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TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY:
A COMPARISON OF SELECTED DENOMINATIONAL MATERIALS

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INTRODUCTION

TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY:
A COMPARISON OF SELECTED DENOMINATIONAL MATERIALS

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

Most Christian educators in the major Protestant denominations today agree with Horace Bushnell that a child should be taught to pray from the earliest time he can begin to understand the concept of prayer and the One he is praying to. The theory that he should not be allowed to pray until he is converted has been totally rejected. The problem that arises then is not whether or not he should be taught to pray but how he should be taught. What goals should be set for the child to reach in his attitudes and skill in praying both aloud and privately? What should be the content of his prayers? What is the place of the teacher in guiding a child in his praying? What are specific methods that can be used most effectively? These are all phases of the problem that are determined by the teacher, either consciously or unconsciously, as he seeks to teach children to pray. It is the purpose of this study to gain a composite picture of the solution arrived at by four of the major Protestant denominations in order to benefit the teacher who consciously seeks to answer these questions.

B. Importance of the Problem

The first objective of Christian Education set forth by the International Council of Religious Education is: To lead growing persons into a personal relationship with God in worship, fellowship and service.¹ Prayer should be a vital part of the first two for children. Yet all too frequently, as is shown by this survey made by the Baptist Board of Christian Education, this is not so:

An inquiry among a number of adults who said frankly that they no longer prayed privately revealed that as children they said prayers they had been taught, but when these no longer seemed suitable or when they were too old to be supervised by their mother or some other adult, they ceased to pray.²

The conclusions drawn from this survey were: 1) early experience in praying had not been real enough to carry the practice over into older childhood, and 2) the reason they had not been real was that these children had not been helped to make the transfer from repeating familiar prayers to offering their own prayers in private.³ This survey gives some insight into the importance of how children are taught to pray. It determines to a great extent the reality of prayer

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1. Administration and Organization of Christian Education in the Local Church, (International Curriculum Guide, Book 6, Chicago: International Council of Religious Education, 1935) p. 7.
 2. Hazel A. Lewis, "God is Near," Judson Keystone Graded Series, Course III (April - June 1949) p. 75
 3. loc. cit.

for them at the time and their attitude toward prayer in the future.

C. Sources of Data

The material for this thesis is taken largely, on the one hand, from magazines published by the Baptist and Congregational churches for the church school worker and, on the other hand, from the teacher's quarterlies published by the following denominations: Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal, and Presbyterian. In some cases data is also gathered from supplementary pamphlets on the subject and from pupil workbooks. These four denominations were chosen as representative of the Protestant church because they are four of the largest denominations in the United States, and because they offer the most varied composite picture on the subject of teaching children to pray.

D. Delimitation of the Field of Study

This study is limited to a comparison of materials, published by the four major denominations chosen, which reveal their principles and practise of teaching children to pray. No books written on the subject have been included because of presenting too broad a scope to be covered adequately. The field has further been limited by selecting the Primary age group for research in Sunday School curriculum materials.

Where the denomination has published closely graded sets of materials, that year which has been found to include the most material on prayer has been chosen. In such a case, then, materials covering only one year have been used. For those denominations which publish departmental lessons every year, the most recent complete set of lessons was chosen (Sept. 1948-August 1949). For the other denominations which do not publish lessons annually the last set published has been used.

E. Method of Procedure

The first four chapters of this thesis will present a survey of the findings with respect to teaching children to pray as set forth in the materials of the four denominations selected. The principles advocated will be ascertained largely from the denominational church school workers' magazine and from supplementary material published in pamphlet form for the Sunday School teacher or parent, where these are available. Actual practise will then be noted in the Sunday School curriculum materials; and the degree to which the two coincide will be determined at the end of the chapter. The last chapter will take up a comparison of the views of these four denominations to discover to what extent they agree and differ on the various phases of teaching children to pray. The most important findings of this study will then be summarized and conclusions will be drawn.

CHAPTER I
METHODS OF TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY
INCORPORATED IN BAPTIST MATERIALS

CHAPTER I

METHODS OF TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY INCORPORATED IN BAPTIST MATERIALS

A. Introduction

Materials published by the Northern Baptist church form the basis for the study of this chapter. In order to gain a complete picture of the views of this denomination on how children should be taught to pray, both the theoretical and the practical aspects of the problem have been investigated. Material dealing with the theoretical aspects is taken largely from supplementary materials written for parents, as there is only one article written on the subject in the twelve issues of the Baptist Leader for 1949, the year selected. Three pamphlets were found dealing with the subject.

B. Theory Advanced in Baptist Leader and Supplementary Materials

The theory underlying a curriculum can often be derived from the material itself. However when theory can be investigated from other sources an even more exact idea of it can be obtained. The subject of teaching children to pray has not been written upon at great length in Baptist literature, but from the material available the goals, the

place of the teacher, and general methods can be determined.

1. The Goals to be Sought

What a parent or Sunday School teacher can hope to accomplish in helping children to learn to pray is seen first of all in several definitions of prayer for children. One author defines it as, "A way of talking with Someone who loves us dearly, and who is able to help us in the many ways in which we need help."¹ Another says it is "expressing their own feeling in their own way to God."²

As is indicated in the first definition, the child's concept of the God he is praying to is of utmost importance. A child can only be helped to find meaning in personal prayer as he sees that it is communion with a loving God whose personal interest in him and concern for him is like that of a father for his child - only higher and deeper than human love. But if the child has a wrong idea of God, prayer will be only an empty form or a sort of magic repetition of words aimed to ward off evil.³ The child's concept of God influences his whole attitude toward prayer.

One of the goals concerning the child's attitude to-

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1. Margaret M. Clemens, "The Best There Is" (Philadelphia, 1946, p. 11.
 2. Margaret S. Ward, Helping Children to Worship (Philadelphia, 1947), p. 9.
 3. Margaret M. Clemens, op. cit., p. 11.

ward prayer is said to be: "Conscious communion with God so that he talks with Him as naturally as with his family."¹

This is well illustrated by this incident cited by Margaret M. Clemens.²

"David, aged five, announced one evening to his much surprised mother, 'I guess I won't say a prayer tonight, Mummy. I'm going to tell God a story.' He proceeded to do so with the greatest enthusiasm and at the end rose from the side of the bed to say with complete satisfaction: 'There! I'll bet God liked that story!' and who will say that God did not, for it was the confident, friendly companionship of a little child with a loved heavenly Father."

A further goal as to the child's attitude toward prayer is "moments of resolution and dedication which are real prayer experiences."³ That is to say, a child must understand that prayer is not a shifting of his own responsibility to God, but that God will expect his best efforts in co-operation with Him to fulfil many of his petitions.

The goal a child may be expected to reach in public prayer varies, for children differ greatly in their ability and desire to put their inmost thoughts into words. The idea however is that it should be direct, thoughtful and unembarrassed.

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1. Elizabeth Norton Jones, "A Child Worships," Baptist Leader, 10:26, April, 1949.
 2. Margaret M. Clemens, op. cit., p. 13.
 3. Elizabeth Norton Jones, op. cit., p. 26.

2. The Place of the Teacher

Prayer is an experience between the child and God. The place of the teacher is simply to prepare the child for this experience. Ward states, "Preparation for praying is important for children must know what they want to say to God before they can pray either silently or aloud. Children need to be taught how to pray, both by their parents and by their church school leaders."¹ The Baptist church then believes that prayer is to be completely natural, but that it must be learned. The teacher plays an important part in preparing the child and thus in helping him learn to pray.

3. General Methods Suggested

From observation of her own son, Elizabeth Norton Jones² came to the following conclusions concerning stimuli of prayer for a child: 1) quiet beauty whether indoors or out, and 2) something new discovered in God's world producing awe and wonder. These should be provided in abundance.

Many opportunities should be given for the child to pray himself. Ward says that children learn to pray partly by seeing and hearing others as they pray, but mostly by

1. Margaret S. Ward, op. cit., p. 9.
2. Elizabeth Norton Jones, op. cit., p. 26.

actually participating themselves.¹ This applies also to form prayers. "When a child thinks to tell God about an especially happy time or tell God he is sorry that something he did spoiled his day and another's, that is more truly prayer than any memorized words can be" states Margaret Clemens.²

Memorized form prayers may be used at times, for they have the values of suggesting a form for prayers and of enlarging the child's understanding of what we say when we talk to God, but they should never be allowed to become meaningless through thoughtless repetition or take the place of spontaneous prayers, suggests a pamphlet published by the Baptist church entitled, Helping Your Child to Pray.³

In this same pamphlet it is stated, "The position assumed for prayer is a matter of choice, but should be one that seems natural to both parent and child. It is the thought and sincerity rather than the physical position that make prayer real."⁴ Neither kneeling nor folding the hands together is considered important.

