fundamental to the wise use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child.

The next portion of this study will be concerned with the methods and materials which may be employed in harmony with the facts presented in these first four chapters.



## Chapter V

### Guiding Principles Relative to the Choice and Use of Dramatic Material in the Religious Education of the Junior Child

#### I. Introduction

In the opening portion of this study it was discovered that present-day religious educators regard the dramatic method as historically, psychologically, and pedagogically adequate for use in the religious education of the junior child. It was found that in view of this conviction they present certain guiding principles relative to the employment of this highly approved method. Thus, the purpose of the immediately preceding chapter was to bring to light guiding principles set forth by modern religious educators regarding the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child. In contrast to this, the purpose of the present chapter will be to bring to light guiding principles set forth by modern religious educators regarding the choice and use of materials adapted for dramatic work in the religious education of the junior child.

At the outset of this chapter it may be said that authorities in the field recognize six sources of material for dramatic use in religious education, two primary sources--Biblical and missionary--and four secondary sources--historical, literary, musical, and artistic. The following study, then, will be based on discussions by various writers regarding the choice and use of materials from each of these six sources. This study will be carried thru with a view of discovering standards by which to judge materials which may be used in a dramatic way in the religious education of the junior child.

Before beginning an investigation of any of these separate sources it is well, first of all, to enumerate general qualifications which, in the opinion of modern religious educators, any dramatic material must possess if it is to be adjudged as suitable for use in religious education.

1. It must possess genuine dramatic value. The characters must be intelligible; the plot must present conflict and suspense; the entire tone of the material must be filled with intensity and enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup>

2. It must possess positive moral and religious value in order to bring a wholesome contribution to the participants.<sup>2</sup>

3. It must possess educational value, presenting truth in respect to accuracy of detail and in respect to human life and character.<sup>3</sup>

## II. Materials Adapted for Dramatic Use in Religious Education

Now having thus set forth in the above form the broad, general principles governing the choice of materials for dramatic purposes in religious education, it is desirable to study the prominent sources of material and in connection with each source to look for the requirements which present-day writers suggest regarding the selection and use of materials from that source and then to list materials which, according to these writers, are adapted for dramatic use in the religious education of the junior child.

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1. Cf. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 10  
Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 356
2. Cf. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 18  
Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 357
3. Cf. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 10

## A. Major Sources

## 1. Biblical Material

According to the data set forth in the opening chapter of this study, the Bible was the primary source of dramatic material employed during the history of the Christian church. Since that time, however, Biblical criticism has arisen, leaving its unmistakable influence on modern theories of religious education. Because of that, it is well to see how present-day leaders in the field of religious education regard this ancient source when they are looking about for materials to be used in a dramatic way in religious education.

Betts and Hawthorne, in their text-book, Method in Teaching Religion, point out that the Bible is filled with stories and events, which, after proper adaptation, form splendid material for dramatization.<sup>1</sup> Professor Wood reminds his readers that the great personalities which the child meets thru Bible study present challenging possibilities for dramatic portrayal.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Raine, in writing along this line, speaks of the clearness and of the vividness with which the Biblical account reveals these personalities as they exemplify high moral qualities in their decisions and in their deeds. He continues the trend of his argument by saying that when these Bible stories, so rich with human interest, are cast into dramatic form, they have a powerful and a fascinating appeal.<sup>3</sup> Helen Wilcox agrees, for she points out that the teacher of religion may consider the Bible as "a direct source of dramatic material since it is possible to find within its pages much that is suitable

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1. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 354

2. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 72

3. Cf. Raine: op. cit., p. 8

for immediate use.<sup>1</sup> Mary M. Russell feels that Biblical material lends itself very well to dramatization, due to the prominence of the action, to unusual situations, and to the deep truths inherent in many of the stories.<sup>2</sup> In like manner, Dr. Soares commends the use of material from the Bible as of value for dramatic activity in religious education. He definitely points out that the Old Testament stories are powerful in their dramatic quality; he mentions in particular the story of Joseph with its elements of love, envy, hatred, revenge, loyalty, and forgiveness; he calls attention to the accounts of Moses, Joshua, and Samuel—all noteworthy in this connection because of the dramatic way in which they present vital truths of great moral import.<sup>3</sup> In this regard, Betts and Hawthorne point to the value of these Old Testament narratives for dramatic purposes, specifying the stories of Ruth, Esther, Joseph, some of David's experiences and incidents from the lives of the prophets. The same writers add that some of the New Testament parables and stories (such as of the wise men and the shepherds and the experiences of the disciples and the Apostle Paul) lend themselves well to dramatic treatment.<sup>4</sup> Miss Brockway lists stories suitable for dramatization from Genesis, Exodus and Numbers, saying that junior children<sup>also</sup> enjoy the Gideon, David, Samuel, Esther, and Daniel stories. Turning to the New Testament, the same writer lists parables which may well be dramatized, such as: The Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son, the Ten Virgins, and The Good Samaritan.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Cf. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 48

2. Cf. Russell: op. cit., p. 12

3. Cf. International Journal of Religious Education, April 1930, p. 11  
(Article by Dr. Theodore G. Soares)

4. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 354

5. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 125

Thus, it appears that the Bible is still looked upon by present-day leaders in the field of religious education as a major source of dramatic material which may be utilized in religious education. However, despite these widely recognized values inherent in Biblical materials, it must not be forgotten that the fine art of discrimination applies here as well as elsewhere. Miss Powell declares that since the time set aside for religious education is so limited it is necessary for the leader to make a careful choice of materials which are to be dramatically interpreted in order that those chosen may enrich the children's lives.<sup>1</sup> Miss Edland says that many of the Bible stories suitable for teaching should not be dramatized, and in view of this, wise selection must be made before any material is presented for dramatization.<sup>2</sup> In another instance she reminds her readers that it is very necessary to give careful attention to the subject matter which is chosen from the Bible for dramatic portrayal.<sup>3</sup> After reading these warnings as to the necessity of carefully selecting Biblical materials before proceeding with the dramatization, it is now apropos to search for basic rules which modern writers present as guides in the choice and use of Biblical materials. While their guides are of a more or less general nature, and while they relate to all religious education, they are, nevertheless, definitely applicable to the religious education of the junior child and hence have a place at this point of the study.

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1. Cf. Powell: *op. cit.*, p. 354
2. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: *Principles and Technique in Religious Dramatics*, p. 81
3. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: *Children's Dramatizations*, p. 21

## a) Principles Relative to Its Selection

## 1) Material representing Deity

In reading thru modern text books relative to the use of the dramatic method in religious education it was found that many writers consider the problem of the representation of Deity as it arises in connection with the dramatization of Biblical material. In this respect, Dr. Weigle says that there is no irreverence in the dramatization of Biblical material so long as no attempt is made to represent God or Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Miss Brockway makes the statement that "stories with Deity should not be dramatized",<sup>2</sup> and that when such stories are suggested the leader may settle the matter by saying that nobody could possibly portray the part of God or Jesus.<sup>3</sup> It is pointed out by Betts and Hawthorne that the dramatization of New Testament material is limited in comparison to that of the Old Testament since representation of Jesus is generally conceded to be out of the question.<sup>4</sup> Miss Miller reminds her readers that it is possible, however, to dramatize incidents about the life of Jesus without bringing him into the scene directly.<sup>5</sup> Miss Wilcox calls attention to a series of plays written by Mrs. Deseo about the life of Jesus and called The Friends of Jesus. Miss Wilcox points out that this series is an example of dramatic material about Jesus which does not involve portraying him on the stage.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Cf. Weigle, L. A.: The Pupil and the Teacher, p. 142
2. Brockway: op. cit., p. 123
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 123
4. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 354
5. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth: Dramatization in the Church School, p. 58
6. Cf. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 23

Thus, after reading these materials reviewed above, it is found that modern writers agree in this declaration: Biblical material chosen for dramatization should not involve a representation of Deity.

2) Material within the child's comprehension

It is found that many different writers discuss the problem of the relation between the material chosen for dramatization and the child's mental capacity. These discussions serve as a reminder of the child centered nature of the educational process (which has been emphasized time and again throughout the course of this study). In the previous chapter, devoted to a consideration of guiding principles relative to the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child, it was stated that in view of this modern emphasis, all dramatic activity must be graded with respect to the mental characteristics of the child. Although this point is often overlooked when Biblical material is employed for dramatic purposes, it is noteworthy that a great number of religious educators discuss the matter.

In this respect, Miss Edland says that the story of Esther, for example, is unsuitable for children's dramatizations since it is built upon an adult theme and is beyond the child's comprehension.<sup>1</sup> An additional illustration of this point is found in the story of Noah. As this story is generally interpreted, it is not suitable for work among juniors, since the junior child is not able to understand the real heroism which Noah represents. In contrast to this, there are many Bible stories

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1. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: Children's Dramatizations, p. 22

of moral heroism which are well within the junior's grasp, such as these: The Report of the Spies, Abraham and Lot, Gideon, or Isaac and the Wells.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this aspect of the problem, it is well to note Miss Wilcox's further advice regarding the proper selection of Biblical material for dramatization among junior children. She says that they should not dramatize any Biblical material which is of such a nature that the rendering would interfere with their appreciation of it in future years.<sup>1</sup> After stating this, Miss Wilcox illustrates her thought by speaking of the story of the flood as involving material which should not be dramatized by children since they could not possibly realize its full meaning and thru the dramatic activity the significance of the story would be lessened for them as they approached it in maturity.<sup>2</sup> In these respects, then, it is clear that the teacher should use the utmost discrimination in order to choose Biblical materials which are within the range of the child's comprehension at his particular stage of development. The consensus of opinion on this point leads to the enumeration of a second requirement which is based upon emphases noted in the previous chapter. This requirement may be stated in this way: Biblical material chosen for dramatization should be within the range of the child's understanding and ability of expression.

### 3) Material representing ethical action

Twentieth century religious educators consider the choice of Biblical material with respect to the ethical actions which are involved therein. In a preceding chapter emphasis was placed

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1. Cf. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 48

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 48



upon the outcomes of right attitudes and skill in living which might accrue from dramatizations in which the children portrayed noble characters. As has just been noted, the Bible is rich in its tales of noble personalities which may well be portrayed in dramatic fashion. And yet, side by side, and constantly related to these worthy individuals are others who are utterly unworthy of emulation and who, consequently, should never be given the center of attention in dramatic work. Elizabeth Miller Lobingier, in writing of missionary material suited for dramatization makes specifications which are applicable to the choice of Biblical material in this respect. She says that while undesirable characters may at times be portrayed, these individuals should never be regarded as of maximum importance by the children, but should always occupy a position subordinate to the admirable characters. Continuing the discussion of this matter, she declares that it is contrary to all pedagogical theory to attempt to teach positive truth in a negative fashion and that any tendencies in this direction must be carefully guarded against in the choice of materials for dramatic presentation.<sup>1</sup> Miss Powell points out that in an earlier book the same writer says that the story of Jacob is a good example of Biblical material which is not suitable for dramatization, since in this story, Jacob, as the hero, secures<sup>2</sup> what he wants thru the unethical means of deceit and trickery.

A digest of these opinions, leads, then, to a statement of another principle governing the choice of materials from the Bible for dramatic

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1. Cf. Lobingier: op. cit., p. 22

2. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 354

use in religious education: Biblical material chosen for dramatization should be of such a nature that the center of interest is focused upon ethical action.

#### 4) Material involving a God concept

In considering the characteristics of Biblical material which may be used for dramatic purposes, Miss Edland writes of a qualification, which although not mentioned specifically by other writers is well worthy of consideration. She says that children should not dramatize stories such as the story of the flood with its concept of a wrathful, punishing God. She points out that those who participate in the playing of such a story will not be aided, but will rather be hindered in an appreciation of God as a kind and loving heavenly Father. From this point Miss Edland voices an opinion which may be accepted as a further guide post in the dramatic use of Biblical material: Biblical material chosen for dramatization should give the child a Christian<sup>1</sup> conception of God.

Thus far it has been seen that in religious education the Bible is the most frequently used source of dramatic material. In this connection it was found that present-day leaders in the field of religious education feel that materials chosen from this source must be selected with the greatest of care and that in the choice of Biblical materials for dramatic use these general rules should be observed:

1. Biblical material chosen for dramatization should not involve a representation of Deity.

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1. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: *Children's Dramatizations*, p. 24

2. Biblical material chosen for dramatization must be within the range of the child's understanding and ability of expression.

3. Biblical material chosen for dramatization should be of such a nature that the center of interest is focused upon ethical action.

4. Biblical material chosen for dramatization should be of such a nature that it gives the child a Christian conception of God.

#### b) Principles Relative to Its Use

After having discovered these regulating factors regarding the choice of Biblical materials, it is now desirable to look thru current materials on religious education in order to find qualifications relative to the use of Biblical materials for dramatic purposes. This quest will be pursued with the view of unearthing principles which, when followed, will enhance the values resulting from the dramatic use of Biblical materials in the religious education of the junior child.

##### 1) Biblical language interpreted

There is wide-spread discussion among modern religious educators regarding the problem of Biblical language as it arises in connection with the dramatization of materials from the Bible. In this respect, Professor Wood makes statements which are in perfect harmony with the second principle of gradation discussed in the previous chapter: Dramatic activity must be graded in respect to the mental characteristics of the child. It is in writing on this point that Professor Wood indicates that if portions of the Bible are to be dramatized by children these portions must first of all be re-cast in to simpler language in order that they may be understood by the

children.<sup>1</sup> This holds true in the case of dramatic activity such as pantomime or picture playing where the children do not speak, yet it is of special importance in forms of dramatization including oral interpretation. Miss Russell, in speaking of the wording of a Bible story when it is enacted in the classroom, says that it is not wise to urge the children to arrange it in Biblical language at the outset, but rather to let them phrase it in their own way as long as the theme and the spirit are preserved intact.<sup>2</sup> Miss Miller declares that there has been a considerable difference of opinion on this point, but that a middle position is possible---that is, the children may use their own words in the initial stages of the work, and then, as they proceed, they may gradually adopt the classic language of the biblical account.<sup>3</sup> In writing of the use of Biblical language in dramatic forms involving conversation, Miss Brockway gives this example of a group of junior children who had been enacting the story of David and Goliath. The story teller had quoted David's words: "Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves?" The little Italian boy who portrayed the part of Goliath exclaimed at the time of the first playing: "I ain't no dog. What you comin' with a stick fur?" No comment was made on that wording, but before the story was played again it was suggested that all players re-read the account in the Bible so that they could speak just as

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1. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 73
2. Cf. Russell, Mary M.: How to Dramatize Bible Lessons, p. v and vi
3. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 11  
Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: Principles and Technique in Religious Dramatics, p. 64

David, Saul, and Goliath spoke. On the third playing the Biblical phrasing appeared without any obvious effort on the part of the children.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it appears that all Biblical material employed for dramatic purposes in religious education must be made so meaningful that the child is able to reduce it to his every day speech and then, after thorough assimilation of its import, return to the Bible to see new meaning and beauty in the expression of the original account. Thus, a consensus of the opinions held by these religious educators may be stated in the form of this principle: The dramatization of Biblical material involves language interpretation and adaptation.

## 2) Biblical history and customs explained

Those who write of the dramatic use of Biblical materials give consideration to a study of Biblical history and customs in connection with the dramatization of events from the scriptures. For example, Professor Wood says that even though the Bible is rich in its messages about great characters, these characters cannot be fully appreciated by the junior child until he is able to place them in their natural setting, knowing of their life and customs. For example, if a group of eleven year old girls are to dramatize the story of Miriam caring for her baby brother, Moses, they should be led into a thorough study of the times out of which the story came in order that they may apprehend the history and customs in the story which are significant for a proper understanding of its messages. Thru such a study the story would become a living reality for them.<sup>2</sup> Miss Miller also

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1. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 123
2. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 73  
Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 354  
Cf. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 24

places emphasis upon a correct portrayal of the customs and manners of Biblical times, saying that the manner of salutation, prayer, bows, blessings, and oath taking need detailed description and practice. She declares that when children dramatize the story of Abraham, for instance, it is highly important that they realize why Abraham lived in a tent and that they have an accurate idea of the kind of tent in which he lived, realizing that it was not like an Indian wigwam. If the story of Joseph is enacted those appearing in the court scene must learn the manner of the Oriental bow and not "courtesy" to Pharaoh after the fashion of the dancing school.<sup>1</sup> In view of this, then, it is apparent that the leader must devote attention to background study before proceeding with the actual dramatization of the Biblical story in order that the material used in the activity may be made meaningful to the participants.

This study, then, leads to <sup>the</sup> declaration of another principle regarding the use of dramatic material from the Bible: The dramatization of Biblical material involves the study of Biblical history and customs.

### 3) Biblical themes clarified

Recent books and magazine articles which are concerned with the dramatization of Biblical materials contain discussions regarding the leader's part in clarifying the message which the chosen Biblical material is expected to convey. In these sources it is pointed out that Biblical material, coming as it does out of a wide variety of life experiences, contains details and ideas which are quite alien to present-day experiences. In view of this, the leader must study the portion of Biblical material which is to be dramatized in

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1. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth: Dramatization in the Church School, p. 53

order to present it in such a way that all points are made clear and harmonized in relation to the central theme which crystallizes its value. To re-phrase the same thought, it may be said that in any attempts to dramatize Biblical materials the important points must be made outstanding so that the theme of the given material may stand out in bold relief.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes in the course of the dramatization the action tends to blur the effect of the theme. In one town where the children had given a dramatization of the story of David and Goliath many of the merchants found their shop windows broken. That happened because as the children had dramatized the story their interest had centered upon the activity of the boy with the sling shot and stones, rather than upon the true message which the story was designed to convey.<sup>2</sup>

Such data found in modern text-books regarding the use of ~~the~~ dramatic material in religious education leads to a statement of a third principle regarding the use of Biblical materials: The dramatization of Biblical material involves a clarification of the message which the given material is designed to carry.

#### 4) Biblical spirit preserved

The atmosphere of reverence is another aspect of the dramatization of Biblical material which receives attention from modern writers. In this regard, Elizabeth Miller, as a leader in the field, writes of "the reverent spirit which pervades the dramatization of every Bible story."<sup>3</sup> Miss Brockway presents an illustration of the

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1. cf. Wilcox: op. cit., p. 23
2. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 124
3. Miller, Elizabeth: Dramatization in the Church School, p. 66

creation of this atmosphere of reverence. She tells of a group of juniors who were dramatizing the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den. When the king approached the door of the den and called out: "O, Daniel, Daniel!", Dick, who played the part of Daniel, greeted His Majesty with a flippant response: "O, Hello, King!" At that, the other juniors in the class expressed utter disgust with their chosen hero and made protests such as these: "Daniel doesn't say that. He's supposed to say: 'O, King, live forever!'" Another boy added: "Yes, Dick is spoiling it. We ought to have another Daniel." At that suggestion, Dick looked startled and declared earnestly: "O, I can do it; I can do it! I just forgot for a minute." After that he was an irreproachable Daniel and the spirit of seriousness and reverence had been restored.<sup>1</sup> Thus, no matter whether Biblical material is cast into the form of a simple tableau or an elaborate play, it must be handled with respectful seriousness and reverence throughout each step of the dramatization.

This emphasis made by these writers may be framed into a fourth principle governing Biblical drama: The dramatization of Biblical material involves the creation of an atmosphere of reverence.

The immediately preceding paragraphs have been centered around a consideration of one major source of material which may be used for dramatic purposes in religious education--namely, the Bible. In that connection it was found that present-day religious educators hold these

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1. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 124



convictions regarding the choice of Biblical materials for dramatic use in the religious education of the junior child:

1. The materials chosen should not involve a representation of Deity.
2. The materials chosen should be within the range of the child's understanding and ability of expression.
3. The materials chosen should focus attention upon ethical action.
4. The materials chosen should give the child a Christian conception of God.

Following the discovery of these principles, further principles relative to the dramatic use of Biblical materials were then brought to light and read as follows:

1. The materials must be interpreted and explained.
2. The materials must be studied in such a way that the history and customs involved are understood.
3. The materials must be so presented that the central message of the given material is crystallized.
4. The materials must be employed in an atmosphere of reverence.

## 2. Missionary Material

Now, at this time it is fitting to study a second major source of material which may be utilized in a dramatic way in the program of religious education--missionary material. In the following pages devoted to a study of this source attention will be focused upon values inherent in this material and upon a search for principles governing its choice and use.

Present-day religious educators express the conviction that missionary material is "a mine of dramatic possibilities."<sup>1</sup> and they say that thru

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1. Ferris: op. cit., p. 51

the dramatization of such materials children are enabled to enter into the lives of people who have lived greatly and earnestly.<sup>1</sup> Writers such as Wood, Hutton, Brockway, Miller, Betts and Hawthorne all consider this particular source of material of high value for dramatic use in religious education. As in the case of Biblical material, fine discrimination is also necessary in order that the choice from this second major source be wisely made. At this time, then, it is well to look for requirements relative to the choice and use of missionary material adapted to dramatic treatment in the scheme of religious education.

a) Material embodying truth

One of the phases of the question considered by contemporary writers is concerned with the quality of truth inherent in the missionary material chosen for dramatization. It is when writing on this point that Lydia Glover Deseo declares that the principles having to do with the selection of missionary material for dramatization may be summed up in this one statement:

"We should, above everything else, adhere to truth as we portray the lives of those of other nationalities. We must truly portray their customs, their every day life."<sup>2</sup>

Miss Miller also asserts that in presenting the lives of other peoples, correctness and accuracy are of fundamental importance.<sup>3</sup> This, then, leads to the statement of an initial requirement: Missionary material chosen for dramatization should adhere to truth.

b) Material embodying fairness

Another aspect of this subject receiving the attention of present-day religious educators has to do with the fair

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1. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 354
2. Church School Journal, Nov. 1927, p. 585 (Article by Lydia G. Deseo)
3. Cf. Lobingier: op. cit., p. 10

representation of all racial groups. In discussing this, Mrs. Deseo says that it is of utmost importance to choose only those materials which present other groups in a fair manner, showing not merely the unhappy, sordid aspects of their lives, but also mirroring their aspirations and achievements.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, Mrs. Lobingier is willing to second Mrs. Glover's opinion, for the former declares that any material employed for dramatization in the field of missionary education must be of such a nature that it promotes an attitude of world friendship and that "only those stories are suitable which reflect a kindly feeling and an appreciative attitude toward other peoples."<sup>2</sup> In view of this, it is possible to infer a second principle: Missionary material chosen for dramatization should give a fair representation of all racial groups.

c) Material bearing situations possible to dramatize

In discussing further the choice of missionary material which is adapted for dramatic use, Elizabeth Miller Lobingier voices her opinion on several points not dealt with by her colleagues. Since Mrs. Lobingier is generally recognized as a pioneer in her field it is wise to present her views on these matters, even though they are not supported by any other writers. These considerations have to do in general with the choice of mission material as it relates to the practical problems connected with dramatic production. In this regard Mrs. Lobingier says that missionary material chosen for dramatization should not involve the representation of an animal by one of the children. Since animals are often introduced into missionary materials in places

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1. Cf. Church School Journal, November 1927, p. 585 (Article by L. G. Deseo)  
 2. Lobingier: op. cit., p. 10

of prime importance, it must be borne in mind that to have one of the children take the part of an animal is likely to produce an effect so ludicrous that the entire point of the dramatization is lost. Mrs. Lobingier says that in the mission story of "The Stubborn Donkey", for example, the presence of the donkey is absolutely vital to the action of the story, and yet, if the donkey's part were actually assumed by one of the children, the hilarity produced would ruin the message which the material was originally intended to convey.

It is undesirable to have children dramatize missionary materials in which the center of interest is focused upon a wrong course of behavior. This principle is discussed in connection with the dramatization of Biblical materials and may well be re-stressed just here. As was pointed out in the former case, this does not mean that undesirable characters must be omitted altogether from the dramatization, but rather, that they must always be subordinated to the story in such a way that the positive message of the material is the outstanding impression left upon the minds of the children. For example, the mission story of "When Joan and Margery For-  
got" should not be chosen for dramatic interpretation, since in that story the anger of the old woman is a central feature, the representation of which would not be desirable. The story, "The Porto Rican Children's Christmas" is an example of a story well suited for dramatization, since its teaching is positive and constructive throughout.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Cf. Lobingier: op. cit., p. 22

Besides making these suggestions, Mrs. Lobingier adds that missionary material chosen for dramatization should not contain situations which the children could not reproduce. She declares that in selecting materials for dramatic purposes it is not wise to choose missionary materials which would necessitate the representation of a scene which the children could not represent. She illustrates her point by saying that the mission story of "The Sugar Cane Whistle" involves the portrayal of a day spent in the sugar cane fields and the cutting of the cane. Because of that, the effectiveness of the story depending upon the setting and action, would be lost in dramatization since the children could not reproduce the setting.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, from Mrs. Lobingier's discussion this additional guiding principle emerges: Missionary material chosen for dramatization should not involve situations undesirable or too difficult for the players to reproduce.

#### B. Minor Sources

Thus far this chapter has been devoted to a search for principles governing the choice and use of dramatic materials from two major sources--Biblical and missionary. Important as these sources are, they may well be supplemented at times by materials from history, literature, music, and art in order to increase the possible values which may come thru the dramatization process in the curriculum of religious education. Before listing and discussing the materials from these minor sources it may be said that the principles regarding their selection and use are akin to those discovered in connection with both Biblical and missionary

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1. Cf. Lobingier: op. cit., p. 11

materials and therefore they do not require re-statement at this time.

### 1. Historical Material

If dramatization in religious education serves to "crystallize principles of noble living, set up worthy ideals and characters made real in great personalities"<sup>1</sup>; then incidents taken from the lives of world figures may well be dramatized.<sup>2</sup> Professor Wood says that church history is a storehouse of such materials and that dramatic portrayal serves to humanize the child's knowledge and appreciation of characters prominent in the history of the Christian church--characters such as Jerome, Origen, Athanasius, Patrick, Boniface, Wesley, and a host of others. Thru dramatization of material from church history as well as material from Biblical and missionary sources, the participants may reach a new realization of the continuity of God's activity all thru the ages.<sup>3</sup>

### 2. Literary Material

Cuttings from the world's best literature rich in the dramatic element may yield "concrete examples of genuine Christian living"<sup>4</sup> and thru meeting these examples in dramatic form children "may be guided in ordering their lives."<sup>5</sup> Professor Wood designates "The Legend of King Arthur and His Knights" and "Tales of a Wayside Inn" as typical examples of literary material of high merit which may be used fruitfully

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1. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 54
2. Ibid., p. 355
3. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 74
4. ~~See~~ Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 354
5. Ibid., p. 355

in the process of religious education.<sup>1</sup> Miss Edland speaks of the dramatization of the King Arthur story which has been prepared by Walter Russell Bowie as interesting material in which the religious element predominates.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Musical Material

An additional source of material which may be utilized in religious education is found in hymnology. These hymns may be presented in a variety of forms, sometimes in tableaux, pantomime, or sacramental drama, depending upon the particular composition, the participants, and the occasion. The following hymns are suggested as examples which are suitable for dramatic treatment in religious education: "Publish Glad Tidings", "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life", "Hushed Was the Evening Hymn", "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks", and "O, Little Town of Bethlehem".<sup>3</sup>

### 4. Artistic Material

Works of art, including both painting and sculpture may be worthily used in a dramatic way in religious education since their meaning is greatly enhanced for all those who participate in the actual reproductions in living fashion. Of course it is needless to say that no picture necessitating the portrayal of Christ should, at any time be dramatized.<sup>4</sup> Pictures such as the following are adapted for this use: Reynold's "The Infant Samuel", Calderon's "Ruth and Naomi," Brick-Lajos' "Ruth Gleaning", Israel's "David Before Saul", and "David and Goliath", Mme Bouguereau's "David as Good Shepherd", Tophan's "Naaman's Wife and the Captive Maid", Van der Heyden's "Adoration of the Magi", Gentile da

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1. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 76

2. Church School Journal, July 1924, p. 459, Article by Elisabeth Edland

3. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 354

4. Cf. Ibid, p. 356

cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 76

Fabriano's "Adoration of the Kings", Joy's "The Merchant and the Pearl of Great Price", J. Sant's "The Infant Timothy Unfolding the Scriptures", Shield's "St. Paul at Rome", and Le Suer's "St. Paul at Ephesus." Often times pictures of secular subjects may be used, such as representations from history and literature which convey a religious message.<sup>1</sup>

### III. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to make a study of materials adapted for dramatic use in the religious education of the junior child. At the outset three general characteristics were named as the primary qualities, which, in the opinion of present day writers, must be present in any dramatic material if it is to be chosen as the basis of dramatic activity in any program of religious education. Then, following the enumeration of these broad principles, attention was focused upon two major and four minor sources from which material might be drawn for dramatic use in religious education, the sources being, in the order of their importance: Biblical, missionary, historical, literary, musical, and artistic. In this connection principles were discovered in modern-text-books regarding the choice and use of materials from each source and examples were cited of materials which conformed to the previously named principles.