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1. Margaret S. Ward, op. cit., p. 9.
 2. Margaret Clemens, op. cit., p. 13.
 3. Helping Your Child to Pray (Publication of the Children's Department, Northern Baptist Convention) p. 4.
 4. Ibid., p. 3.

C. Practice Incorporated in
Baptist Primary Curriculum Materials

The Northern Baptist church published closely graded lessons for the primary department. Course III has been chosen as being the most representative of the church's practice in teaching children to pray. In examining these materials it was found that four lessons are directly centered in prayer. Five lessons contain references to it. Eleven lessons suggest pupil's prayers, either written or silent. Prayers that teachers may use are set down in twenty-two lessons, and twelve form prayers for the teacher and class to read together are given. Six prayer hymns including one to be memorized are used in the course of the year.

1. Objectives

a. Capacities of this age group

Certain changes have usually taken place by the time children reach the third year in the Primary department, especially along these two lines: a greater capacity for joining in group worship, and a greater desire and ability to engage in richer personal devotional experiences.¹

1. Hazel A. Lewis, Judson Graded Keystone Lessons, Course III, Part I, p. 11.

b. Specific Goals Based on these Capacities

The specific goals based on the greater capacity for joining in group worship are: 1) experiencing worship together in group prayers said or written together, and 2) learning what to do and think about when they go into the church service, with special emphasis on preparation for prayer in church.¹

The specific goals based on the greater ability and desire for personal devotional experiences are: 1) working out a personal plan for prayer including certain times, occasions and places and the manner of prayer,² 2) a realization also that prayer should not be limited to set times and places, though this helps make it concrete, but that they may talk to God anytime and any where, and 3) finding prayer as a source of strength when they meet temptation and a source of joy when they are truly repentant.³ The second goal is seen in this purpose suggested for the unit on prayer, "To help the children feel a deeper sense of companionship with God, that will lead them to desire to talk with Him in prayer; and through such companionship to relate God to the everyday experience of their lives."⁴

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1. Ibid., p. 48
 2. Part 3, p. 76
 3. Ibid., p. 86
 4. Part 3, p. 76

c. Concept of God

With the exception of one prayer in which Thee and Thou is used in addressing God, He is addressed always by the familiar you. The most frequent title is, "Dear God". Father is also used occasionally both in the worship service and class prayers. "In Jesus name" is used only once in these materials to close a prayer in the many suggested to be said together or by the teacher. In all other cases simply the Amen is used.

In the worship service prayers, great emphasis is put on God's love for all. A typical example is this prayer:

Dear God, it's good to know about your many children
Who live in many homes through out the world so fair
It's good to know they work, study, play and grow
Safe in your loving care. Amen¹

In the lessons the idea of God as a Friend who likes to have His children tell Him when they are glad and is willing to help them when they are sorry for having done wrong is stressed.² This concept of a personal God who cares for each individual is brought out again and again.

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1. L.M.Wildes, "Worship for Primaries," Baptist Leader, 10:21, May, 1949.
 2. Part 3, pps. 82-97.

d. Attitude Toward Prayer

Prayer is to be looked on as something important in their experience. It is not something to be engaged in only at church but at home and when there is a choice to be made between right and wrong, or when one is glad or frightened - in all of life. The illustration is given of talking to parents. Just as the child does not have to wait till a certain day to come and tell them something so he is not to feel that he must wait till Sunday to talk to God.

The child is taught in the unit on "God is Near" that prayer is most often answered through God's helping him to find out the best thing to do through his ears, eyes, and mind; and through good people who love God and help to do His work. Attitude toward prayer is further pointed out in this differentiation between real and imaginary fear,

To be afraid when there is nothing to fear means that we are not using the good minds that God gave us. But when there is danger or when we are not sure we can talk to God and He will hear us.¹

Besides this attitude of responsibility, an attitude of naturalness and joy rather than any coercion is encouraged. The child need share his prayer book only if he wants to. Making a home worship center where he can go for

1. Part 3, p. 98

devotions is not something the church demands or expects of him but something he can do if he would like. The teacher is advised that such activities as having the group write a prayer should not be attempted unless the children really wish to do it.¹ And the teacher is not to ask them to pray aloud individually during the special study of prayer as they would be too self-conscious to pray with self-forgetfulness in connection with a study of this kind.² Their attitude is to be one of complete sincerity and naturalness rather than any feeling of social pressure.

2. Kinds of Prayer

Both the worship service prayers and those given in the material for class sessions follow the same general pattern of specific thanksgiving and aspiration based on the lesson. In several prayers there is a note of praise for God's kindness. In only one is there a petition for others, "Bless all Thy children everywhere."³ But aside from these few exceptions, thanksgiving and aspiration are the only elements included.

The prayers are not all self-centered. Petition for others is most often indirect; that is they are asked in the form of a prayer God can answer through the child making the

1. *Ibid.*, p. 84
2. *Ibid.*, p. 77
3. Part 2, p. 35

petition. For example the prayer cited above goes on, "Help us to think of ways in which we can be friendly to the Indians who are Thy children, even as we are."¹

The pattern repeated in almost every prayer is well illustrated in this prayer for the beginning of vacation:

Dear Father God,
Thank you (italics not in original) for all the mornings
 When I go out to play,
 And for all the fun I shall have.
Help me (italics not in original) to be a good playmate,
 To be fair, to do my part
 And to be forgiving. Amen.²

Almost every phase of a child's experience is covered in these prayers. The beauty of music, the seasons and nature; the love of family and friends; the fun of vacation and birthdays; the joy of Christmas and Easter; and the heritage of the Bible, the stories of Jesus and the church are all touched upon in the prayers of thanksgiving. The prayers of aspiration are largely in connection with ethical behaviour. Two main emphases are that they may live like Jesus and that they may do their share in all their relations with others, such as helping to make their family and home more happy and loving.

3. The Teacher's Place in Guiding Prayer

a. Personal Life

In several places in the quarterlies, the

1. loc. cit.,
 2. Part 3, p. 99.

teacher's own spiritual life is stressed as being a prerequisite in leading children to truly experience prayer. The author of these lessons notes, "To rid oneself of the sense of hurry and pressure (at Christmas) and to keep some time for meditation and prayer are the most essential preparation the teacher can make. Without that all other preparation will result in confusion and superficial experience to children and teacher."¹ And in another place she advises that the depth of the teacher's own prayer experience will influence the children very greatly for it will make her better able to guide their growing prayer life.²

b. Planning

The teacher is to determine how the material on prayer will be taught by recalling all that she can about the devotional life of each child in her group. She cannot gain this by asking direct questions but by remembering the attitudes toward prayer shown in conversations and class activities such as writing litanies. On the basis of this knowledge she should decide how much more can be done to increase the children's desire and ability to pray.³

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1. Part 1, p. 125.
 2. Part 3, p. 96.
 3. loc. cit.

4. Specific Methods

A great variety of specific methods are suggested for the teacher to use in order to reach the goals designated for prayer.

a. Conversation

Conversation is often used to prepare for times of silent prayer in order that the child may learn to pray by actually praying. The quarterly recommends making such suggestions as this: "Perhaps you would like to tell God that you love Him or thank Him for the stories in the Bible."¹ However too much suggestion is warned against as being an intrusion.

Conversation is also used to teach what God is like, and what He wants their prayers to be. One conversation was on things that made the children happy, leading up to this conclusion: "Sometimes we think that praying is very solemn and usually asking for things. We forget to tell God about the glad times we have."²

b. Story

The story is used effectively to show what prayer can mean in every-day situations the children are likely to face. For example a story about a boy's exper-

1. Part 1, p. 132.

2. Part 3, p. 82

ience in praying for forgiveness after cheating at a game was used to start a discussion on the times it is not easy to do right. And this in turn led to what "lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil" can mean at such times.

In another session a story based on Psalm 103 was used to prepare for group worship. It was introduced,

"There are many times when we want to talk to God, our Father. This is a story of a man long ago who remembered all the things that made him glad and wrote a song about them."¹

c. The Form Prayer

This is used a great deal. By far the majority of both the teacher's and children's prayers are of this type rather than spontaneous. A number of methods are employed to make these form prayers meaningful. One is a Word Book. This grows out of the necessity of knowing certain words not in the average primary child's vocabulary in order to understand these prayers. Children of this age have a natural delight in learning new words if they express ideas that are interesting and that have been actually experienced. The following procedure is used: "The word dedicate is first defined, to give to God's work, and then talked about and written down; finally it is put in a sentence, 'We dedi-

1. loc. cit.

cate our offering to God's work' and this experience is carried out."¹ This method is used for both "hallowed" and "temptation" in teaching the Lord's prayer.

Memorization is suggested only once (the Lord's prayer) and only for the third graders in order to prepare them for group worship in the church services.