Thus far in this study of the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child it has been revealed that:

1. On the basis of historical evidence the dramatic method has been used effectively thru the ages as a means of realizing the major

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1. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 76  
 Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 356



objectives desired in all religious education.

2. On the basis of psychological knowledge regarding the nature of the junior child and the constituents of the dramatic impulse, the dramatic method is very well suited for use in the religious education of the junior child.

3. On the basis of a comparison of the objectives of modern religious education with the outcomes realized thru the use of the dramatic method, this method is an effective means of attaining the objectives desired in the religious education of the junior child.

4. On the basis of modern pedagogical theories, five chief guiding principles must be heeded if the dramatic method is to realize its true function in the religious education of the junior child.

5. On the basis of attention to the two major and four minor sources of dramatic material principles regarding the choice and use of materials from each of the six sources were discovered as the basis of naming specific materials adapted for dramatic use in the religious education of the junior child.

It is apparent, then, that the study of the first four points was centered around the interrogative "why"; the fifth point involved the question "what"; the following pages will be concerned with the inquiry "how". Thus, the next chapter will contain a general description of the procedures involved in the various types of dramatic activity employed in the religious education of the junior child.

## Chapter VI.

### The Accepted Modes of Procedure in Four Types of Dramatic Activity Adapted for Use in the Religious Education of the Junior Child

#### I. Introduction

In this study attention was first centered about historical, psychological, and pedagogical data which served to justify the place of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child. Following this justification, consideration was then given to six sources of material and principles were established for the selection of material from each source. Now, at this point, after having dealt with the "why" and the "what" of the dramatic method, it is well to turn to the "how" aspect and to describe the accepted modes of procedure in four of the many types of dramatic activity adapted for use in the religious education of the junior child, namely, tableau, pantomime, story playing, and the prepared play.

#### II. Modes of Procedure in Four Types of Dramatic Activity

##### A. The Tableau

The tableau, sometimes called the living picture, is the motionless form of picturesque drama.<sup>1</sup> It is defined as a "static reproduction of a single scene with a musical or literary accompaniment."<sup>2</sup> Technically speaking, it is a pictorial design made up of three dimensional forms---line, mass, and color and bearing the suggestion of both past

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1. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 99

2. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 358

and future time.<sup>1</sup> Tableau may be used either to give a pictorial effect of a certain situation or to reproduce a chosen picture. In the first instance, the teacher may tell the desired story and then help the children to build a picture representing some element in it, while in the latter case, the children attempt to reproduce a given painting.<sup>2</sup> Miss Maude E. Davis, writing in the *Pilgrim Elementary Teacher* says that when picture acting of this former type is introduced in the teaching of Biblical material, the teacher should choose a picture which gives a clear presentation of some important action in the story, preferably the climax. She says that this act of forming a tableau should lead the participants to study the expressions on the faces of the people in the painting, to consider their positions in the picture, and to discuss what they might be saying at the moment which the picture represents.<sup>3</sup> Meredith points out that thru the tableau it is possible for the actors to portray not only one significant incident or situation, but to represent a series of related incidents as described in the Bible. He adds that related scripture reading and fitting music serve to enhance the effect of a tableau.<sup>4</sup>

#### B. The Pantomime

The pantomime, the second form of picturesque drama, is "a mute representation in action of characters and incidents."<sup>5</sup> In contrast to this static form of the tableau, the pantomime is a moving

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1. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 284
2. Cf. Overton: op. cit., pp. 116, 117
3. *Pilgrim Elementary Teacher*, Sept. 1928, p. 385  
(Article by Maude E. Davis)
4. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 146
5. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 358

picture in which motion, rhythm, and tempo are essential elements.<sup>1</sup> It is a play without words, being made up of movements and attitudes which may center in a single character or which may include an entire plot.<sup>2</sup> Thru its use, source material of religious education (listed in the former chapter as Biblical, missionary, musical, or literary) may be filled with a new and vital meaning for the participants. The value of pantomime is greatly increased when it is accompanied by music to give atmosphere or by dramatic reading to describe the action and to make the meaning clear.<sup>3</sup>

While it is generally recognized that the pantomime is of great educational value for young children it must not be forgotten that it is also very helpful in the religious education of older children who have reached the age of ten or twelve. This value lies in the fact that it necessitates a very careful analysis of the characters involved in order that appropriate gestures and facial expressions may be attained. Following a period of preparation the actual work of pantomime should be initiated when the teacher tells a story while each member of the group tries to visualize the details of the action in each situation. Junior children are well fitted to prepare a pantomime of the Nativity, for example, using carols and hymns. In addition to the study of the people and the emotions primary to this story, a careful study should be made of the setting which would lead to an intelligent construction of simple costumes and properties during the workshop period. The details of the action in the pantomime may well be brought to light thru a period of very careful questioning by the leader. In the preparation of the Nativity

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1. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 284

2. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 118

3. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 360

Cf. Edland: Principles and Technique in Religious Dramatics, pp. 19, 20

pantomime, the teacher might ask some questions such as: "Why was the year in which Christ was born a very busy one in Palestine with lots of traveling?" The children's responses to a question like this would be the representation of a group of people going to be taxed. In that same fashion the action of each group may be indicated.<sup>1</sup>

In considering important features in connection with the rehearsing of the pantomime it is essential to note that the teacher should at the very beginning block out the action in small divisions and that these should be repeated a number of times independently before any attempts are made to join them together.<sup>2</sup> All possible freedom should be given to each child as he interprets his part according to his particular light on the matter. The teacher should never, in any case, show the child how to act in a particular instance, but she may bring out desired movements and gestures thru asking questions such as: "John, how are you going to show the surprise of the shepherds? How would you do it, James?" Opportunity should be offered for group suggestions in order that the maximum of interest may result from the activity.<sup>3</sup> On this same point Kimball says that the director's suggestions should be an aid as the child interprets a given situation but that the child must be allowed to express himself in his own way.<sup>4</sup> Although the pantomimic productions should always remain simple, there should always be a striving toward perfection. As the children sense the harmony between setting, action, and music they should be led into a desire to create a beautiful result with a full realization

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1. Cf. Bulletin: The Production of Religious Drama, p. 30
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 31
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 27
4. Cf. Kimball: op. cit., p. 10

of the kinship between beauty and holiness.<sup>1</sup>

In this consideration of the procedure adapted to the pantomime form of dramatic activity these examples are given by Miss Brockway and by Miss Edland. The former says that in pantomiming the parable of the Ten Virgins it is well to represent all of the wedding procession. In this story sex need not be considered, for among junior children it would be entirely satisfactory to let boys play the part of the virgins. For a time the ten show their ornaments and then they fall asleep, only to be awakened by the watcher who discovers the approach of the bridegroom's party. It is important that attention be focused upon the imploring of the foolish virgins and upon the refusal of the wise ones; the bargainings of the oil merchant and the meeting of the wise virgins with the bridegroom should also be included; at the close it should be shown that the foolish virgins plead (in pantomime) for admission and yet are denied. The leader would do well to conclude this pantomime by reading the words found in Matthew 25:13.<sup>2</sup>

Miss Edland writes that in pantomiming Bible stories the text is read by a reader and the actors respond in action only. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, for example, this mode of procedure might be followed. As the original story is read, the rich man and his two sons approach; in their action they portray the early course of the

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1. Cf. Bulletin: The Production of Religious Drama, pp. 27--32
2. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: Principles and Technique in Religious Dramatics, p. 20

story, showing the division of property and the subsequent departure of the younger son. The father looks longingly after his boy while the older brother stands by with eyes full of scorn. No attempt is made to dramatize the portion of the story dealing with the son's evil living in the far country and the next scene is laid in the fields. Following this there is shown the meeting of the father and the son while the closing scene is between the father and the older son.<sup>1</sup>

### C: Story Playing

The steps in the process of story playing have been outlined by many writers who have listed essentially the same steps. In view of that, this discussion will be based primarily upon the method of procedure which is outlined by Elizabeth Erwin Miller, although reference to methods advocated by other leaders will be cited from time to time.

1. This is Miss Miller's initial advice to the leader who proposes to dramatize a story for the purpose of religious education: "Select a story with care."<sup>2</sup> In a later book, this same writer gives further light on this point, suggesting that any story selected for dramatization must meet the following requirements:

- a) Have a sound basic structure which includes a beginning, a climax, and a conclusion.
- b) Contain a clearly marked succession of events.
- c) Involve action.
- d) Be within the range of the children's comprehension.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Cf. Edland: op. cit., p. 20
2. Miller, Elizabeth: Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 13
3. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth: Dramatization in the Church School, p. 8  
Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 119  
Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 77  
Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 361

2. The second step in the procedure to be followed in story playing is framed in this command to the leader: Tell the story, placing emphasis upon the most important elements which it contains, stressing action and events in particular, using direct discourse, and attempting to present vivid mental pictures.<sup>1</sup> Professor Wood elaborates on this point, saying that in telling the story for dramatization, the leader should observe these general principles:

a) The theme of the story should receive central emphasis throughout the course of the telling and should be clearly understood by the hearers.

b) The story should be so arranged that action exceeds narration and that long speeches are eliminated.

c) The story should be so planned that division into scenes for dramatization will be fairly easy and simple.

d) The story should be made concrete thru the use of phrases which appeal to the senses.

e) The story should contain direct discourse rather than descriptive or narrative speech in the third person.

f) The story should be humanized—that is, made clear, interesting, and important to present day life and experience.<sup>2</sup>

3. Miss Miller says that after hearing the story, the children may then be guided into dividing it into scenes.<sup>3</sup> Miss Powell

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1. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth: Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 11, 15

2. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 350  
Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 91

2. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 80

3. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth: Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 11  
Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 82



suggests that these scenes be listed on the blackboard in order that the children may judge their own suggestions. She says that this often reveals that they have chosen far too many scenes for representation, and after a period of consideration and discussion they may decide to eliminate the unnecessary ones.<sup>1</sup> Miss Brockway says that the children themselves should choose the location of the scenes in order that they may have a clear idea of their placement; then she proceeds to give this illustration to bear out her point: "Where shall we have the brook where David finds his stones?" asked the leader. "I'll get some grass and lay it down on the platform.", declares one of the group. Some one else asks: "Wouldn't this crack in the platform do? We could play that it was real wide." The leader left it to the group who decided in all seriousness that the crack would do.<sup>2</sup> Miss Edland asserts that in discussing the scenes of a story which are to be dramatically represented, the setting should be definitely limited and the location of doors, windows, etc. ought to be made clear to all before the actual playing begins. She points out that in using the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child, in particular, this is an important phase of the procedure since juniors are very exact about details of that kind.<sup>3</sup>

4. After deciding upon the number, location, and details of the different scenes, Miss Miller reminds her reader that the leader must then allow the children an opportunity to discuss just what ought to take place in each scene. Next, volunteers from the group may act out

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1. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 351

2. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 121

3. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: The Children's King, p. 1

one of these scenes.<sup>1</sup> In this matter of choosing the players for the various parts, Professor Wood points out that the original players may be those who volunteer as the different parts are named, or that they may be chosen by the leader or else by the vote of the group.<sup>2</sup> Miss Brockway recognizes that this step, involving the choice of characters, is often a sore point in the use of the dramatic method among junior children especially, since children of that age are so self-assertive that they show no hesitancy about demanding the leading parts. She suggests that the group vote for those who are to play the major roles while the leader assigns the parts of lesser importance. Sometimes, again, the names of the principal characters may be listed on the blackboard and two leaders in the class may make selections.<sup>3</sup> As was noted in an earlier chapter, there are times when the leader should arbitrarily choose the cast in order that various members may play parts which will be helpful in their development of Christian character.

5. After the players have been selected in one of these ways, they may then play thru the first scene in the way in which they think that it ought to be represented, expressing themselves in their own words.<sup>4</sup> Miss Edland makes the remark that as a rule this preliminary playing is mostly in the form of pantomime and that the sentences spoken are apt to be short, and perhaps rather crude.<sup>5</sup> Miss Miller says that at this stage of the process the children often show a certain amount

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1. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 15
2. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 82
3. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 121
4. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 11
5. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: The Children's King, p. 1

of stiffness and self consciousness. The children, sensing these imperfections, reach out naturally toward ways of improvement, thus entering upon the next stage in the dramatic process. At this time a period of group discussion takes place at which time appreciation of the good points and suggestions for improvement are brought forward.<sup>1</sup> Then the leader raises such questions as these: "Which parts did the actors do best?" "Why?" "In what ways may they make improvements? If you were acting a certain part, what would you do to make it better? What really ought to have been said just at this point?" Questions such as these stimulate the children to offer constructive criticism and changes are made in the dramatization on the basis of group opinion, rather than on the basis of opinions offered by the leader.<sup>2</sup> Questions also serve to give each child an opportunity to make helpful comments and to express his interpretation of the various parts by acting them out to demonstrate his thought. This process leads to a re-enactment of the scene in order to incorporate the suggested changes and improvements.<sup>3</sup>

6. As the succeeding scenes are dramatized in the same way, each child should be given a chance to portray different parts. Miss Miller declares that after the entire story has been played thru a few times it is then possible for every child in the group to assume any

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1. Cf. Miller; Elizabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 16  
Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 82
2. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 12  
Cf. Meredith: op. cit., p. 91  
Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: The Children's King, p. 1  
Cf. Eggleston: op. cit., p. 156
3. Cf. Miller; Elizabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 16  
Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 351  
Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 82

character in the story and that "It is an essential part of this method that every child~~ren~~ has a different part every time."<sup>1</sup> Professor Wood and Miss Powell also write that it is important that thru this process each child has an opportunity to interpret a number of roles. Miss Edland, writing at greater length regarding this emphasis in the process of dramatic activity in religious education says that there must be a change of cast with every playing, or at least in the case of every second or third playing. This is desirable in order that all of the pupils in the group may have an opportunity to play the character parts and may thru this widened experience receive a well rounded understanding of the entire story and the relationship of the various characters in the story.<sup>2</sup> Miss Miller points out that in the process of playing and re-playing in this fashion, the children will observe weaknesses in their original portrayal of the material and will wish to polish and refine their work, changing it in accord with group criticism until the result becomes a product of their very best effort.<sup>3</sup> Miss Powell feels that repetition of a dramatization will not be wearisome to the children or result in the loss of interest if they are constantly on the alert to judge their work and seek to perfect it thru suggestions of better ways of speaking and acting. The participants should never feel that their dramatic interpretation of a story is completely finished, but that the way is always open for further improvement and alteration. The wording should not, as a rule, be definitely settled and each performance ought to mean a slightly different interpretation. Sometimes, however, when

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1. Miller, Elizabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 12  
Of. Meredith: op. cit., p. 161
2. Of. Edland, Elisabeth: The Children's King, pl 17
3. Of. Miller, Elizabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 16  
Of. Wood: op. cit., p. 82

some Biblical materials are used as the medium for the dramatic activity, the wording may be carefully worked out by the children on the basis of the Biblical language.<sup>1</sup> In this respect Miss Edland says that worthy lives from scripture may well be memorized after the pupil thoroughly understands the situation and the characters involved. As was noted in a former chapter, memorization introduced in this later phase of the dramatic process is not mechanical, but meaningful to the participant. In illustration of this, Miss Edland declares that the opening sentences of Paul's speech at Athens, for instance, may well be memorized and then linked with "free speech" in the ensuing sentences; that memorization is excellent when it gives the child a natural way of learning and using great utterances made by outstanding Christian heroes.<sup>2</sup>

7. If the story is to be played before parents and friends as the last stage in the process, parts should be assigned to particular individuals a short time before the public performance. Miss Miller emphatically declares that this presentation is not considered as the climax of the process, but rather that it is thought of as an occasion of little more importance than any one of the rehearsals carried on in the group. The children invite guests because they have enjoyed playing the story and wish to share their enjoyment of it with their friends.<sup>3</sup> Other writers who advocate the use of the dramatic method in religious education are also anxious to make their views very clear on this final phase of the dramatic procedure when it means the presence of an audience.

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1. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 351

2. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: The Children's King, p. 17

3. Cf. Miller, Elisabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 14

Miss Edland prefaces her remarks by saying that spontaneous dramatizations are seldom given before an audience. Then she continues by declaring that in educational dramatics if there should be an audience the leader ought to explain to them that the performance is not presented as a finished play, but simply as a demonstration of a teaching method.<sup>1</sup> In another instance she says that in the case of a missionary dramatization the audience should be considered as a vital part of the dramatization itself and that there ought not to be any distinction between the spectators and players.<sup>2</sup> James Watt Raine says that in educational dramatics the audience may be regarded as merely incidental. Then he shows that the pupils sometimes need an audience in order to have the experience of sharing the result of their best efforts and that in this light the audience ought to be invited to help the participants.<sup>3</sup> In writing on this matter Professor Wood expresses himself as of the opinion that when a group has had the pleasure of dramatizing a story and wish to share it with another group they ought to be given the opportunity of doing so. The same writer adds that in such a case as this, educational results may accrue from the presence of an audience.<sup>4</sup> Thus, as has been pointed out in an earlier chapter, present day educators are placing the child, rather than the audience in the place of central importance with reference to dramatic activity. In describing the details of this last step in the dramatic process relative to the playing of a story,

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1. Cf. Bulletin: The Production of Religious Drama, pp. 22, 27
2. Cf. International Journal of Religious Education, Feb. 1927, p. 23  
(Article by Elizabeth Edland)
3. Cf. Raine: op. cit., p. 7
4. Cf. Wood: op. cit., p. 71

Miss Powell says that the stage setting ought to be very simple so that the attention of both players and audience may be centered upon the message of the story itself rather than upon the background against which it is given. She suggests that the children who take part in the final playing may be seated in the front of the room but that they should be with the other members of their group and not set aside as "chosen people". Before the dramatization begins the leader ought to tell something of the story, mention the spirit in which it is being presented, describe briefly the various characters and explain the significance of their costumes. This type of an introduction thus serves to make the public presentation an entirely natural part of the entire process involved in the playing of a story.<sup>1</sup>

#### D. The Prepared Play

The authors of "Method in Teaching Religion" write that in the field of educational dramatics there are two large divisions: spontaneous and prepared drama.<sup>2</sup> The preceding paragraphs have been given over to a consideration of the former type--dramatic forms which called for spontaneous speaking and acting on the part of the players. It was pointed out that in the case of the tableau, pantomime, and story playing the leader presented the situation or story, after which the pupils themselves analyzed the various scenes, characters, and actions and then presented their own dramatic interpretation of the given situation or story. A finished production was not desired, but the entire activity

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1. Cf. Powell: op. cit., pp. 352, 353

2. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 364

was judged in the light of its effect upon the participants. Now, it is desirable to study the prepared drama in relation to its rightful place in dramatic activity which is carried on in connection with the religious education of the junior child and to describe the mode of procedure which educators advocate.

Those who emphasize the importance of the dramatic method in regard to the prepared play claim that thru it the participants gain all of the values which accrue from spontaneous dramatization, since they must make a careful study of the text and interpret the characters. In respect to these two broad divisions--spontaneous and prepared drama--one modern textbook on religious education contains this sentence: "Both methods should be employed."<sup>1</sup> Now, after having accepted this statement as it stands, it is well to consider the details of the procedure involved in the use of the prepared play in the religious education of the junior child. Mrs. Overton says that since the junior resents any dramatic form which may seem simple or childish he reaches out eagerly for the prepared play.

1. Miss Ferris, in outlining the steps in the procedure relative to the production of the prepared play says that at the time of the first rehearsal the theme must be made absolutely clear to all and that the play should be told as a story.<sup>2</sup> Another writer says that in telling this

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1. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 365
2. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 112
3. Cf. Ferris: op. cit., p. 64



story the plot and the structural outline should be made to stand out in bold relief. This telling should include direct discourse in order that the children may gain a clue as to the conversation which is used in the play itself. Oftentimes an element of interest may be added if the leader reads directly some portion of the text.<sup>1</sup>

2. This initial step should be followed by a detailed study of the material, with a focusing of attention upon conversation and upon details of action. This should be related to character analysis, showing the different characters in the play with careful consideration of their appearance, motives, their importance in the plot, and their relation to each other. Plot analysis then follows. In this study the action is traced step by step with an imaginative rehearsal of the way in which the action is carried thru. At this stage, the children will make a special investigation of the customs, dress, habits, and the general manner of life relative to the characters who are found in the play in order that the interpretation may be made in the light of their own experience. A blackboard bearing an outline of the play, its principal characters, its chief divisions, necessary revisions, and steps in action is a helpful device in this first part of the procedure in the study of a prepared play.<sup>2</sup>

3. After this preliminary study of the play as a whole, with special attention given to plot and character analysis, the group should be ready to begin acting. At this point, when the members of the

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1. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 366

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 366

group have thoroughly discussed a chosen scene, they may then portray it in action. In the case of dramatic work among juniors, action is of prime importance and it is in just this connection that Miss Ferris writes that the children should learn the main outline of the action before being introduced to the words of the play.<sup>1</sup> The substance of the words may be given to the player and during the earlier rehearsals the chief emphasis should be upon action founded upon clearly understood reasons for action. Any words which the children speak must be rich in thought content for them and comprehended thoroughly. The memorization of the exact words of the play should not be attempted until after the child has become thoroughly acquainted with the entire play and has achieved a measure of characterization.<sup>2</sup> Miss Powell writes that the printed play should not be put into the hands of the children until this thorough preparation has been made. Then she suggests that when they have copies of the play before them they should be led in a study of the play script, trying to find the meaning in every speech and situation presented.<sup>3</sup> Mary Alice Jones says that whenever a written play is used in children's dramatizations it is essential that the words should be made meaningful to every child. This necessitates a period of careful preparation and the avoidance of all the hurry and anxiety sometimes connected with the presentation of a public performance.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Cf. Ferris: op. cit., p. 65
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 65  
Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 365  
Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: Principles and Technique in Religious Dramatics, p. 28
3. Cf. Powell: op. cit., p. 351
4. Cf. International Journal of Religious Education, Oct. 1931, p. 29  
(Article by Mary Alice Jones)

In general, it may be said that during the course of the second and third rehearsals the stage settings and arrangements for production ought to be completed. Important advice is given on this point by Betts and Hawthorne who say: that the players ought to be grouped and placed on the stage according to their parts in the play and in correct relationship to the other characters to appear with them in order to secure balance, harmony, and consistency in the whole play. Stage pictures ought never to be rigid, but free enough to allow for various changes from time to time.<sup>1</sup>

4. In leaving this technical aspect of the rehearsals to consider the spiritual side, Dr. Soares writes that during the period of preparation for a play reverence and appreciation should be given a far more important place than merely theatrical perfection. He adds that the entire process ought to be educational in nature with emphasis upon the understanding of religious meanings and that rehearsals ought to be made exercises of worship with appropriate prayer.<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Lydia Glover Deseo also stresses this devotional side of the procedure in the production of a prepared play for she says that before such a play is presented there ought to be a period of prayer and consecration, since "only by such sense of devotion can the drama best achieve its character objectives."<sup>3</sup>

Now, after having considered in general terms the manner and modes of procedure appropriate to the use of the prepared play in the

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1. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 370

2. Cf. International Journal of Religious Education, April 1930, p. 319

3. Bulletin: Glover, Lydia: Dramatics Why and How, p. 9

religious education of the junior child, it is fitting to think of certain aids in dramatization--costumes, setting, and properties--which may be helpfully utilized in the course of this procedure. Before writing of these aids, it is well to say that they will not be discussed in the light of the technique of professional drama, since such a treatment would not be pertinent to the matter of their use in connection with the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child. In view of that, then, the following discussion will be limited to a study of these aids as they may be employed to advantage when a prepared play is studied and produced by junior children for educational and dramatic purposes.

Mrs. Overton says that the child of junior age shows keen interest in the costuming, setting, and staging of a prepared play.<sup>1</sup> Miss Edland says that the creative abilities of the juniors may well find outlet in the construction of costumes, scenery, properties, and stage settings for their play.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the teacher is merely following sound pedagogical principles by considering constructive work as an important phase of the dramatic procedure and by allowing the children to make simple accessories for their plays. Many who write of the dramatic method in religious education suggest that in a vacation school, for example, the children may make their costumes, properties, and setting for their play during the workshop period, thus making that activity

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1. Cf. Overton: op. cit., p. 112

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 63

Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 233

an integral part of the entire project.<sup>1</sup> In discussing these workshop activities as they become a part of the production of a prepared play, Betts and Hawthorne say that this phase of the procedure, educationally speaking, is very rich.<sup>2</sup> Candler writes that when a group of junior boys engage in making the stage panels necessary for their own play, their gang propensities are utilized in a positive way and that at the same time the element of justifiable rivalry is not lacking.<sup>3</sup> Girls, in making costumes for a Biblical play, for example, need to study Bible pictures in order to be able to make the costumes accurately. A period of study of Sargeant's Frieze of the Prophets or of Tissot's paintings proved to be of inestimable value.<sup>4</sup> In discussing the outcomes of this workshop period set aside for the construction of the fundamental aids in dramatization, such as costumes, scenery, and setting, Candler says that workshop experiences such as were described above give the children "a store of beautiful thoughts and feelings upon which they can safely build."<sup>5</sup>

While fully recognizing these values concomitant with the construction of scenery, costumes, and properties, prominent writers sound notes of warning regarding the nature and use of these very items. Meredith says that costumes should always be simple and suggestive; that properties ought not to be elaborate and that branches cut from trees

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1. Cf. Russell, Mary M.: How to Dramatize Bible Lessons, p. vii
2. Cf. Betts and Hawthorne: op. cit., p. 363
3. Cf. Candler: op. cit., p. 51
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 85, 88
5. Ibid., p. 51

might well suggest the out of doors; that in many class-room dramatizations scenery could be eliminated altogether.<sup>1</sup> Candler says that costumes, properties, and setting ought to be kept exceedingly simple in the religious play. She suggests that a city wall, for instance, built of wooden framing, covered with cloth which has been painted in broken effects in gray and tan and set against a blue back-drop makes a simple, yet impressive background for a religious play.<sup>2</sup> Russell also declares that the costumes and properties made by the children should be of the utmost simplicity.<sup>3</sup> Miss Edland writes that "a little goes a long way"<sup>4</sup> and that elaborate costumes should never be attempted. Miss Miller feels that costumes worn by children in a play should be treated as of minor importance and that if used, should be worn at the various rehearsals in order that the children may be enabled to relive the experiences of the people whom they represent.<sup>5</sup> In speaking of properties, Miss Miller says that very little stage setting and only a few properties ought to be introduced into dramatic activity in religious education and that as far as possible these items ought to be left to the imagination of the children. Those which are used ought to be made by the children themselves and should contribute definitely to the atmosphere of the play. The stage settings which they make should be limited to very simple designs showing ornaments of the time in which their play is located. In concluding this examination of modern opinions regarding the use of

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1. Cf. Meredith: op. cit., pp. 98, 99
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 91
3. Cf. Russell, Mary M.: How to Dramatize Bible Stories, p. vii
4. Edland, Elisabeth: The Children's King, p. 31
5. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, p. 144

costumes, properties, and scenery in connection with a prepared play as it is employed in the religious education of the junior child it is fitting to quote a statement made by Candler:

"The costumes and the properties...should emphasize the import of the action...re-enforce it by psychological suggestion."<sup>1</sup>

### III. Summary

As stated at the outset, the purpose of this chapter has been to make a study of the accepted modes of procedure in four representative types of dramatic activity which may be employed in the religious education of the junior child. The types chosen for consideration were: stableau , pantomime, story playing, and the prepared play. In connection with each of these forms of dramatic activity principles of technique and general manner of procedure advocated by present day leaders in the field of religious education were named and discussed. In the case of each type the child was the central consideration around whom the entire process revolved, all features of these activities--such as the presence of an audience or the use of costumes, properties, and setting being introduced only as they might serve to further the religious education of the junior child.

Now it is fitting, after having made this study of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child on the basis of historical, psychological, and pedagogical data, and after having considered sources of material for dramatic activity and the modes of procedure involved, to turn attention to reports which give an account of actual experiments in the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child.

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1. Candler: op. cit., p. 100

## PART II

### EMPIRICAL FINDINGS RELATIVE TO THE USE OF THE DRAMATIC METHOD IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE JUNIOR CHILD



## Chapter VII

### Reports by Modern Religious Educators Regarding Their Use of the Dramatic Method in the Religious Education of the Junior Child

#### I. Introduction

Now, after having considered the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child from the standpoint of theories advanced in modern text books, it is well to turn attention to reports telling of the practical uses of that method. Consequently, it is helpful to include at this point in the study a number of reports in which various writers describe their experiences in the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child.