Several times the children are asked to repeat a prayer line by line after the teacher. Another method is to read the prayer on the Sunday School leaflet together.

d. Prayer Notebooks

In connection with the unit on prayer, "God is Near", each child is to make a notebook in which he records the specific times, places and manner in which he will pray. In this notebook he is to copy from prayers he likes that show him things to pray about, and also prayers that he has written himself as well as a litany that the whole class has composed. Each child is to be allowed to work at his own pace and alone as much as he desires.

e. Home Co-operation

This is stressed both to the children and, through the Sunday School leaflets, to the parents. In several of these leaflets prayers are given to be read to-

1. Part 1, p. 54.

gether by the whole family. On the back of the leaflet accompanying the lesson on the Lord's prayer is an explanation of it which the mother is to read to the child again when he gets home.

f. The Home Worship Center

This is introduced by conversation in which the teacher points out its value. After calling attention to the worship center of the Primary Department she asks if it would not help for them to have a worship center at home. They have already made picture easels as one of their class projects, and with this, a picture and an orange crate she demonstrates how a worship center might be arranged. Their interest is further aroused by letting them help rearrange it, and talking about how it could be worked out in their own homes.

D. Comparison

There is a close correlation between the principles set forth in the magazine and pamphlets for teachers and parents, and the actual practise revealed in the Sunday School curriculum. It is especially evident in the goals. Specific objectives and methods are all aimed at carrying out the larger goals set forth. For example the goal of talking to God naturally and relating prayer to everyday experience is carried over into practise by teaching that

each child can talk to God anytime and anywhere, and that God wants the child to come to Him when he is glad as well as when he is frightened. The prayers of thanksgiving touching on many phases of the child's everyday life seek to relate prayer to his experience. The "moments of dedication and resolution" are emphasized in the Sunday School materials both through frequent prayers of aspiration, and stress on the child's responsibility in being used to answer his own prayers. Most of all, the goal of a richer personal devotional life is noted in both principles and practise over and over again.

The concept of God as a personal God of love and concern for each child set forth in principle is also carried over into practise, through conversation, form prayers conveying this concept and other methods such as allowing the child complete privacy in writing his prayers that he may understand it is just between God and himself. There is no teaching of God's justice, only His love for everyone.

The specific methods showed some divergence from the general methods suggested. Not much opportunity to actually observe outdoor beauty was provided, though it was often mentioned in prayers of thanksgiving. Not so much opportunity for individual, spontaneous prayer was given as would seem to be suggested in the principles. Form prayers were used a great deal, though not repeated and always

related specifically to the lesson. No opportunity was given to lead in prayer publicly though individual spontaneous prayer at home was stressed a great deal. On the whole, however, the practise found in the Sunday School materials was built directly on the principles discovered.

E. Summary

This chapter was centered in a study of Baptist materials to discover the theory and practise of teaching children to pray set forth there. It included first an analysis of the twelve issues of Baptist Leader for the year 1949., and three pamphlets published by the Judson Press on the subject. This was followed by an examination of the Sunday School curriculum materials for the third grade of the Primary Department for the same year. Theory and practise were found to be in general agreement on the following points:

1. Natural, thankful prayer related to all areas of life is the final objective.
2. The underlying concept of God is to be that of a loving Father to all people; a Friend and Companion.
3. The teacher is to be a spiritual guide as much by personal example as by teaching.
4. Conversation and the form prayer are two of the most effective methods which can be employed in accomplishing the final goal. Co-operation with the home is also considered important.

CHAPTER II
METHODS OF TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY
INCORPORATED IN CONGREGATIONAL MATERIALS

CHAPTER II

METHODS OF TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY INCORPORATED IN CONGREGATIONAL MATERIALS

A. Introduction

Materials published by the Pilgrim Press publishing house of the Congregational church form the basis for the study of this chapter. As indicated above, twelve issues¹ of the magazine, Children's Religion, giving helps for parents and church school leaders, were examined and were found to contain three articles dealing directly with teaching children to pray; two articles referring to it, and several prayer poems and litanies. In addition one booklet, And When You Pray, deals more at length with the philosophy underlying children's prayers. Together, these materials reveal the theory of the Congregational church on the problem. Practise is revealed in the lesson materials for primaries. Because it was seen to include the greater amount of material devoted to prayer, the course for the first and second grades was chosen for analysis.

1. October 1948 - September 1949.

B. Theory Advanced in Children's Religion
and in Supplementary Material

An exact idea of the theory underlying the practise advocated by the Congregational church on teaching children to pray is gained through noting the common emphases in both the magazine and booklet. A comparison of the articles and the booklet examined revealed that the discussions of prayer include emphasis on goals to be sought in teaching children to pray, the concept of God to be developed, the place of the teacher, and various methods to be used.

1. The Goals to be Sought

In a list of suggestions on children's prayer sent to parents at the close of a unit on the Lord's prayer, as reported in one article, this definition is included, "Prayer at your child's age is talking to God under various moods."¹ Another author defines prayer for a child as "Telling things to God, sharing thoughts with Him, turning our thoughts toward Him in connection with our real interests."²

A right attitude toward prayer is stressed as one of the main goals to be sought. In one typical class of primaries it was discovered that prayer was still largely formal and by rote rather than a personal experience of talking to

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1. Mrs. Wendell French and Margaret Kentfield, "Teaching the Lord's Prayer," Children's Religion, 10:9, May, 1949.
 2. Mary E. Venable, "The Little Child and Prayer," Children's Religion, 9:18, November, 1948.

God. This was reflected in their use of the Lord's prayer. The author comments, "Listening to the children say the Lord's prayer in the worship service, they seemed to echo the words of Jesus, 'But when ye pray use not vain repetitions.'"¹ In contrast to this attitude of dutiful discipline the child's attitude should be one of joyful anticipation. These two examples illustrate the difference.

One night Billy said that he was 'too tired' to say a prayer. His mother replied, 'If you are too tired to say your prayers, God will be too tired to take care of you during the night.' Dickie on the other hand was led to approach prayer as a joyful natural thing to be engaged in when he feels like talking to God.²

Another goal set up is developing the right kind of prayer; prayers of praise should be the main content rather than prayers of petition. Ruth Christopher Carlsen³ advises teachers to seek to use prayer as a quiet time of thinking about the happy experience, the joys of living, rather than a time of asking.

The overall goal, then might be stated as the natural joyful expression of the child's thoughts, especially those of thanksgiving, arising out of happy experiences, to God. An illustration of this kind of prayer is reported in one article in the form of this litany, composed by a group of

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1. French and Kentfield, op. cit., p. 7.
 2. Venable, loc. cit.
 3. Ruth Christopher Carlsen, "Answering A Child's Questions," Children's Religion, 10:6, April, 1949.

children after sharing together the things that reminded them of God:¹

Dear God,
 We are glad for
 Birds that make pleasant sounds
 Night that always comes
 Moonlight shining a path on the water
 All newborn things
 Flowers that make us gay
 The way my dog looks at me
 Green fields that we play in
 Our bodies so we can use
 the things you have given us.
 Dear God, for all these things
 We are glad.

2. The Child's Concept of God

What kind of thoughts shall be expressed depends largely on the child's concept of God. McGavran says that if he thinks of God as a kind of Santa Claus, his prayers will be filled with selfish petitions. If he believes in a God who has absolute power he has a right to expect that prayer may set that power in motion.² Since the kind of prayer he prays is determined by his idea of God one must consider what idea of God the child should have.

Venable cites the case of a Sunday School teacher telling her class the story of a mother who knew if she asked God for a little baby that He would send her one.³ This involves a false concept of God which must be avoided. Because our

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1. Gertrude Sheldon, "Children Can Worship," Children's Religion, 9:3, November, 1948.
 2. Cf. Grace W. McGavran, And When You Pray, (Boston, 1941) p. 13.
 3. Cf. Venable, loc. cit.

world is one of marvelously intricate inter-binding law and order God cannot change it to answer prayer. McGavran asks, "Why...should we tell a child that God can do this and do that? We would not say to him, 'Your daddy can cut off your finger if you disobey him.'"¹ The realms in which a child's concept of God is often warped by believing God can act, when actually He cannot, include weather, sickness, disaster, and suffering. According to this view of prayer, God cannot turn off the fountain head of the showers nor absolutely protect a child from all danger except it coincide with the working out of the natural laws of His orderly universe. Therefore, instead of asking God to do miracles, the child should ask Him rather to help him in his attitude and adjustment to situations in which he finds himself.²

Two prayers given for a rainy day illustrate the right concept of God and the resulting desired effect on the child:

Dear God, I 'spect you could make it stop raining, but perhaps you couldn't, because it would be breaking your own rules. Anyway we won't ask you to.

Dear God, help me not to be cross because it is raining.³ God's way of working through natural law must find expression in man's willingness to accept responsibility. This example is given to illustrate. When Don asked, concerning the

1. McGavran, loc. cit.
 2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 13 ff.
 3. Ibid., p. 13.

plight of two homeless children, "Why doesn't God help them?" his mother could have said, "Let's ask God to help them." But instead she explained that God works through human beings and suggested they send some money for their care.¹ The corollary of God's working through natural law is man's fulfilling his responsibility.