#### II. Reports of the Use of the Dramatic Method in the Religious Education of the Junior Child

##### A. A Dramatization of the Life of Paul

A certain scout troupe, which had been studying the life of Paul, wished to present a pageant on his life at a worship service on Children's Day. In working out the project the boys themselves, under the guidance of their leader, selected the incidents which they felt should be included in such a pageant and then they chose suitable scripture passages to be read in connection with it. They showed a maximum of interest in the undertaking as they studied books and pictures in order to secure the knowledge necessary for the planning of their costumes; they manifested keen delight in making their own properties. When the pageant had been worked out in this way the finished product was a composite of the best thinking and working which could be done by the group. All

thru the process the boys had been attracted to the project since it offered them an opportunity to do something, to put their lessons about Paul into action; it provided a means of calling forth their dramatic instincts and guiding their imaginations. Perhaps the foremost result of this dramatic activity was that thru it one of the chief characters of world history became a companion who would always be very near and real to them during the rest of their lives.<sup>1</sup>

#### B. A Dramatization of the Childhood of Moses

In a vacation church school a group of junior children wrote a dramatization of the story of Moses, proceeding in this fashion. At first they brought in a list of Bible heroes whose lives they wished to portray dramatically. After the teachers read the lists submitted, the class cast the majority of votes for "The Childhood of Moses." Since the children felt that they needed to be more familiar with the story before dramatizing it, they asked their leader to tell it to them. Following this, they spent a fifteen minute period in writing out their contributions toward the dramatization. At the session on the next day the teacher read these contributions with the result that the children discovered that there was a great deal of overlapping in the various accounts. In view of this, the members of the group decided that at each day's meeting a single portion of the story should be told and then written in dramatic form by every one in the group. After reading these papers the teacher was to choose the best one contributed each day and then to incorporate it into the class play; when this had been done the

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1. Cf. Bulletin: Pageantry in the Church School, p. 6

teacher was then to read the dramatization as far as it went and tell the next portion of the story. This process lasted for several days, at the end of which time the story had been completely dramatized. The division into acts and scenes was made by a nine year old girl in the group who offered to make them. In connection with this dramatic project there were several related activities of importance. Since the girls wanted to make their own costumes and since they knew little about the clothing worn in the time of Moses, they made a careful study of the costumes of that day. The boys asked to build the stage and make all of the accessories which would be needed. "Such spears as they made for the king's guard! The swords were longer than themselves!"<sup>1</sup> The important point was that this was all their own work and made their hand-<sup>2</sup>craft period an integral part of the entire program of the school.

#### C. A Dramatization of the Parable of the Talents

A teacher who had a class of junior boys ranging from ten to twelve years in age wished to have the boys dramatize the parable of the talents. Before telling the story, she gave all the members of the group an opportunity to look leisurely at pictures which gave the setting of the story. Even though explanatory notes were attached to each picture, the teacher was constantly on the alert to answer any questions which might arise in connection with any of the pictures. Then, after explaining the nature of a parable, she proceeded to relate the one chosen.

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1. International Journal of Religious Education, October 1929, p. 29  
(Article by Alfred L. Murray)
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 29

Following the story, the children looked again at the pictures in order to discuss the story more intelligently. In this discussion the names of the characters who appeared in the story were listed on the blackboard and it was suggested that it would be well to include extra servants in order that everyone in the group might have a part. The action of these extras was not described at first, since it was deemed best to let each boy watch the dramatization carefully and then decide just what his particular part in it should be. As the dramatization developed the discovery was made that additional characters, such as the messenger and the soldiers, might well be added to heighten the point of the story. The "hero"--the rich man--became a person of chief interest to every one in the group and he was minutely described as to size, appearance, clothing, and general manner. The boys then discussed the chief characteristics of the servants, deciding that the first two were honest, while the third one was lazy and perhaps jealous because he had received but one talent. No one ever wanted to take the part of this last servant and sometimes it was given to the latest comer and sometimes to a member who had been absent. The boys were interested in the setting of the story, yet their enthusiasm for that phase of the dramatization was slight in comparison to the interest which they manifested in their discussion of the characters involved in the parable. In the end it was decided to place all of the action in two scenes, both of which were to be located in the rich man's house, one taking place before the journey was under-

taken and the other after he returned from his trip.

At the time of the first playing no actual dramatization was attempted. In order to amplify the significance of the story at just this point in the procedure the teacher told two secular stories which would clarify the idea of the "talents" in the minds of the boys, choosing: "The Lame Boy" from The First Book in Religion by Mrs. Charles A. Lane and a story of Louis Pasteur, who, as a scientist, made wise and splendid use of his talents. After these supplementary stories the group learned one verse of the hymn, "O God Who Workest Hitherto", found in H. Augustine Smith's Hymnal for American Youth. Before leaving, temporary assignments were made for all the roles(except for that of the servant) in order that the children might have a chance to think over their parts before the time of the next meeting. For example, the boy who had chosen to be the rich man's camel keeper was to find out all that he could about camels and make a report at the next meeting of the group.

When the story was dramatized for the first time the "extras" did very little but walk on and off the stage, while the other members of the cast shouted directions at each other. After this first playing, thru which the children adjusted themselves to the new situation, the second playing went forward in a much more orderly and satisfactory manner in all respects. At the time of the third playing the keeper of the camel proceeded to read the report on camels which he had prepared since the previous meeting. His attempt met the disapproval of the rest of the group, who, after discussing the matter, voted that the report was not at all in keeping with the rest of the story, and therefore should not be read at that time. Immediately following this, suggestions for changes and for <sup>the</sup> addition

of new characters were brought forward and weighed by the group. Then, an outline of the action of the play was jotted down and after this had been done, the children listened to another story about individual talents--"Why the Chimes Rang", by Raymond McDonald Alden.

As the story was played and replayed slight changes were made in action, but the speeches were constantly changed and improved by the players as they interpreted new roles at each playing. In connection with the matter of costumes an important thing happened. Before the play began, one of the boys who had been designated for the rich man's part at the next playing, disappeared, only to re-appear a few minutes later wearing a kitchen towel wrapped around his head for a turban and carrying a window pole in his hand for a staff. When the teacher came to the next meeting she brought a strip of cloth from which the boys might make a real turban. The turban was the only bit of costuming used in connection with the play and the properties were limited to a scroll which the boys made for the servants, a handkerchief for the third servant, and a purse for the rich man. All these properties were made at one class session, while candles and a glass of water were the only properties which were brought in addition.<sup>1</sup>

#### D. Another Dramatization of the Parable of the Talents

Another teacher who also told the parable of the talents to her group of juniors writes this account of their dramatization of the story.

At the first meeting of the junior class group in the vacation church school the various members suggested things which they would like

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1. Cf. Edland, Elisabeth: Children's Dramatizations, pp. 28--39

to do during the term of the school. One child said: "We might learn Bible stories.", while another added: "Yes, and we might play them." Although that suggestion was not acted upon immediately it was borne in mind and later, when the teacher had finished telling the story of the talents, she asked the children if they would like to play it. Since the response was in the affirmative, an opportunity was given for the children to volunteer to take the various parts in a preliminary playing. This playing was deemed quite unsuccessful by the group with the result that one child finally said: "It ought to be written out." The teacher in looking about for writers noted that two children volunteered to do this work. After that there was a short discussion as to the characters, the setting, and the properties necessary for the enactment of the parable.

At a later session one of the two volunteers, a sixth grade girl, brought in her dramatic arrangement of the parable. After she had read it to the group the children made these responses:

'When will we give it?'

'Where....May I be the Master?'

'Will we have costumes?'

'I have some pictures that will show the costumes.'<sup>1</sup>

Just then the teacher asked those who had pictures to bring them to the next session. At that time the children met the teacher with this question: 'Where will we give our play?' The teacher responded:

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1. Danielson and Perkins: Teaching Without Textbooks, p. 189  
(Chapter by Edna L. Acheson)

'You may send a committee to see.'<sup>1</sup> Since all of those in the class wanted to have a part in the decision as to where the play should be given, they all went out for a walk around the campus in order to find a spot which would be a suitable place for dramatizing the parable. After a spot had been chosen, the children wrote invitations to several adults with whom they wished to share their play. Following this, the group gathered around the teacher to look at the pictures which some of the children had brought to help the entire class to dramatize the story. When the teacher asked: 'What shall we have in our street scene?', some one called attention to the street scene picture, and, seeing nets in the picture, suggested that tennis nets ought to be used in the setting for the street scene. During this conversation another child had been studying the plan of the play. At this time he asked: 'How much is a hin?' The teacher referred the question to another one of the group who volunteered to ask his father for the desired bit of information. Since a Bible dictionary was at hand, it was suggested that reference to that might be the best way of finding out about the point in question. The teacher asked two children to read chosen portions from Harold Hunting's book, Hebrew Life and Times, and from Grant's book, Life and Times of Jesus, in order to suggest ways in which the scene of the story might be arranged. When these books had been consulted and reports made, it was decided that merchants, judges, and wise men would likely sit in the market; that near to them would be a group of gossips; that the merchants and neighbors



would engage in bargaining, while the market itself would be held in front of a hole in the wall. As two of the members dramatized the dickering of the buyers, one junior let forth a loud snort and was forthwith descended upon quite severely by the leader. She tried to call attention to the law of good workmanship as it applied in this instance, but was rather unsuccessful in her attempt and realized that she had not dealt wisely with this interruption which ought to have been treated in a light, inconsequential fashion. When another group dramatized the action of the wise men the teacher referred to the wise man who taught Paul; since the children were not acquainted with him, one junior volunteered to find out about him and report at the time of the next session. The investigators reported their finds regarding the "kin" and the "kab" which had been discussed before. After this, specific planning was done regarding the various scenes and the children definitely decided as to just what properties they would use in their next playing.

At the opening of the next session replies to the invitations were read and then work was begun on the stage properties by the various groups. Comments heard by the teacher at that time included the following remarks.

'We'd really write a better play now.'

'Well, I'll be the wise man....I'm going to make me a long pipe like that one in the picture.'

'I'll carry a water jar as that lady is doing.'

'Gamaliel was the wise man who taught Paul; father read where<sup>the</sup>

Bible said that Paul sat at his feet!'

Several days later when the children gave their play, the school room was quite like a workshop in appearance during the early part of the forenoon as the final preparations were being made. Before the dramatization was given the girls stitched busily away on their costumes, while the boys brought in benches for the guests to sit on and arranged the properties. In connection with the production of the play at this time the teacher told the story of a camp fire girl who had been faithful to the end. (See Hartshorne's "Manual for Worship"). At the conclusion of the dramatization the teacher linked the message of the parable which had just been enacted with the task of putting away the borrowed things, saying: "He that is faithful in that which is least has a chance of becoming a master builder." As the children worked at putting things back they were quiet and orderly, evidencing that the experience had had a real effect upon them. "And so the play, with its attending problems and its education in attitudes, was over."<sup>1</sup>

#### E. A Dramatization of a Missionary Story

A group of junior children, after hearing the mission story-- "Who is My Neighbor,"<sup>2</sup> asked to play the story. The teacher declared that it could well be played and then asked the children how they thought they ought to begin it. One child said: "We couldn't begin at the beginning of the story because nothing happens in the first part." On being questioned further as to where the dramatization really should begin

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1. Danielson and Perkins: Teaching Without Text Books, p. 187
2. Cf. Harpers, Irene M.: The Golden Sparrow

the group decided that the best point was where the two boys ran from the car to get a drink of water from the well. Then the teacher suggested that the children think thru the story from that point on to the very end and then decide just what events should be chosen for the play and also consider the number of scenes needed to represent the chosen events. It was after a short period of silence during which each one was to think out his plan for the play, that the various plans were suggested and discussed. As a result of this, the class at last decided to include nine events which might all be represented in one scene. After the children had decided just what each scene was to contain, they proceeded to act out the first one. As the teacher named the various characters there were volunteers for each part and those remaining without specific roles were chosen to represent the crowd. As far as scenery and properties were concerned, it was agreed to let a chair represent the well and to think of the automobile (mentioned in the story) as being off-stage.

After these decisions had been reached, the children played thru the first scene, using their own words and without any comment from the teacher. When this preliminary playing was over, the teacher said: "Now, let's sit down and talk about it." As the children gathered around her to discuss their work these comments were made by various members of the group: "Teacher, John missed the point of the story." Some one else added: "We couldn't hear a single word that Jimmie said, and besides, the man who was supposed to be hurt didn't act at all like an injured man." After listening quietly to these comments which were all rather negative and destructive in their tone, the teacher asked: "What parts did you like best of all?"

Then, when the children had considered the good points present in the first playing the teacher said: "In what ways can we make it better in the second playing?" With that thought in mind the story was re-played, each child assuming a new part. After this second playing the children paused again to discuss what they had just done, giving special attention to the harmony between each character and the story as a whole. They raised such points as these: "Do we all understand just why the two boys hesitate about helping their father?" "From the way that we played the story could anyone watching us tell that it happened in India?" Another person asked: "Does the injured man's last speech make the story as impressive as it ought to be?"

At the time of this first meeting the story was played through several times, each child having a different part at each playing. Under the guidance of the teacher the boys and girls were constantly on the alert to make suggestions which would make the play much more complete than at the outset of the undertaking. The final production with its carefully planned wording and action was the children's own creation, and in view of that, they were eager to present it to the rest of the junior department. They decided that in view of this "public performance" they ought to have costumes. This led to a study of the clothing worn in India and in connection with this study the children learned to wind their own turbans and to drape their own garments. Before the play was given, the more advanced members of the group wrote out the

words as they were spoken in order that the class might have a permanent record of the play.<sup>1</sup>

#### F. A Dramatization of the Christmas Story

At Christmas time a group of junior children were eager to dramatize the Shepherd Story. As they began work on it one member of the group made this suggestion: "Mary can hold her arms out and make-believe that she is showing the baby Jesus to the shepherds." After the shepherds had been chosen one of them declared: "We can play that the larger hymn books are our sheep." Another child added: "All of us can sleep, except just one who should stay awake to watch." When the time came for the angel's song, the children making up the angel chorus, rose from their place behind the piano and sang their song which awakened the sleeping shepherds. Following this song, one of the shepherds said: "Let's all go to Bethlehem and see this baby whom the angels told us about." One of the players, picking up a hymn book said: "I'll take a lamb with me." Just at that point some one asked: "What did the shepherds do with their sheep?" When the leader confessed that she didn't know, one of the children answered: "They knew that they could trust God to watch their sheep, or maybe the angels looked after them for a little while." The juniors moved very quietly to the corner designated as the stable where Mary sat with arms encircled as if holding a baby. Someone asked softly: "Shall we kneel?" and in reply the leader nodded. After the "lamb" had been given to Joseph

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1. Cf. Lobingier: op. cit., pp. 3-6

the shepherds rose to return again to their flocks. When they had seated themselves again, one of them asked: "Shouldn't we sing now?" There followed a quiet consideration of an appropriate song and then the group chose "Silent Night" revealing as they sang that "the story had become their imperishable possession, and that they had shared in some mystic sense the wonder and the adoration of the shepherds."<sup>1</sup>

#### G. A Dramatization of the Life of Joseph

Since the story of Joseph is one which is frequently dramatized by junior children, it is of importance to include Miss Miller's report of her experience in working it out with a children's dramatic club connected with the Sunday School of the Hyde Park of the Church of the Disciples in Chicago.

At the outset the story was told to the children in a version which was closely akin to the Biblical account and the children were then asked to choose the outstanding events in Joseph's life. They spoke of his early life in Canaan, his sale into Egypt, his experiences in Potiphar's house, his imprisonment, his gift of interpreting dreams, his rulership in Egypt, the famine and the visit of his family. It seemed to all of the children that a great many scenes, perhaps as many as seven or eight would be necessary if they were to portray the story adequately. After several members of the group had described the first scene in detail, volunteers came forward to act it out. In the successive playings it was done naturally and spontaneously by changing groups of children. Each playing varied somewhat, since no two groups interpreted

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1. Cf. Brockway: op. cit., p. 126

~~ing it~~ the words of the story in just the same way. Those who were not actively engaged in the dramatization were alert to give suggestions for improvement during the discussion period which followed each playing. At these times the criticisms came from the children directed and guided by the leader's questions.

Since the meetings of the club were only an hour long, there was time to work on but one scene at a meeting. Because of this, the children were asked to think thru the story during the week in order to have the details of the second and third scenes clearly in mind when they returned on the following Sunday afternoon. When the next meeting was held at that time, these later scenes were worked thru in much the same way as the first scene. At the time of the following session, the scenes connected with Joseph's Egyptian experiences were roughly sketched and blocked out by the children who made up their own words as they progressed with the play. An observer would have felt that the language was exceedingly modern for a Biblical play, yet this was inevitable, for the emphasis up to that point had been primarily upon thought and action, rather than upon the phrasing of the speeches. Four of the older girls in the group, dissatisfied with the wording of the play, volunteered to write out the play in different phraseology. At the next meeting they read their version of the play to the children who saw several needless repetitions and overlappings of material. After that the entire group turned to a careful study of the play in order to omit any unnecessary portions and to choose only the essential scenes for inclusion in the final form of the play, which form the

older children began to write out.

At the time of the fifth meeting of the club the children and the leader took into consideration the work which had been done outside of the class room on the wording of the play, and using that work as a basis, gave special attention to the speeches, trying to make them as much like the Bible as possible. This was not a very difficult process, for the children knew thoroughly the thought of the story through their repeated experiences in dramatizing it.

When they met again they made a conscious effort to interpret the parts in a better fashion at each playing; they used definite words with freedom and ease, since the thought of the story had been very real to them long before they had turned to any set speeches. When several children volunteered for the same part it was decided that each volunteer might learn the part which he had chosen and then interpret it to the best of his ability at the next meeting of the club. At that next meeting the final cast was voted upon by the children themselves. Thus, in that way, there was no unpleasant feeling in the minds of those not cast since they were much more ready to accept such a choice from the group than from the leader. The individuals who could not be utilized in the speaking parts were given places in the caravan or in Pharaoh's court in order that they might still feel themselves a vital part of the activity.

After eight or nine meetings the play was practically finished. The children wore simple slip costumes with bright sashes and appropriate



headgear which they had been wearing at all of the practices. The boy who played the part of Pharaoh was gaily dressed and wore numerous ornaments which he had made for himself from gilt paper. The stage settings, all made by the children, were very simple, based on designs from the lotus. In working out these details Tissot's Bible pictures were found to be very helpful aids. Joseph's ten brothers carried staffs which they themselves had fashioned from the limbs of trees. All such articles of costuming and stage setting were used at the rehearsals and were found entirely adequate in providing the appropriate atmosphere for the story. When the children felt that the play represented the culmination of their best efforts, they invited their friends to one of their regular meetings where they were to give it. A number of days before the final performance four of those who had leading roles were taken ill and could not play their parts. In view of this, four others, who had minor roles, assumed the larger parts and handled them without any difficulty whatsoever, feeling that it was only natural to do this thing. The play was well given at the time of the final production and was characterized by a spirit of reverence and dignity.

Thru the dramatization of this story of Joseph, the children who participated in it gained a new freedom and ease in expressing themselves, a self-confidence unspoiled by conceit, and the ability to cooperate with others in their club group. In particular it was observed that several children who had been timid overcame some of their shyness, while one girl, inclined to be over confident regarding her own ability,

found that there were others who could surpass her interpretation of a particular part. It is certain that the children who participated in this dramatic activity will never forget it, for several years afterward a number of them referred to the play with great joy. At that later time they indicated that Joseph has been one of their favorite characters ever since they actually lived thru some of his experiences when they played the story of his life.<sup>1</sup>

### III. Summary

In the above accounts, which tell of the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child, there are certain outstanding emphases revealed by the various writers. At this time it is well to list those emphases which seem to be of paramount importance when considered in the light of the previously discussed theories set forth by modern religious educators.

Those emphases which bear a relation to the principles of dramatization considered in the foregoing chapters may be listed as follows:

1. The children entered naturally into the dramatic activity as it grew out of their other classroom activities and was an integral part of their entire program of religious education.

2. The children themselves arranged the material in dramatic form, choosing the scenes and the setting as well as phrasing the speeches.

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1. Cf. Miller, Elizabeth: The Dramatization of Bible Stories, pp. 17-34

3. The children looked to their leader as guide and counsellor, but never as dictator.

4. The children had a wide experience of the story dramatized since each member of the group had an opportunity to take different parts in the different playings.

5. The children invited an audience because they wished to share the results of their best efforts to interpret a favorite story.

6. The children entered whole heartedly into the dramatic activity and created an atmosphere of dignity and reverence.

7. The children first achieved an understanding of the scriptural material and put this into their own words; then when the Biblical phraseology had thus acquired meaning for them it was employed in their dramatization.

Those emphases which bear a relation to the objectives ~~sought~~ sought in the religious education of the junior child (as discussed in a previous chapter) may be listed as follows:

1. The children entered upon a widened field of interest and sympathy as they studied the customs, the dress, the manner of life, and the ideals of other peoples. (Right attitudes)

2. The children experienced the meaning of co-operation as they engaged in the production of a group project. (Skill in living)

3. The children were enabled to put facts and ideals into action. (Skill in living)

4. The children, in portraying heroes of the past, became

acquainted with these noble characters in such an intimate way as would tend to produce lasting effects upon their own lives. (Fruitful knowledge, right attitudes, skill in living)

5. The children developed a new knowledge and appreciation of art, hymnology, and literature as these were related to their dramatics and served to make them meaningful. (Fruitful knowledge, right attitudes)

6. The children learned to engage in positive, constructive group criticism and then to profit thereby. (Skill in living)

7. The children were eager to make their costumes, properties, and stage setting for their plays and were willing to enter upon the necessary preliminary study. (Fruitful knowledge)

8. The children were led by the teacher to see the relation between the dramatization and actual conduct. (Skill in living)

Thus, these points, which may be grouped according to principles and objectives, indicate that the theories set forth by modern educators regarding the use of the dramatic method coincide with the experiences of those who use this method in the religious education of the junior child; it is clear then, that the theories discussed in the earlier portion of this thesis are upheld by reports of life situations.

## Chapter VIII

### Reports of Four Experiments Conducted by the Writer in the Use of The Dramatic Method in the Religious Education of the Junior Child

#### I. Introduction

After a theoretical study of the dramatic method in relation to the religious education of the junior child, attention was then turned to practical aspects of the problem. In view of that, the preceding chapter included reports which have been made by modern religious educators regarding their use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child. An examination of these reports revealed that the theories set forth by modern writers are confirmed by their experiences in connection with the actual use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child. Now, at this time, the writer will present four accounts describing her experiences in the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child. This will be done in the light of the preceding data regarding the theoretical foundation and the empirical verification of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child.

#### II. Reports of the Writer's Use of the Dramatic Method in the Religious Education of the Junior Child

##### A. A Dramatization of the Christmas Story

The following dramatization of the Christmas story was worked out in the East Madison (Maine) Vacation Church School by a group of nine boys and girls of early junior age under the direction of the writer. Even though the children were all very familiar with the

details of the Christmas story, the writer re-told it before they began playing in order that they might better be able to interpret it dramatically.

### 1. The Story as Told

It was late on a December afternoon and already the sky was beginning to grow dark. As Mary and Joseph traveled along the road leading from their home to Bethlehem they looked anxiously at the darkening sky and hurried on, eager to reach the town before night time came. They walked as though they had come a long way and were very tired. Presently Mary spoke:

"It will be good to reach Bethlehem where we shall be able to rest. This long trip has made me feel tired and hungry."

In reply, Joseph said: "I think that we are fairly near to Bethlehem now. How good it will seem to have a comfortable room where we may spend the night. I just hope that we won't have any trouble about finding a room now at this busy time when so many people are also going to Bethlehem to have their names written in the king's big book."

Mary looked worried and shook her head doubtfully. "I was just thinking of that very thing. I'm afraid that the inn will be crowded full of people, who, like ourselves, want a place to stay. But, we shall just have to wait and see."

Mary and Joseph traveled on for some time and then at last they came to the little village of Bethlehem. They went to the inn, trying to find a room, but all of the rooms had been taken before

they got there. Joseph said to the landlord: "Is there a place in your inn for two weary travelers who have come a long way?" The landlord was impatient and answered sharply: "No indeed; the rooms in this house are all full."

He was about to slam the door when Joseph said: "Good sir, perhaps you have a place in the stable where we could lie down on the straw to sleep and where we could be sheltered from the cold."

When the landlord heard that, he looked at Mary, and seeing that she seemed very tired, his face softened a little and he said: "Yes, you may sleep in my stable for the night. I'll show you where it is if you will follow me."

Then Mary and Joseph followed the innkeeper as he led them toward the stable not far from the hotel. That night, there in the lowly stable, a very wonderful thing happened: the baby Jesus was born!

Not far away some shepherds were watching their flocks on the hillsides. As they sat around their little fire, they talked, saying things like this:

"This night is colder than usual."

"How good the warm fire feels."

"How clear and bright the sky looks tonight!"

"Just look and see that bright star overhead!"

"Yes, isn't it big. How very bright it is!"

Suddenly, one of the shepherds who was watching the star more intently than the rest called out: "Look! Look! The bright

star is growing brighter. See, look, there is an angel coming toward us ! Then, all of the shepherds fell to their faces in terror and amazement, for they saw a brilliant angel in the sky. Then, the angel, seeing how terrified the shepherds were, said:

"Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people."

The shepherds listened while the angel continued:

"There is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."

And just after the angel had finished saying that, the shepherds raised their eyes and saw many, many angels joining this one. Then the angel chorus sang these words:

"Glory to God in the highest  
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased."

After the angels had gone away into heaven the shepherds looked at each other, their eyes filled with wonder and joy. One of them said: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this baby whom the angels told us about." Then the shepherds left their flocks and hurrying along the road they soon reached the stable where the baby Jesus lay on his bed of straw. In love and adoration they fell down and worshipped him on that first Christmas eve.

## 2. The Story as Interpreted

After hearing the writer tell this story the children declared that in playing the story there should be four pictures-- the first one being on the road to Bethlehem, the second before the



landlord's door, the third around the shepherd's fire, and the fourth in the stable. Then they listed the characters as follows: Mary, Joseph, the innkeeper, and shepherds.

A boy and a girl were chosen for Mary and Joseph and then the playing of the story began. These two walked completely across the portion of playing space designated as the road without saying a word. The rest of the group were impatient with this silence and made suggestions as to what the conversation ought to include. With these suggestions in mind, Mary and Joseph began again, but found that they were moving too rapidly to allow time for much talking. In view of that they made a third attempt with much better results and with the formulation of lines like these:

Mary: I'll be glad when we get to Bethlehem; I want to stop and rest.

I'm tired and hungry.

Joseph: I wonder how far Bethlehem is. Do you suppose that we can find a place to stop?

Mary: I don't know. Probably the inns are crowded."

In planning the second scene it was decided to place the inn door in the center of the stage and to imagine that the stable was off to the left. The boy who volunteered to interpret the role of the innkeeper assumed a very lordly air and was properly brusque when accosted by the weary travelers. However, he showed a suggestion of gracious hospitality as he led them toward the warm stable. After a number of playings these words were evolved for the second scene:

Joseph: (speaking to the landlord) Can we have a place to sleep at your

inn?

Innkeeper: No, all the rooms are crowded full of people.

Joseph: Do you have a place in the stable where we can sleep?

Innkeeper: Yew, I'll show you where it is.

The six children who had not had part in these first two scenes were eager to take their places for the shepherd scene. As they acted it out they sat huddled around their imaginary fire in quite convincing fashion. Several devoted so much thought to "shivering" that they had to be reminded by the others in stage whispers to "say something." In discussing and playing through this incident the following lines were deemed appropriate to the situation:

1st. Shepherd: The fire feels warm. This is an awfully cold night.

2nd. Shepherd: See the big star.

3rd. Shepherd: Yes, it is a big star, and a bright one too.

4th. Shepherd: I see an angel.

5th. Shepherd: Yes, so do I, and it's coming nearer.

When it came to the matter of the angel's words the children suggested that the writer, standing behind the scenes, should recite the words from the Bible which had been included in the story, and that the shepherds should act as if they saw the angel in the sky above them, speaking and singing. The members of the class then insisted that the shepherds should show a goodly amount of surprise and joy, and then be very eager to go to Bethlehem to see the baby Jesus. This speech, made by the sixth shepherd, was expressive of the reaction of all of the group:

6th. Shepherd: Let's go to the place that these angels just told us about and then we can see the baby Jesus.

In connection with the playing of the fourth scene the children did not wish to use any words, but preferred to enact it in pantomime form, with a tableau effect at the close. Mary and Joseph sat in the center of the group appearing in this last scene, while the shepherds knelt on each side with their heads bowed as they worshipped the holy baby.