The concept of God to be cultivated is summarized in this statement of McGavran's:²

It takes courage to refuse to give children faith in a God who can absolutely do anything. But from such a belief they can never rise to the greater faith in God as He is, too great to be able to do that which is of lesser worth. It takes courage and patience and thought to guide them to the greater understanding. But in that greater, truer understanding lies their brightest hope of a faith in God which will meet the experiences of our modern world.

3. The Place of the Teacher

In order to accomplish the goals set, especially in the children's attitude toward prayer, one article set forth the principle, "The adult's own growth in the unceasing attitude of prayerful living may be more effective than any words that are spoken."³ The teacher, either in the church school or in the home, both communicates attitude by the depth of his own experience and teaches it by the concept of God he conveys.

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 14.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Venable, loc. cit. Cf. Sheldon, op. cit., p. 4.

4. General Methods Suggested

In order to gain the goal of natural prayer which grows out of experience, the main method recommended is conversation through which the teacher can lead the child into feeling God's nearness at all times. It is suggested that though special times may be set apart for prayer, such as mealtime and bedtime, the discerning teacher will use other situations that make the child feel like talking to God. These opportunities may be used for a spoken word or prayer or thank-you song. An example of this is seen in an experience of a Sunday School teacher with her class:¹

After sailing boats one little boy said, 'I am so glad for the rain so we can sail boats.' The teacher said softly, 'Thank you God, for the rain, and for the fun we have playing in the water.' Not all the group bowed their heads but there was a quietness which indicated a feeling of nearness to God.

Meaningfulness can carry over also into the use of form prayers. In order to guard against the danger of "saying" a prayer, with the emphasis on the saying rather than the praying, only a few beautiful thoughtful form prayers should be used. To conserve their value of stimulation to spontaneous expressions of prayer it is suggested they may be read on appropriate occasions and learned naturally, through repeated and meaningful use, not through drill.²

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1. Nina M. Nelson, "Discovering God in the Out-of Doors," Children's Religion, 10:5, June, 1949.
 2. Venable, loc. cit. Cf. French and Kentfield, op. cit., p. 7.

Another method used to cultivate spontaneous prayer is that of prayer reminders. After using this method French and Kentfield¹ state that there is real need for more tangible evidences of prayer and worship in the Congregational church. They conclude, "We must teach ideas through objects which the children can see and feel, because their minds at this age level are very much occupied with the here and now and with all the things they are learning from their immediate environment."

C. Practise Incorporated in Congregational Primary Curriculum Materials

For the primary department the Congregational church publishes The Pilgrim Primary Teacher containing teaching notes and possible procedure for the teacher to follow. In the course selected² only two lessons are found directly centering in prayer.³ Three lessons contained references to prayer.⁴ Time for silent prayer or for writing prayers is

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1. French and Kentfield, Ibid., p. 8. Cf. Nelson, op. cit., p. 6.
 2. October 1948 - September, 1949.
 3. Cf. Florence M. Taylor, The Pilgrim Primary Teacher, 2:36-39, November, 1948.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 40-41, November, 1948.
 4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 34-35, January, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 43, February, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 62, March, 1949.

allowed in seven lessons;¹ while thirty-four prayers for the teacher to pray are given.² Form prayers are used five times³ and seven prayer hymns⁴ are suggested for the class to sing. From this material the practise of the Congregational church in teaching children to pray can easily be determined.

1. Objectives in Praying

a. General Function of Prayer

One of the chief objectives sought is that the child shall realize and experience the function of prayer which is said to be the motivation of right conduct.⁵ This objective is clearly wrought out in a lesson on Jesus' praying.

Whenever Jesus had something hard to decide he went away by himself to be alone with God. It helped him to know

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 34, January, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 48, February, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 44, May, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 40, August, 1949.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 56, December, 1948.
Cf. Ibid., p. 22, January, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 53, February, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 62, March, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 49, May, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 17, June, 1949.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 41, November, 1948.
Cf. Ibid., p. 44, 52, February, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 36, 42, May, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 20, June, 1949.
 4. Cf. Ibid., p. 39, November, 1948.
Cf. Ibid., p. 56, December, 1948.
Cf. Ibid., p. 39, 44, 49, February, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 19, April, 1949.
 5. Cf. Ibid., p. 37, November 1948.
Cf. Ibid., p. 37, 48, February, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 40, August, 1949.

what God wanted him to do. It helped him to be strong enough to do it even when it was hard... Being alone with God, and thinking about what he wants you to do, can help you too. It can help you to be strong enough to do the right thing even when it is hard.¹

b. Specific Goals

The fifth unit, We Learn about God from Jesus, deals most fully with prayer. The specific goals for the unit which are to be carried out in and through group prayer are:

A realization of the care and dependability of God as evidenced in an orderly universe.
A sense of fellowship with God; a growing understanding of God's loving concern for all persons.²

A further goal in both form and original prayers is a feeling of reality in talking to God. In form prayers the children are to be helped to realize that they are not just reading a prayer but actually praying in the same words other people have used when they have talked with God, and that these words often express exactly the things they themselves feel like praying about.³

2. The Child's Concept of God

As can be seen from the above goals, the Congregational church considers the concept of the One prayed to most important. Taylor states, "A person's prayers frequently reveal

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1. Florence M. Taylor, We Learn About God From Jesus, Pilgrim Bible Stories for Children, 44:2, February, 1949.
 2. Taylor, Pilgrim Primary Teacher, p. 37, February, 1949.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 48, February, 1949.

inadequate or mistaken ideas of God. How we pray, what we ask for, what we expect all these are determined by what we believe about God and about our relationship to Him."¹ This affects also such things as selecting prayer books. Parents are warned never to judge them on the basis of eye-appeal but always on thorough examination of basic concepts implied in the wording of the prayers.²

It is important also that children understand how God's will is revealed through prayer. If they are taught that in prayer God speaks to them as they speak to Him, they may fail to recognize that the consciousness of right, the inner strength which comes in sincere Christian living, are the ways in which God reveals Himself now, says Taylor.

3. Common Emphases in Content of Prayers

An analysis of the prayers contained in this course reveals the following outstanding emphases in content:

a. Prayers of Thanksgiving

The majority of the prayers fall into this category. They generally begin, Our Father, we are glad...³

There are three characteristic emphases in these prayers of thanksgiving. The first is thanksgiving

1. Ibid., p. 8, August, 1949.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 38, February, 1949.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 26, January, 1949.
 Cf. Ibid., p. 49, June, 1949.
 Cf. Ibid., p. 23, July, 1949.

for experiences of all kinds: God's nearness,¹ happy times,² nature,³ the lessons Jesus taught,⁴ and others. Then there are prayers of thanksgiving for people who have made these experiences possible.⁵ And finally there is thanksgiving for abilities God has given which make it possible to share and have a part in serving.⁶ A litany used in a service of song illustrates all three of these phases. The leader gives thanks for the music of birds and wind and rain, then for people who have composed beautiful music, and finally for the music in the churches in which all can have a part.⁷

b. Prayers of Aspiration

The rest of the prayers largely can be classified in this category. They usually begin, Our Father, help us...⁸ Even the one penitential prayer included is largely aspiration, "help me to do better."⁹ Again there are three main emphases. One is that the lessons of experience and of the

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 53, February, 1949.
 2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 16-31, October, 1948.
Cf. Ibid., p. 43, November, 1948.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 23,25, July, 1949.
 4. Cf. Ibid., p. 44, February, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 24, April, 1949.
 5. Cf. Ibid., p. 22, January, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 49, June, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 20, July, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 37, August, 1949.
 6. Cf. Ibid., p. 31, October, 1948.
Cf. Ibid., p. 45, November, 1948.
Cf. Ibid., p. 33, January, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 27, April, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 43, August, 1949.
 7. Cf. Ibid., p. 47, May, 1949.
 8. Cf. Ibid., p. 53, February, 1949.
Cf. Ibid., p. 3,27, July, 1949.
 9. Cf. Ibid., Pilgrim Bible Stories for Children, p. 3, February 13.