After playing the story through several successive meetings of the group in this vacation school class, the children expressed themselves as wishing to play this same story at the time of the vacation school program, held at the end of the week. That gave rise to a discussion of costumes and properties; in the end it was voted not to wear costumes, but to bring these properties; branches from trees as crooks for the shepherds, and a small blanket which Mary might hold in her arms to represent the baby Jesus. Several of the children were of the opinion that there should be some Christmas music somewhere in the story. After considering the matter they decided to ask the organist to play "Silent Night" very softly as the shepherds knelt in the last scene.

On the evening of the vacation school program these juniors were eager to share this interpretation of the Christmas story with their parents and friends. Before the dramatization there was no frantic haste to get into strange and difficult costumes, for there were none. The children had brought their own simple properties and

when the time came for the story they took their places without a trace of self consciousness and without a tremor of nervousness about any lines which might be forgotten. The playing of the story went forward as simply and as spontaneously as it had in the repeated classroom dramatizations. When the final tableau was reached, there was a reverent hush throughout the audience for everyone realized that the children were participating in a genuine worship experience as they dramatized the Christmas story.

#### B. A Dramatization of the Parable of the Good Samaritan

This dramatization of the parable of the Good Samaritan which follows, was worked out by a group of junior boys in one of the clubs of the Lieutenant White Neighborhood House. At the outset of the period the writer announced that she had a story which boys usually liked to act out and that after hearing the story, they might play it if they wished. Most of them showed interest in that proposition and listened quite attentively as the writer told the following story.

##### 1. The Story As Told

One day a lawyer came to Jesus and asked him this question: "Good Teacher, what shall I do in order to go to heaven when I die?"

Jesus responded: "What does the Bible say about it?"

The lawyer thought for a moment and then replied: "The Bible says: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.'"

"That is right.", answered Jesus. "If you do those things you will surely go to heaven when you die."

But still, the lawyer was not quite satisfied, and he asked still another question: "Who is my neighbor?" Instead of answering him directly, Jesus told him a story which I shall re-tell to you, using my own words and using my imagination to fill in details.

One day a man lay face downward by the side of the lonely road which runs between Jerusalem and Jericho. He groaned and writhed as though he were in terrible pain; one arm was under his head and the other was flung out above his head and he opened and closed his hand as people do when they are suffering. Not far from him there stood the robbers who had attacked him; they were counting the money which they had taken from him and rejoicing in their evil deed. Then they stole away to lie in hiding until some other poor traveler came past whom they might rob in the same way.

For some moments after the robbers went away the wounded man lay twisting and moaning. Presently a priest came walking by; his hands were folded in front of him; his eyes were cast upon the ground; suddenly he saw the wounded man. For just a moment he paused and looked down at him; then, shrugging his shoulders in disgust, and gathering his rich temple robes about him, he hurried on. Not long after he had passed, a Levite appeared. In his hands he carried a scroll on which was written a hymn which he was singing as he walked

along. Suddenly he stopped his singing and stared in surprise at the wounded man by the roadside. After pausing for just a minute he shook his head and then walked on, resuming his song where he had left off. All the while the traveler was suffering from the wounds which the robbers had inflicted upon him. He began to think that he would surely die before anyone would come and help him to an inn where he might be taken care of. Then, as he turned his head to one side he caught sight of a Samaritan man coming over the brow of a hill. But that didn't give him any hope, because he felt sure that since he was a Jew, a Samaritan would not even consider helping him. (In those days the Samaritans and Jews didn't feel very friendly toward each other.) Then, imagine his astonishment when the Samaritan actually stopped, knelt by his side and said: "My poor man, what has happened to you?"

The traveler answered: "Robbers. Robbers came and grabbed me, beat me, took away my money and left me here all alone by the roadside to die."

Then the Samaritan, placing his hand under the traveler's head, raised him to a sitting position and gave him a drink of water. Then he said: "Now that you have had a drink of cool water and feel better, just lean on me and I'll take you to an inn where you will be taken care of until you are well again."

"Yes, but I haven't any money to pay the innkeeper; the robbers took all that I had."

"That doesn't matter because I will pay the landlord."

Slowly the two men walked down the road toward the nearest

hotel. When the innkeeper saw them coming he ran out to meet them and to help the wounded man. The Samaritan said: "My friend was attacked by robbers as he traveled between Jerusalem and Jerico; they took his money and left him half dead by the roadside. I have brought him here to your hotel, asking you to take care of him until he is well. Today I will pay you two shillings and if it costs any more than that for his room and meals, I will pay the rest when I come this way again."

That day as the good Samaritan went on his journey the traveler watched him through the hotel window and then said to the landlord: "That man was a real neighbor because he helped me when I was in need."

After Jesus finished telling this story he said to the lawyer: "Who was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers - the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan?" In an instant the lawyer replied: "Why, the Samaritan, of course, because he showed kindness to the one who needed help." Jesus' final advice was very brief: "Go thou and do likewise."

## 2. The Story as Interpreted

As soon as this story was concluded, the writer found that all of the boys in the club were eager to begin playing the story. The responses took the form of the following discussion:

"Where did the story happen?" asked the leader.

"Out in the street in a forest where there were lots of trees."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because the robbers hid behind the trees and then jumped out at the traveler."

"What else besides trees would you include in a picture of

this story,"

"Stones and bushes."

"A road because the man was traveling when the robbers got him."

"Who was in the story?"

"Robbers, a traveler, a priest, and a Levite?"

"Was there any one else?"

"A Samaritan and an innkeeper."

"Let us think what each of these people did.. Where shall the robbers stand and what shall they do?"

"They ought to stand over at one side, counting their moeny and talking."

"Where is the traveler?"

"Lying in the road."

"Where is the road?"

"Running the long way of the room."

"Who comes by first and how does he act?"

"The Priest; he walks real slow; he has his hands folded like we do in church."

"Yes, and he just looks at the traveler and then goes right past him way over on the other side."

"Who comes next?"

With difficulty came the response: "The Levite; he carried a scroll and he was singing a hymn. He shrugged his shoulders and went right on when he saw the traveler."

"Who was the last person to come by?"



"The Samaritan; he gave the man a drink and took him to the innkeeper. He told the innkeeper that he would pay for the man's room and eats."

"What did the traveler say when the Samaritan left the inn and went on his journey again?"

"He said that the Samaritan was a good man."

"Yes, and he said that the Samaritan had been good to him."

After several questions the word "neighbor" came to light, although it had not made a deep impression on these boys of East Side New York where "neighbor" is a practically unknown concept. Following this discussion some of the boys volunteered for various parts and then nominated others to support them in playing the story. Then, the first playing was undertaken with a great deal of attendant noise and argument. Each boy told everyone else what to do; some of these suggestions, given so freely, were heeded, but most of them were completely ignored. In the midst of the playing, Frank, an additional member of the club, came in late and was immediately made a member of the cast by the boys who hastened to explain what they were doing and what his part should be. During this preliminary dramatization the leader said very little, merely asking questions such as these as she guided the procedure: "How does the wounded man lie?" "What does he do with his hands?" "What does the Samaritan ask him? What does he tell the Samaritan?" All directions were thus given through the members of the group as they answered these questions. In this first experience of dramatizing the story it was evident that all of the boys clearly

understood the entire meaning of the story, although their portrayal of it was far from artistic or complete. At the close of the first playing the writer gathered the players around her in a circle to discuss the work which had just been done. When the writer asked: "Do you want to play it again?" the group voted unanimously in the affirmative.

"If we play it again, what can we do to make it better?"

"We ought to have costumes like they did in the Christmas pageant here at the Neighborhood House."

"Yes, and the costumes ought to be real long." (Followed by descriptive gestures)

"And purple."

"Yes, and we ought to have a bottle of water for the Samaritan and a scroll for the Levite. I know just<sup>how</sup> that should be fixed. "  
( A demonstration was immediately made with a piece of paper lying near and a repeated reference to the Christmas pageant.)

"We would have to have some money, too."

"Even though we had all of those things that you mention, would there still be anything that we could do to make our playing better?"

"Make it longer by having more speeches; then too, we ought to show the part where the man is caught and beaten."

So much eagerness was in evidence in regard to this violent aspect of the incident that the writer referred to the course of the

story as originally told and suggested that it might be as well to adhere to the order of this story in the dramatization. Since this seemed satisfactory to the group they re-played the story in the above form, making a few changes in the cast. Since the group was small several doubles were necessary at both playings and that necessity meant an added element of confusion at each time. The hour came to an end before the third playing began and the group reluctantly left.

### C. A Dramatization of Moses in the Bulrushes

The following account tells of the dramatization of the story about Moses in the bulrushes as it was initiated and carried on in a group of junior girls in the Lieutenant White Neighborhood House. When the writer approached the group she asked the girls if they were in the habit of dramatizing stories in school. Since the response was in the affirmative, she told the group that she knew a story which they might like to act out, and then she proceeded to tell the story.

#### 1. The Story As Told

The king was seated on his throne; all about him were his servants and courtiers and advisors, ready to do his bidding. When the king began to speak everyone leaned forward to listen. This is what he was saying:

"As the years go by the children of Israel become more and more numerous here in the land of Egypt. Why, before we know it they will be stronger and more powerful than we Egyptians. We must do something right away before they rise up and overpower us."

For a minute no one said a word; then one of the chief advisors

who was very old and considered very wise spoke up and said: "I don't see what more we can do. We make the lives of the children of Israel just as hard as we possibly can. We make them work long hours building palaces and roads for us and working in our fields."

For a minute everyone was quiet again; then another adviser spoke: "O King, I beg of you to treat these people kindly. It is wrong for us to be so cruel to them. Let us treat them kindly and..."

The king would listen no longer and he cried out in disgust: "Treat them kindly? Treat them kindly? I should think not! We have been too kind to them. It is high time that we destroyed them. I know what I shall do. I shall command that every baby boy among the Israelites be killed."

Not far away from the king's palace there was a small home where an Israelite family lived. One day, about three months after the king had made his wicked decree, the mother sat rocking her baby to sleep. He was crying and she was anxiously trying to quiet him. When he was finally asleep she said to his sister Miriam: "For three months we have been able to hide our baby so that the king's soldiers didn't find him and kill him. But I don't see how we shall be able to hide him any longer. He is so big and cries so loudly that they will be sure to find him. Whatever shall we do?"

Miriam looked sad and shook her head sorrowfully, for she fully realized the danger. As she looked at her mother she saw that her mother's face brightened as though she had found a way out of the difficulty.

Then her mother spoke: "Miriam, we can hide the baby in a basket down by the river's brink. The king's men would never think to look there for him. Go into the other room and bring me the basket that I may cover it with pitch and put soft cushions into it. Then, as soon as the baby wakes up we'll go and hide him."

A few hours later the mother and daughter took the tiny baby to the brink of the river. As they stood on the bank the mother said: "We can't leave him here all alone. Will you stay and watch his basket to see that nothing happens to him?"

Miriam loved the little brother dearly and she was happy to think that they had at last found a way to save the baby from harm, so she said: "Yes, mother, I shall be glad to stay here and make sure that no harm comes to little brother."

Then the mother placed the basket in the tall rushes by the river bank, said a little prayer to God asking Him to bless the baby, and then, after kissing him softly, went home while Miriam stayed by to watch.

She had not been watching long when she saw the beautiful princess and her maidens coming down to the water. The princess said: "How clear and lovely the water looks today. Listen, what do I hear? It sounds as though a baby were crying. Look around and see if there is a baby around here anywhere."

The maidens looked and one found the little basket and brought it to the princess. She looked in and exclaimed: "What a beautiful little baby! He is smiling now; I believe that I shall adopt him because I have found him."

When Miriam heard the princess say that she stepped forward from her place of hiding and said: "Do you want me to find someone to help you to take care of the baby, O princess?"

The princess answered: "Yes, I will need a nurse and you may find me one if you can."

Miriam said: "I'll be back here with one in just a few minutes."

Miriam ran very fast until she came to their home and then she called out to her mother: "Mother, mother, I have good news for you. The princess found our baby and wants to take him for her own son. She needs someone to take care of him and I told her that I would find someone. Come quickly, mother, because she is waiting."

When Miriam and her mother reached the river bank the princess asked: "Will you take care of this baby for me? I will pay you good wages because I want him well cared for."

Then, when the princess and her maidens went on ahead to the palace Moses's mother knelt to pick the basket from the river's brink. While she was on her knees she thanked God for taking care of Moses and for saving his life.

## 2. The Story as Interpreted

As soon as the writer finished telling this story these comments were made by the girls:

"I've heard that story before."

"Teacher, let me be king."

"No, Teacher, I want to be the king."

"Marie was the mother in our play at school; she ought to be Moses' mother."

"Teacher, what can we have for the grass and river? I don't see how we can play that part."

In the midst of so much zeal it was easy to question the group about the fundamental points of the story beginning with a consideration of the number of scenes and their location. Several girls insisted that three scenes were sufficient but the majority vote was cast in favor of five which were to be as follows:

Scene I - The King's Palace

Scene II - An Israelite Cottage

Scene III- The River Bank

Scene IV - An Israelite Cottage

Scene V - The River Bank

When the characters were named and discussed each girl in the group stoutly declared that she wanted to be king. In order to settle the dispute, the writer named the girl at her left as king, which decision seemed entirely satisfactory to the girls, who, without further dissension proceeded to choose the rest of the cast. When this had been done, the girls took their places, the king seating himself on a chair (throne) in the center of the playing space; two attendants stood behind the throne while the two advisors stood out front. For a minute after placement there was a little uncertainty as to words, but with mutual aid, the following lines were gradually evolved, with discussion on several points,

King: Them Israelites are getting stronger and stronger all the time. We just got to do something about it. Pretty soon they'll take my kingdom.

1st Adviser: We ought to make them work harder and harder.

2nd Adviser: Oh, no, king; don't treat them so mean. They have been working hard for us; they build pavements and raise corn. Why don't you treat them kind?

King: (Shouting) No, I'm going to make them work harder and harder. I got an idea! Every baby has got to be killed!

Just at this point there was a protest from the other members of the club who felt that the king had made a grave mistake in stating the facts; they speedily informed him that the baby boys among the Israelites were the only ones who were to be killed. When this error had been corrected the girls considered the first scene ended and then discussed their playing of it, making suggestions for improvement. It was decided to have the attendants fan the king as they stood behind him. The king picked up a coat and said: " This will be my robe." At that, several looked round for something suitable for a sceptre, but since nothing was in sight the king decided to hold out his arm to indicate that he had a sceptre. At the second playing improvements were made in both speeches and in action.