Bible may be remembered. For example, it is suggested that the first session in December be closed with a prayer that we may remember how Jesus loved and helped and that we too may find ways of loving and helping.¹

A second emphasis is that God's nearness may be felt. Typical is this prayer: Our Father, may these things help us feel Thee near us. May we learn to live in ways pleasing to Thee.²

Most common of all is the prayer for help to love and share with all other and thus do God's will.³ Experiencing God's presence is always associated with living rightly with other people. This idea is embodied in the following Litany:

There are people in my home who work hard to care for me.
Use me, O God, to help the people in my home.
There are neighbors near me who are lonely or in trouble.
Use me, O God, to help my neighbors.
There are children in school who are not liked by the
other children.
Use me, O God, to help my schoolmates.
There are people all around me of whom I do not think,
who need some friendly service I might give.
Use me, O God, to help wherever I can.⁴

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1. Ibid., Pilgrim Primary Teacher, p. 56, December.
Ibid., p. 17, July.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 44, 53, February.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 30, January.
Cf. Ibid., p. 48, February.
Cf. Ibid., p. 27, April.
Cf. Ibid., p. 27, July.
 4. Ibid., Pilgrim Bible Stories for Children, p. 3, February
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4. Specific Methods

The methods used to teach children to pray are varied and well suited to the age group. Many of them grow directly out of the goals.

a. Conversation

This is one of the most frequently suggested methods.¹ One of the forms it takes is discussing unfinished stories. For example, the story of Betty who must make a choice between going to the movies and staying with her grandmother is told. Then the children are asked to finish the story and analyse their ending to see if Betty was truly thankful for her grandmother. The discussion is then centered around what is involved in real thankfulness.²

b. Stories on Prayer

Two stories specifically have prayer as their theme, "God's Answer"³ and "The Broken Leg".⁴ Both bring out how God answers prayer wisely and in accord with the laws of an orderly universe.

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1. Cf. Ibid., Pilgrim Primary Teacher, p. 36,37, November.
Cf. Ibid., p. 42-48, February.
Cf. Ibid., p. 23, July.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 35, November.
 3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 49-50, February.
 4. Cf. Ibid., p. 38, November.

c. Form Prayers

Several of the form prayers used are first composed by the children themselves.¹ For example, after thinking of the things for which they are thankful and then making a thankful chart, the group are to compare a litany following this pattern:

Leader: We are thankful for our mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers.

Response: And so we will try to be helpful members of our families, and do our share of the work willingly and cheerfully.²

Other form prayers include Bible verses³ and prayers contained in the lesson pamphlets which are used to begin the children's prayer books.⁴ "Use me O God" is one of the latter and it is introduced by the teacher asking the children to read through it and ask about the words they don't know. After the class has practised reading it together several times it is used as part of the worship service.⁵

d. Memorization

The memorizing of Bible verses to be used as a prayer is suggested only once in connection with the Thanksgiving unit. First of all the Bible verses to be memorized,

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 48, February.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 44, May.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 41, November.
 4. Cf. Ibid., p. 44, February.
 5. Cf. Loc. cit.

expressing thanksgiving to God for all His bounteous gifts, are written on thanksgiving place-cards. Then each child is to memorize one as his thanksgiving verse. A grace to sing at meals is learned at the same time by the class.¹

e. Dramatization

The one use of dramatization in connection with prayer also occurs in the Thanksgiving unit. After the children have learned the verses and the grace, the teacher suggests that they make believe they are standing around the table on Thanksgiving day. Then each child repeats his verse and they sing the grace together. Later the place cards are taken home and it is suggested that the family actually carry out this scene for their Thanksgiving meal.²

f. Picture Study

This method to teach the meaning of prayer is only used once. Woodward's picture of Jesus Praying is used both in class and on the cover of the lesson pamphlet. The teacher explains,

This is a picture of Jesus at one of the times He went off by himself to think with God. How do you think he is feeling as he sits there? Mention the position of His hands and feet. Help the children feel the readiness in His posture. He looks as if at any moment He might rise and go striding back to the busy world of people.³

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 41, November.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 43, November.
 3. Ibid., February, 1949, p. 44.

g. Making a Prayer Book

This is a simple project as it consists of making a cover and inserting the four lesson pamphlets containing special prayers for the month of February. The teacher may encourage the child to add prayers of his own and for this purpose a few sheets of blank paper may also be included.¹ Parents are advised that a loose-leaf book is best for a child making his own collection as prayers may then be added or deleted as the child's interest dictates.²

h. An Original Class Prayer

After making a scrapbook in a winter unit of Jesus and the children of the World, to send to children in China, the children help plan a service of dedication. This gift is to be part of the offering for which a prayer of dedication is to be written. The teacher lets the children dictate it to her and then a child is chosen to read it as the climax of the worship service.³ Individual original prayers are also suggested several times.⁴

i. Home Co-operation

To encourage private devotions at home, each child is to make a triptych to be taken home as a prayer reminder. In front of this he is to place his prayer book and

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1. Ibid., February, 1949, p. 38.
 2. Ibid., August 1949, p. 8.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 34, January.
 4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 27, 62, February.
Cf. Ibid., p. 48, March.

perhaps flowers to "serve as reminders of God, Jesus and friendly ways of living."¹

Meeting with the parents is also considered important. The teacher is advised to have several discussions with them using such books as Margurite Harmon Bro's When Children Ask, and McGavran's And When You Pray.²

D. A Comparison Between Theory and Practise

The basis for comparison between theory and practise was found in goals, including the concept of God, and methods.

1. Goals

The goals set forth in theory such as sharing thoughts with God in connection with real interests, happy anticipatory attitude toward prayer and the right concept of God, carry over with complete harmony into the practise set forth in the curriculum. The child is taught that prayer means sharing thoughts with God by giving Jesus' example, for He went off by Himself to think with God.³ God's constant nearness also is stressed in encouraging the child to share his thoughts with God in connection with his real interests.⁴ One method used in practise to carry out this goal is the home worship center so that the child's praying is not confined simply to

1. Ibid., p. 43, February.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 39, February.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 49, February.

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 44, 53, February.

the church.¹

The attitude of joyfulness set forth in theory is stimulated in practise by the great preponderance of prayers of thanksgiving and praise. This is true in both worship service and class prayers, and is closely related to the concept of God set forth in both theory and practise - that God works through people and natural laws rather than directly. Thus, instead of a petition that God will heal Johnny there is praise that God has enabled doctors to find out so much about how to regain health, and that Johnny is in their care. This concept of God is seen running all through the curriculum materials, not only in the prayers but also in stories and hymns. One hymn reflecting it is this:

Let us be glad of God's good plans
And of the laws that He has made
Laws that endure
So safe and sure
We trust them and are not afraid.

His laws for us are wise and kind
To show us what is right to do
And day by day,
If we obey
His laws we shall grow strong and true.²

The prayers of aspiration especially reflect the concept that God uses people to do His work.³

Thus practice is seen to be largely determined by the goals and concept of God set forth in theory.

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 43, February.
 2. Francis M. Morton, The Pilgrim Primary Teacher, 2:67, September, 1949.
 3. Cf. ante, p. 9.

2. Method

As is suggested in theory, conversation is used frequently as a method of teaching the meaning of prayer. Practise is also in complete accord with theory on the matter of form prayers. The principle is that only a few beautiful, meaningful form prayers are to be used. In the year's course only five are suggested for use. Several are litanies composed by the class itself, and therefore meaningful to the children; with the teacher's help these could be beautiful. Practise also carries out theory in the matter of prayer reminders. One of the projects is making the triptych as a prayer reminder to be put in the child's bedroom. A great variety of other specific methods not mentioned in the general principles found in theory are also included in the practise to make for interest and facilitate learning for the whole class.

E. Summary

Centered in a study of Congregational materials, to discover the theory and practise of teaching children to pray set forth there, this chapter included first an analysis of the issues of Children's Religion for October 1948 through September 1949 and of the pamphlet And When You Pray by Grace McGavran. This was followed by an examination of the Sunday School materials for primaries for the same period of time as

given above. Theory and practise were found to be in general agreement with respect to goals, basic concept of God, prayer content and method. The main goals were discovered to be a real expression of thoughts, both of aspiration and joy, to God in connection with the child's own vital interests; a happy anticipatory attitude toward prayer, reflected in a real desire to pray and determined by the right concept of God; and a transformation of life through prayer by its motivation to right conduct.

The concept of God reflected in both theory and practise was found to be an understanding that God's laws are unchanging, that God always acts in accordance with them, and that God works through people.

This concept of God and the above goals to a large extent were seen to determine the content of prayer. Joy for daily happy experiences and petition for God to help by working through the child's ability to love and share with other people, it was found, are the main emphases of the prayers included and the suggestions for prayer given. In the realms beyond these abilities of the child the emphasis was found to be petition for adjustment of the child's own attitude rather than for divine intervention to change the situation.

The methods used to achieve the goals are varied and detailed. That used most often in setting the main content

pattern was discovered to be the teacher's prayer, most frequently coming at the end of the class session. Conversation is also an important method. Other methods in which the child has a more active part were also found to be employed frequently.

These findings all point to the fact that the Congregational church considers it of great importance that children be taught to pray and is basing this teaching upon the child's level of capacity.

CHAPTER III

METHODS OF TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY
INCORPORATED IN PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL MATERIALS

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METHODS OF TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY INCORPORATED IN PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL MATERIALS

A. Introduction

The last course for primaries in the Cloister Series used by the Protestant Episcopal church was published in 1940 and is entitled *Discovering Our Church*. It constitutes the entire basis of this chapter as no church school magazine or other supplementary material is available. In order to allow enough opportunity for creativity on the part of the teacher, this course is not divided into lessons, but into six units which may cover as long or short a period as the teachers chooses. Of these six units, one, "We Use Our Church Building" especially emphasizes prayer. In the whole year thirteen different activities are suggested in connection with teaching children to pray;¹ prayer is referred to in eight stories;² four prayer hymns are used.³ Twenty

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1. Cf. Marcella Prugh, *Discovering Our Church, The Cloister Series of Church School Courses*, Teachers Book, pp. 35, 36, 43, 58, 59.
 2. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-80, Benny's Little Wooden Cross.
Cf. *Ibid.*, Pupils Book, pp. 16, 17, Leo Answers A Question.
Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 28, A House of Prayer.
Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 29, Teach Us To Pray.
Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 51, A Place of Prayer.
 3. Cf. *Ibid.*, Teachers Book, pp. 43, 63, 87, 124.

prayers are given in the pupils book to serve as a pattern;¹ and the suggestion that the children themselves compose original prayers is given three times.²

B. Practise Incorporated in
Protestant Episcopal Curriculum Materials

The principles advocated by the Episcopal Church in teaching children to pray are clear from the course itself. Though the course is much briefer and more concise than those published by the other denominations examined, three main phases stand out; goals, content, and methods.

1. Goals to be Sought

a. Goals Connected with Worship in the Church.

Goals related to worship in the church are naturally prominent in the course on the church. They are specifically listed at the beginning of each unit. For example, two desired outcomes for the second unit on exploring the church building are 1) to know a prayer to say on entering and one to say on leaving the church, 2) to establish the custom of bowing head when the cross passes, when passing the altar, etc.³ In the third unit it is made clear, however, that the child should not only know about the service of the church but should experience fellowship with God

1. Cf. Ibid., Pupil's Book, pp. 3,25,26,34,47.
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 4,34,48.
3. Cf. Ibid., Teacher's Book, p. 36.

through actual worship, both in his own department and with adult members of the church family.¹ Primary children are considered old enough to begin to understand the value of The Prayer Book as a guide to common worship and to participate with the rest of the family in the church worship services. Concerning this Pruch writes:²

It does no harm for third-graders to be required occasionally to stretch up a little so long as there is provision for the expression of their own needs in their own language at sometime during the church school session. The family pew, the family worshiping together with the parents setting the example, is of utmost value in the religious life of children.

As far as their own use of the church sanctuary goes, a further goal is that they develop the habit of using the children's corner.

b. Goals Connected With Personal Worship

In the last unit the relationship between goals for group and personal worship is explained. The author states:

Personal discipleship more than additional discoveries about the church is the goal for this unit, because ways of using the church are worth nothing unless this knowledge bears fruit in Christian lives - more Christlike personalities because of experiences in the church.³

Consequently specific goals for the personal individual prayer life of the children are:

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 55.
 2. Ibid., p. 56.
 3. Ibid., p. 118.

Habits of prayer, of gaining strength to be good followers of Jesus Christ through prayer.
 Increasing skill in expressing their own thoughts and needs in original prayer.¹
 Habits of personal devotion.²

2. Emphases in Content of Prayers

No prayers or suggestions as to the possible content of prayers are given in the teacher's manual. However, twenty prayers are included in the pupil's book and from these it is possible to discern the main emphases in content. Both the prayers of thanksgiving and of aspiration express devotion to God. The prayers of aspiration express the desire to serve all fellow men.

a. Devotion to God Expressed in Thanksgiving for His Blessings

Six prayers of thanksgiving are found in the Pupil's Book.³ Of these, three express thanksgiving for God's gifts such as health, parents, sunshine and beauty, which meet all of man's needs.⁴ The other three are centered in thanksgiving for qualities of God's character; His loving-kindness, His guidance, His nearness and knowableness, His graciousness and patience.⁵

1. Ibid., p. 61.

2. Ibid., p. 97.

3. Cf. Ibid., Pupil's Book, pp. 26, 33, 34, 57, 58.

4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 26, 33, 34.

5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 34, 57, 58.

b. Devotion to God Expressed in Desire to Please Him

Five of the prayers of aspiration fall into this category.¹ Three of these prayers are related to worship. The following prayer, to be said when the child first goes in- to the sanctuary and kneels down in his pew, is an example:

Dear Heavenly Father, be with us as we worship Thee this day. Help us to remember that we are in Thy house and help us think only of Thee and listen to Thy voice. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.²

The other two relate to everyday life. One, called "A Morn- ing Prayer" is as follows:

My Father, now from Thee
A new day comes to me.
Teach me the wisest way
To learn and work and play,
So that Thy gift may be
A day that pleases Thee.³

In "A Child's Affirmation" the prayer of devotion is address- ed to Christ.

Lord Jesus, I believe Thee,
Lord Jesus, I trust Thee,
Lord Jesus, I love Thee.⁴

c. Devotion to God Expressed in Desire to Serve Him

This is the main emphasis in three prayers.⁵
A typical prayer in this group asks God to help them to be

1. Ibid., pp. 3,12,13,25,47.

2. Ibid., p. 12.

3. Ibid., p. 3.

4. Ibid., p. 58.

5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 3,34,57.

good Christians and help God always.¹

d. Devotion to God Expressed in Desire to Serve All People

This emphasis comes in connection with a missionary unit and is found in three prayers.² Under this category comes the prayer of thanksgiving that God has made all people alike in feeling joy and sorrow so that there can be universal understanding of others needs. A prayer based on this understanding is as follows:

...We don't understand why it is that some of your children have homes and some have not. We feel you never meant the world to be that way. You put in it good things enough for all. Help us to grow up thinking of ways to make things fairer, so that all the children may share in the good things we feel you meant for all.³

This prayer reflects as do the others the belief that God uses human instruments to accomplish His will. It is one of the few prayers that addresses God in the familiar you instead of Thou. Most of the prayers also end, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord" though a few omit this phrase.

Throughout these prayers the primary emphasis is devotion to God; desire to do His will in worship and everyday life, because of a deep desire to please Him from the motive of love and reverence.

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 34.
 2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 33, 34, 45.
 3. Ibid., p. 33.

3. Specific Methods

Comparatively more emphasis is laid on method than on content in this course. This in accordance with the aim to arouse the teacher's own creativity in making the lessons applicable to her class.¹ The close relation between goals and methods can easily be seen in the following methods recommended.

a. Stories on Prayer

Six stories are used to teach the meaning of prayer.² Two point up the significance of the church as a house of prayer where one can go to be quiet and alone to think about God, and give praise and pray.³ The others show the close relation between prayer and a changed life. Prayer is shown to result in courage, strengthening of will to do God's will, and guidance.⁴ This excerpt from one story shows how the Lord's prayer is applied: "The Lord's prayer said, 'Hallowed by Thy Name.' He knew he could not swear and keep the Lord's Prayer."⁵

b. Use of Common Prayer Book

The use of the prayer book in teaching about prayer is mentioned twice.⁶ In connection with the mission-

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1. Cf. Ibid., Teacher's Book, p. 2.
 2. Cf. Ibid., Pupil's Book, pp. 16, 28, 29, 50, 52.
Cf. Ibid., Teacher's Book, pp. 74-79.
 3. Cf. Ibid., Pupil's Book, pp. 28, 52.
 4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 29, 50.
 5. Ibid., Teacher's Book, p. 79.
 6. Cf. Ibid., p. 48, 67.

ary unit the children are taught, "Our bounden duty is to follow Christ, to worship God every Sunday in His church; and to work, pray and give for the spread of His Kingdom."¹ In the other instance it is suggested the class discuss The Prayer Book as a guide to worship.²

c. A Letter in Pupil's Book

At the beginning of the pupil's book this message is printed showing the purpose of the prayers given in the book:

In this book are some stories and prayers for you to use. Some of these prayers were written by church school classes. Why not make up some for yourself? You know, you don't always have to use prayers out of the book or which you have learned by heart, but you can pray at any time in your own words. Do that this year.³

d. Sentence Prayers

Spontaneous sentence prayers are suggested only once in the course of the year. After telling the story of an Indian chief who showed great courage as a result of prayer, the teacher is to guide the conversation around to things that are hard for the children to do. After several members of the class have given various suggestions, she asks if they can think of a prayer that would be appropriate. A brief period is then allowed during which as many as wish may pray in simple sentences asking for God's help to do

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1. Ibid., quoted on p. 48.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 67.
 3. Ibid., Pupil's Book, p. i.