In playing the next scene the king's throne became a mother's rocking chair. Several girls wanted a doll or coat to represent the baby Moses, but the mother was utterly content to encircle her arms as if she were holding a baby. As the scene progressed these speeches were made:

Miriam: Mother, what shall we do with the baby?

Mother: Go and bring me a basket from the other room. Then I can cover it with pitch and put it in the tall reeds down by the river."



When Miriam returned with an imaginary basket she said in an aside: "This isn't any good. We ought to have a real basket."

Then Miriam and the mother walked to the left of the stage, considering that the river ran across the end of the stage. When the mother placed the basket at one side one of the spectators remarked: "We ought to have some real grass and weeds. Maybe we could make them out of paper." Since no one else in the group appeared to be of the same mind, the suggestion died a natural death.

After the basket had been deposited by the river the mother said: "Now Miriam, will you stay here and watch it?"

Miriam : Yes, mother, I'll be glad to.

With that remark she squatted down on the floor to watch. The girls were so eager to play the rest of the story that the princess and her attendants were at the riverbank almost before the mother had left. When the princess began by saying: "I hear a baby crying..." one of the players broke in with the reminder: "You should say first-- 'How pretty the water looks!'" The princess took the suggestion in good spirit, and after repeating the phrase, parrot-like, went on with her speech, bidding her maidens to bring the basket. As she held it in her arms she and her two maidens let forth excited exclamations of "Oh," and "Ah," remarking upon the beauty of the baby. Then Miriam popped out from her hiding place and called: "I'll get a nurse for the baby." She rushed into the cottage and exclaimed: "Mother, Mother, I got good news for you. The princess found our baby in the water and wants

him for her son. I told her that I'd get a nurse to take care of him. Hurry, mother, she's waiting."

In haste the two approached the river bank. There, this conversation took place:

Princess: Will you be the nurse for this child?

Mother of Moses: Yes, I'll be glad to.

Then the princess and her maidens left for the palace while the mother dropped to her knees and bowed her head, thanking God for saving her baby.

The girls were eager to replay the story and asked a guest to come in and watch them repeat it. This second playing showed improvement, but they were conscious of imperfections in their interpretations, for they asked the guest to criticize their work. She said that she thought that the words and actions were good, but that the characters didn't fully enter into their parts. With that thought in mind they re-played the story, perfecting it in many respects and enacting it with greater sincerity. Several expressed themselves as feeling that costumes and properties would be a help in making the story seem more real. Since the period was over by that time no further playing was possible.

#### D. A Junior Pageant for Children's Day

A committee in the Solon (Maine) Congregational Church School chose Elizabeth Edland's pantomime, "The Passerby and the Flowers" as the material to be used in the Children's Day program. Following this choice they adapted it somewhat and changed it into pageant form so that it read as follows:

## 1. The Pageant as Written

## THE PASSERBY AND THE FLOWERS

(Adaptation of a pantomime by Elizabeth Edland)

## "Cast of Characters:

Anemone  
 Sister Flower  
 Disciples  
 Trees  
 Flowers of the Field  
 Children  
 Mothers  
 Boys  
 Breeze  
 Sun

Reader: Very slowly a flower by the roadside opened her petals for a first peep at the great out of doors. She wondered what she could see. As the petals opened wider and wider rays of light darted in between them.

(During this speech Anemone rises slowly and begins to unfold her petals. As she does so, the Sun moves a little closer to her and tries to see what she is doing.)

Anemone: My, how wonderful the world is! You funny, skipping little shadows, let me come and play with you!

Sister Flower: Hush, a minute! Children and mothers and babies are coming down the road. We always listen to hear what passers by say. That is how we get the news and carry it back to the other flowers in the field, who, otherwise, would not know what happened in the world.

Reader: The small flower stood up as straight and tall as she could and looked and listened as hard as she could, for never had she seen mothers and children and babies passing by.

(Mothers and children enter right. Eager procession, pantomime talk. The grouping is uneven and the movement very deliberate.)

Sister Flower: Listen carefully!

Anemone: What are they saying?

Sister Flower: They are talking of Jesus of Nazareth who always smiles at little children and who knows and loves the flowers of the field. They say that he is passing by this way, and they want to see him. The mothers want him to place his hands on the babies' heads and the boys and girls want to listen to his stories.  
(Exit last of procession.)

Anemone: Oh, sister, look! Way down the road I see men coming. One of them seems very different. He is all in white and he has a kind face like a man who loves little children and the flowers of the field. And look, sister, the children are running to him and gathering around him and he is smiling at them.  
(During this speech both flowers look off stage as if seeing that which Anemone's speech describes.)

Sister Flower: That, little Anemone, is Jesus.

Anemone: I wonder, tall sister, if Jesus would smile upon me too. I think that I shall go to him.  
(At this time little Anemone ran down the road. The sister flower watched her for a few minutes and then before the sister flower could answer, little Anemone was gone. The sister watched for a few moments and then noticed that some of Jesus' friends walked ahead of him.)

First Friend: I cannot understand why he should wish to spend time with children.

Second Friend: Yes, and there are so many grown up people who need him.

Third Friend: Perhaps he knows that some day the children will be grown up people just like us and he wants to teach them how to do things for him.

(Boys enter.)

First Boy: My father saw him heal a man who had a withered arm.

Second Boy: And once, when I was by the lake, he took my lunch and fed five thousand people with it. How can he do such wonderful things?

Third Boy: Well, you know, he worked and studied hard until he was thirty years old and all of the time he was helping other people.

Fourth Boy: On another day he told a great crowd of us stories to show us what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

Fifth Boy: Many people follow him because they love to hear his kind words and to be near him.

Sixth Boy: He is very wonderful because he is able to quiet the stormy sea and high winds.

Reader: The sister flower had almost forgotten her little companion. Quickly she turned to see where she was, and then her leaves absolutely still. Jesus was standing before the little Anemone who stood so straight and tall with her face upturned and smiling. And the figure in white leaned over, and ever so gently touched the white petals with the tips of his fingers. In another moment he had passed and when the little Anemone came back, the two flowers watched him as he joined his companions and disappeared down the road.

(During the last part of this speech, little Anemone returns and the two flowers watch off stage left.)

Reader: Soon all of the flowers of the field knew that Jesus had passed by and that he had blessed and told stories to the children and mothers and babies. And so happy were they that they sang part of his story over and over again as the breeze swayed them back and forth. Even the flowers in the far corner of the field sang, and the tiny green leaves on the tips of the tree tops. This was their song!

The children,  
The children,  
For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

The children,  
The children,  
For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

## 2. The Pageant as Interpreted

After making this choice and adaptation, the committee selected the cast which was made up of twenty-one junior children, five kindergarten children, and one adult. In beginning the work on this pageant, the writer called a meeting of the junior children and the adult chosen for the cast, and informally told them the story of the pageant, reading a few of the speeches. All appeared to be enthusiastic about their parts and the writer agreed to give them copies of their lines on the following day since the pageant was to be produced on the coming Sunday.

On the next day (Monday, June 8) the entire group (including the kindergarten children) met to receive their lines, read them over, and walk through the pageant two or three times. In this preliminary rehearsal

the chief emphasis was upon the setting and the various exits and entrances while little attention was given to lines. Before the time of the second rehearsal the writer coached a number of the children on their speeches, endeavoring to make the meaning clear and to develop an appreciation of the entire drama.

When the children met for the second rehearsal on Wednesday, June 19, it was discovered that they remembered very well the details worked out at the last rehearsal and that their action was, for the most part, excellent. Hence, the major portion of the hour was devoted to a study of the speeches, both singly and in relation to the whole play, this being done with a view of stressing the true significance of what was being portrayed. After the rehearsal was over the writer talked with the children about costumes and found that they were all eager to know what they were going to wear. Those taking the parts of people volunteered to bring blankets, table runners, scarfs, and bits of old tapestry which might be utilized for Oriental costumes. The writer then described the costumes to be worn by the flowers, trees, sun, and breeze.

The third rehearsal was held on Saturday, June 13 and served to round out the work on the pageant. At that time all of the children wore their costumes and took great delight in them. It was evident that the pageant had taken on a great deal more reality for them when they were dressed in a way appropriate for the parts which they were playing. The Breeze, who had been inclined to be inattentive and to miss his

cue assumed a serious look of responsibility as he waited intently for his turn after he had donned the long gray streamers which transformed him from a junior boy into a breeze. Special stress was placed upon the reverent atmosphere of the entire play, telling as it did about Jesus' life here on earth among people.

When the pageant was produced on the following Sunday, June 14, the technical features ran fairly smoothly, but most important of all was the attitude evidenced by the children as they quietly slipped on their costumes and took their places. They enacted the pageant with seriousness, dignity, and utter lack of self-consciousness, showing that they felt that it was not a "show" but a worship service instead.

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#### Costumes:

A. People (Including the mother, the children, the disciples, and the boys): Blankets, bathrobes, scarfs, table runners, tapestry pieces, all appropriately draped to suggest Biblical dress.

B. Trees, Flowers, Sun, and Breeze: Long slip dresses of dark green cambric, caught about at the waist with a narrow sash of the same material; flower's caps--of brightly colored crepe paper, the trees, the same kind of cap, only in green; the sun, a cap of orange, and the breeze a cap of gray.

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### III. Summary

At the conclusion of the previous chapter it was noted that there were certain underlying emphases running thru the reports made by various

modern religious educators regarding their experiences in connection with the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child. It was discovered that these emphases could be classified in terms of the principles and objectives discussed in previous chapters. Now, at the close of the above accounts, in which the writer has described her own experiences in connection with the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child, it is fitting to summarize in this same fashion the principles and objectives involved:

Those emphases which bear a relation to the principles of dramatization discussed in preceding sections may be listed as follows:

1. The children seized eagerly upon an opportunity to give expression to their dramatic impulse.
2. The children entered upon the dramatizations in a spirit of reverence.
3. The children proceeded to dramatize in a manner in accord with their normal processes of free expression.
4. The children dramatized materials which were adapted to the instinctive tendencies and to the mental characteristics peculiar to their age.
5. The children (under the guidance of the writer) criticized and judged their own work, making suggestions for its improvement.
6. The children wished to share their playing of the story with other people.
7. The children felt that costumes and properties would add to the reality of their dramatization.



8. The children regarded the writer as a guide and counsellor rather than as a dictator who laid down the law regarding their activity.

9. The children showed a constant improvement in action and in wording as they proceeded to re-play the story.

10. The children received a written copy of the prepared play only after they had become thoroughly familiar with the meaning and the movement of the entire play.

Those emphases which bear a relation to the objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child (as discussed before) may be listed as follows:

1. The children gained a first-hand contact with Biblical language and situations in a way which was meaningful for them. (Fruitful knowledge)
2. The children acquired an understanding of Biblical customs and situations as they pertained to an interpretation of the materials dramatized. (Fruitful knowledge)
3. The children felt a sympathetic appreciation of other peoples as they put themselves into their situations. (Right attitudes)
4. The children felt a new reverence for Biblical materials as they played the stories. (Right attitudes)
5. The children experienced the meaning of co-operative living as they worked together on a common project. (Skill in living)
6. The children, in portraying noble characters, came to know

them in an intimate fashion which would tend to leave indelible impressions in their own characters. (Skill ~~in~~ living)

In the light of these accounts (in which the above principles and objectives are apparent) the writer, on the basis of such personal experience, is led to confirm the theories and practices described by modern religious educators regarding the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child.

## CONCLUSION

### I. The Purpose of the Present Study Re-stated

As was stated in the introduction, the purpose of the present study has been to criticize the dramatic method from the standpoint of theory and of practice with a view of ascertaining its rightful place in relation to the religious education of the junior child.

### II. Answers to Questions Raised in the Introduction to the Present Study

At the outset of this study the writer listed certain major questions constituting the heart of the problem under consideration--the dramatic method in relation to the religious education of the junior child. In the light of the foregoing evidence gleaned from the writings of modern religious educators the following answers were found to the previously stated questions:

1. Historical evidence regarding the use of drama in religious education is of such a nature as to justify the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child.

2. Psychological data regarding the nature of the junior child and regarding the constituent elements of the dramatic impulse serve to confirm the validity of the dramatic method in relation to the religious education of the junior child.

3. According to a study of materials found in modern textbooks regarding the objectives sought in the religious education of the junior child and the outcomes achieved thru the use of the dramatic method, it is evident that this method is an effective means of

realizing the objectives desired in the religious education of the junior child, namely, fruitful knowledge, right attitudes, and skill in living.

4. Modern religious educators declare that these guiding principles should govern the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child: Dramatic activity employed in the religious education of the junior child must always be child centered in every respect; must be graded in respect to the child's instinctive tendencies and in respect to his mental characteristics; must be adapted to the individual child with respect to his entire program of religious education and with respect to his normal process of free expression.

5. Modern religious educators declare that these principles should govern the choice and use of dramatic material in the religious education of the junior child:

a) Biblical material should not involve a representation of Deity, should be within the range of the child's understanding and ability of expression, should be of such a nature that the center of interest is upon ethical action and should give the child a Christian conception of God. Biblical language should be interpreted and adapted, Biblical history and customs should be studied, Biblical themes should be clarified and the Biblical spirit should be preserved.

b) Missionary material should adhere to truth, should give a fair representation of other races and should not involve situations

too difficult to reproduce.

c) Historical, Literary, Musical, and Artistic materials are of high value for dramatic use in the religious education of the junior child.

6. Modern religious educators outline in detail the accepted modes of procedure in these four types of dramatic activity adapted for use in the religious education of the junior child: the tableau, the pantomime, story playing, and the prepared play.

7. Modern religious educators make reports regarding their experiences in the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child, and in these reports they confirm their theories regarding principles and objectives previously set forth.

8. The writer describes four experiments which she conducted in the use of the dramatic method in the religious education of the junior child and in her descriptions confirms the theories regarding principles and objectives considered both theoretically and empirically by modern religious educators.

### III. The Results of the Present Study

Thus, as a result of the present study of the dramatic method in relation to the religious education of the junior child, it has been discovered that the dramatic method is sound historically, psychologically, and pedagogically; that the dramatic method must be governed by certain guiding principles relative to its use, its basic materials, and its general course; that the theories regarding the dramatic method

may be verified empirically.

In view of these data, it may be concluded, therefore, that the dramatic method, discriminatingly used, is an efficient agent in the religious education of the junior child.

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