hard things. Following this it is suggested that she lead them into sentence prayers of thanksgiving by telling them that every good prayer should give thanks too. After they have added their prayers of thanksgiving each child is to write a prayer in which is included these elements of asking for help, thanking God for blessings and remembering other people.¹

e. Form Prayers

This method is suggested for use in the church school only twice; both times in the worship service rather than the class session.² The main function of the form prayers included in the pupil's book is to serve as a guide for private devotions. For the whole group, however, it is advised that as the children appreciate and experience more real worship if they can share in the planning of the worship services, they should be allowed under the teacher's guidance to choose the form prayers they would like. It is also suggested that they write some prayers especially designed to be used in their own worship services.³

The teacher is warned that he misses the mark if he merely talks about private devotions which the child should experience both in the church and at home. He must

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1. Cf. Ibid., Pupil's Book, p. 112.
 2. Cf. Ibid., Teacher's Book, pp. 106, 121.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 57.

first guide them in expressing their needs and desires; then help them to know and understand the Lord's Prayer in relation to their needs and help them to find and learn other prayers that express these needs. These can serve as a guide in helping them to form the habit of expressing their thoughts in prayers. The teacher can then lead them to expressing their thoughts in their own words and not depending on "memorized" prayers.¹

f. Participation in Church Worship

While it is recognized that constant forced attendance at adult services, where there is little meaning in prayers couched in adult language may do more harm than good, nevertheless it is held that a planned visit to morning Prayer or Evensong with discussion of the service afterward can be a meaningful experience for the children. The discussion is to center around what kind of prayers occurred at different places in the service. The teacher is especially to point out the meaning of the confession of mistakes and the collects or short prayers summing up the teaching of the church.² The following are the collects with which the children are to become acquainted:

...a special collect for each Sunday of the Christian year and other Saint days, as well as some general collects; prayers for other people and for special occa-

1. Loc. cit.
2. Ibid., p. 59.

sions; a prayer of thanksgiving for all of God's goodness to us and to all people; a prayer asking God to grant our petitions according to His plan for the world; and the Blessing.¹

Another suggested method to encourage private meditation and prayer in the church is a visit to the Children's Corner. After looking over the materials provided the teacher is to lead into a conversation about using the church at any time, any day. A similiar procedure is to be followed in looking at the sign board in the vestibule of the church inviting people to "enter, rest and pray."²

g. Projects

Various illustrations of actual projects undertaken by different groups of children are included.³ After one primary department had visited the Children's Corner they undertook several projects to make it a better place to worship. A boy's class realized the need for kneeling benches for the small children whose heads barely reached the top of the pew backs in from of them when kneeling on the floor. Their class contributed money for the lumber and they constructed kneeling benches for the pews occupied by the kindergarten and first grade children. Another class made illustrated prayer folders and books for the Children's Corner and then had a service of dedication.⁴

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1. Ibid., p. 59-60.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 50.
 3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 67,98,111.
 4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 35,46.

h. Missionary Prayer

Several missionary prayers are included in the Pupil's Book.¹ However in class the missionary prayer is only used once. The children are to first compose a special missionary prayer to be used in the department worship. This is then printed on a large piece of bristol board with a border of children or objects from other countries drawn and colored by members of the class.²

i. Keeping Lent

The project suggested for Lent is the making of a small rule card on which are copied the rules, decided upon by the children themselves, which they want to follow during Lent. This project was actually carried out by one school. And it included the rule: "I will be faithful in my prayers and not hurry them."³ The children are to take their cards home and put them in front of their mitebox. At the top of the card each child copies a prayer asking God's help to keep the rules.⁴

C. Summary

Since among the materials of the Protestant Episcopal Church there is no Church-School magazine or other material

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1. Cf. Ibid., Pupil's Book, pp. 33, 48.
 2. Cf. Ibid., Teacher's Book, p. 100.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 98.
 4. Cf. Ibid., p. 101.

dealing with the matter of teaching children to pray, the study in this chapter was confined to the primary materials of the Cloister Series. Three emphases were discovered here: goals, content, and method.

Little stress, it was found, is laid on defining prayer except in terms of the various kinds of prayer given in The Prayer Book. However, the goals were found to be clearly defined and concentrated for the most part on group and individual prayers in the church. Both outward form, such as kneeling and bowing, and inward meaningfulness for the child, are of evident importance in the goals. Devotion expressed in a growing Christian life as a result of prayer is a strong emphasis.

In content as well as goals the prayer of devotion and worship was seen to be placed uppermost. Reverence is expressed in all aspects of prayer by a centering in God and His will for the child rather than in the child and his experiences and needs. As a result, it was discovered, there is little tying in of prayer with everyday experiences and what there is, is general, i.e., school, home, play.

Method was found to occupy considerably more space than goals or content. A variety of methods, keyed to carry out the goals, are used. Especially important, it was obvious, are the methods designed to facilitate the use of the church in connection with prayer. Little mention of home

co-operation was found except in the suggestion of family worship in the church.

From the above it is evident that the Episcopal Church emphasizes the church as the setting in which children are to be taught to pray and gives only a secondary place to the child's everyday experiences.

CHAPTER IV
METHODS OF TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY
INCORPORATED IN PRESBYTERIAN (U.S.A.) MATERIALS

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A. Introduction

This chapter is based on an analysis of materials put out by the Department of Children's Work of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Articles for teachers and parents are included in the Presbyterian New Curriculum magazine for primary age level, Opening Doors. The four quarters' materials¹ examined were found to contain three articles designed for the parents' and teachers' guidance in teaching children to pray. These articles along with the one pamphlet published, Helping Children With Prayers, form the basis for the study of the theory on teaching children to pray. The lesson plans found in Opening Doors reveal how this is put into practise.

B. Theory Advanced in Opening Doors and in Supplementary Material

A comparison of the articles and the pamphlet examined revealed that the discussions of prayer include emphasis on the goals to be sought, especially those set by Jesus' example of prayer, the essential requirements of one who would

1. Opening Doors, October 1948 - September 1949.

teach children to pray, and general methods to be used.

1. The Goals to be Sought

Jesus can be taken as the supreme example and teacher of prayer. Halsey observes that all of His recorded prayers in the Gospels begin, "Father," denoting a real experience of talking with God. Also all but one of those recorded are short. This means that the goals for prayer should be reality, talking to God in the honest thought and language of our own hearts; and on most occasions, brevity.¹ Furthermore, following Jesus' example in prayer means seeking to know the will of God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Halsey² summarizes the goal to be sought in this definition:

We do not come to God to tell Him what to do. True prayer is a gesture of faith and an act of confidence. We are taught to come to God, to treat Him as a father; and to unload all our burden of worry and shame; to share with Him all our desires, and then, just because He is our Father and because we trust His love and wisdom beyond our own knowledge and desire, we say (and feel) as Jesus did, "Father, ...not my will, but Thine, be done."

Prayer to be meaningful at all must be centered on God.

Thus Cellar³ states:

Our goal is for our children to learn that prayer is not confined to a particular time or place or posture, but is those parts of our lives that are not God centered, so that these lines will be the unconscious or conscious

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1. Cf. Jesse Halsey, "Prayer That Is Real," Opening Doors, 1:3, April - June, 1949.
Cf. Helen E. Cellar, "Helping Children With Prayer," Leads for Leaders, G - 4:2, 1947.
 2. Halsey, loc. cit.
 3. Cellar, Ibid., p. 1.

thoughts of a little child at the beginning of the day;
God is near me
All the day
He will hear me
When I pray.

Another goal is that prayer be natural, not forced. The child need only pray when he feels especially like talking to God.¹ This kind of prayer will lead to a deepening friendship with Him instead of empty formalism to which the prayer of duty or the exclusive use of form prayers may lead.²

Prayer, it is said, must be not only talking to God but listening to Him as well. The goal to be sought here is that prayer should be unhurried in order that the child may really experience the feeling of the presence of God.³

Prayer is to be based on intelligent trust in a God of order. This is of utmost importance as it shapes all of the attitudes toward life. If prayer life of the children is ungirded with the knowledge of the orderly way in which God works in His world they will be able to understand that sometimes God must answer, "Not yet," or "No," but He always answers.⁴

The final goal mentioned in these materials is that prayer shall be accompanied by active effort. Cellar believes that children can be spared much disillusionment by being

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1. Cf. loc. cit.
Cf. Ibid., p. 2.
 2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 1, 2.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 2.
 4. Cf. Ibid., p. 3.

taught early how to work with God in answering their prayers. This means that they will ask God to give them strength to act instead of asking Him to act for them.¹ This goal is epitomized in the statement cited of one little boy who said, "You see, when you ask God to help you, you must do everything you can and then God does the tiny little hardest part that you cannot do."

These then are the basic goals around which the Presbyterian Church seeks to build their program of teaching children to pray.

2. The Place of the Teacher

a. His responsibility

With regard to the responsibility of the teacher Cellar² says:

Christian teachers have always had as their chief responsibility and greatest joy helping boys and girls to have a growing and deepening fellowship with God through prayer; guiding them in growing from a simple "thank you" to the point where they will think of prayer primarily in the spirit of Jesus - as seeking to know the will of God through daily fellowship with Him.

It is the teacher's responsibility also to create within the child or a group of children the desire to express themselves to God.³

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 2.
Cf. Halsey, loc. cit.
 2. Cellar, Ibid., p. 1.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 2.

b. Requirements Demanded of the Teacher

The teacher or parent can fulfil these responsibilities only by meeting certain requirements. There must, first of all, be reverence in his own attitude. Of this Halsey states:

Teaching children beautiful prayers - the upward lift of other souls - is valuable, but the attitudes of thought and mind, the unconscious gesture of reverence, most often are the things that children catch from us in our unguarded moments. Grace at the table quickly over with is a poor substitute for a consistently reverent attitude.¹

He must be sensitive, skillful and patient in handling children in order to help them really feel the presence of God.

He must be careful not to force prayer when they are not ready. But on the other hand he must be alert to every opportunity where it seems most fitting and natural to stop for prayer, for this helps them to learn the habit of naturally turning to God at all times.² Most of all he must have spiritual resources of his own. Earnest desire on the part of parents to lead their children to pray is not enough. They must first discover the meaning of the worship of God in their own lives.³ Therefore the teacher must continue to grow in prayer himself. It is suggested that he try and carry out in his own private prayers, the goals to be sought in teaching children to pray.⁴ One method recommended in order to pray na-

1. Halsey, loc. cit.

2. Cellar, Ibid., p. 4.

3. Cf. Clyde M. Allison, "Prayer Psalms," Opening Doors, 1:14, April - June, 1949.

4. Cf. Cellar, Ibid., p. 1.

turally without wordy formalism is to pray aloud in daily practise.¹ In order to center prayer in praise and adoration of God Allison suggests the prayer guides which the Psalms afford.²

Since the teacher creates the pattern, another requirement is that his prayers have variety. The children will mimic his vocabulary; therefore he needs to be careful in his use of such words as "bless" and the various terms he uses for God.³

3. General Methods Suggested

Comparatively little emphasis is put on methods. However it is suggested that the atmosphere of the room be made as warm and worshipful as possible. The worship corner can become even more effective, Cellar says, by allowing the children to make it their own through bringing the flowers and selecting the pictures themselves.⁴

Beauty in sound may also serve as motivation for prayer. While the children listen to music on records or on the piano the teacher may suggest that they think about God.⁵

The teacher may use the opening or closing prayers of the class period to set the mood or bring the lesson to a climax.⁶

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1. Cf. loc. cit.
 2. Allison, loc. cit.
 3. Cf. Cellar, ibid., p. 4.
 4. Cf. ibid., p. 3.
 5. Cf. loc. cit.
 6. Cf. loc. cit.

As most children get little or no help at home with prayer, a wide variety of prayers that they can use at home or in the church school should be memorized.¹ Home worship centers are also urged. One article suggests to parents that a table set aside as a family altar may be a very significant help to worship.²

C. Practise Incorporated in Presbyterian Primary Curriculum Materials

The primary course in the Presbyterian New Curriculum includes the magazine for teachers and parents, Opening Doors, reading books, and activity packets for the children, and a set of teaching pictures. In the year chosen,³ one complete unit containing lesson plans for eight weeks is centered in prayer.⁴ Times for silent prayer or for writing prayers is allowed in eight lessons.⁵ Leading the whole class in prayer by individual members is suggested four times.⁶ Seven form prayers are used,⁷ while forty-two prayers for the teacher to

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1. Cf. loc. cit.
 2. Cf. "Centers of Study and Worship in the Home," 1:31, April - June, 1949.
 3. October, 1948 - September, 1949.
 4. Dorothy B. Fritz, editor; "Plans for Teaching in Church and Home," Opening Doors, 1:24-64; Number 3.
 5. Ibid., pp. 40, 45, 52, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., p. 44, Number 2.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 35, 58, Number 3.
 6. Cf. Ibid., p. 32, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., p. 32, Number 2.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 60, 62, Number 3.
 7. Cf. Ibid., p. 48, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 41, 42, 47, 50, 52, Number 2.
Cf. Ibid., p. 35, Number 3.

pray are given.¹ Thirteen different prayer hymns are suggested² and there are six stories centering in or referring to prayer.³ From this wealth of material the practise of the Presbyterian church is analysed.

1. Goals to be Sought

Many specific goals are set forth, which fall into three main categories.

a. Fellowship followed by action

In one article The Child and God, teachers are told,

Whether a child ever achieves the ability to pray so that the process becomes a strengthening and enabling influence in his life depends upon his awareness of his own relationship to God as revealed through Jesus Christ; this will determine how he prays.⁴

In light of this the first goal must concern the child's concept of God. In this article four aspects of His nature are set forth as being the concept of God that should be conveyed. He is an all-wise God of dependability as seen in His orderly universe. He is a God of loving concern for all persons. He is a God of righteousness who demands responsive righteousness in personal and social relationship. He is a

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 42, 55, 61, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 38, 44, Number 3.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 32, 51, Number 4.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 49, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 30, 40, 52, 53, Number 2.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 36, 40, 58, Number 3.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 59, Number 2.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 34, 36, 46, 56, 60, Number 2.
 4. Ibid., "The Child and God," 1:29, Number 3.

Spirit with whom to have fellowship, not simply a giver of good things.¹ With this kind of God the child can have fellowship.

Christ reveals this same relationship of belief in God's love and righteousness in His teaching. The Lord's prayer as interpreted in the primary reading book, Thine is the Glory reflects each of the four aspects. Because He is a God who has created dependable laws in the universe, "deliver us from evil" cannot be interpreted to mean, "don't let anything unpleasant happen to us" but rather, "don't let anything that happens make us do anything evil."² The we, our, and us in the Lord's prayer mean everybody, everywhere, and show God's loving concern for all people.³ God's demand of responsive righteousness in both personal and social righteousness is brought out in several stories in the book. The meaning of hallowed is explained to Don as the wonderful goodness and holiness of God which reminds us that God is and that everything we say and do should show that we remember Him.⁴ That God is a Spirit is conveyed in Polly's thoughts on the meaning of "Our Father who art in heaven..." "Polly wrote, 'That means heaven is wherever God is. And wherever people are loving God and trying to do what He wants them to,

1. Cf. loc. cit.

2. Cf. Florence M. Taylor, Thine is the Glory, 1:49, Number 3.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 35.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 5, pp. 15, 34, 49.

that is heaven right there."¹ The climax of the book also gets over this concept, "Wherever God is, life is as full of glory as the sunset."²

Christ also reveals the fellowship the individual must have to God in prayer through His example. One story interprets it thus: "Jesus went out very early in the morning to pray after a long day's work. He had learned that talking to God and listening for Him can be done anytime, anywhere."³

The specific goal stated for the Thanksgiving unit sums up this goal of fellowship. "There should be in each child's heart and mind such a consciousness of God, the Creator, that every hour of every day may be such a song of praises (as Psalm 111, 118, 136 etc.)."⁴

b. Clarification of Knowledge

A second major goal is that the children may experience a deeper revelation of God's will through prayer. The final goal in group worship is a greater awareness of God's purposes.⁵ Jesus' example also shows this to be the purpose of prayer:

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1. Ibid., p. 15.
 2. Ibid., p. 49.
 3. Opening Doors, p. 52, Number 2.
 4. Ibid., p. 49, Number 1.
Cf. p. 50, Number 1.
Cf. p. 29, Number 3.
 5. Loc. cit.

Jesus...went often to a quiet place to pray. He thought this was the very best way to understand God and to know just what God wanted him to do. That is why you have special times of your own to talk to God.¹

With deeper knowledge of God's will comes strength to carry it out. In Jesus' life, it is pointed out, prayer made him able to do hard things which otherwise He would not have been able to do.² In a letter addressed to the boys and girls on the back cover of their reading book, Taylor³ writes,

One of the most important things you can ever learn is how to pray. For when you really pray, you are thinking about God first, and talking with Him, and finding out what He wants you to do.

So prayer becomes a way of knowing more certainly God's will for their lives.

c. Reality in Expression

Prayer is defined as "a very special way to let God know we love him and want to do his will."⁴ The children must really mean all that they say in prayer to God. This is to be stressed especially in prayer hymns and other form prayers.⁵ It is brought out in the reading book as well:

Some of the most beautiful prayers ever written are hymns. You can sing a prayer, or you can say it out loud, or you can just think it. It's a prayer whenever you are really talking with God and meaning every word you say.⁶

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1. Ibid., p. 50, Number 2.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 19, Number 3.
Cf. James D. Smart, Jesus, Stories for Children, 1:47, January - March, 1949.
Cf. Florence M. Taylor, Growing Pains, 1:49, July - September, 1949.
 3. Taylor, Thine is the Glory, back cover.
 4. Fritz, op. cit., p. 49, Number 2.
 5. Cf. Ibid., p. 48, Number 3.

These three goals are of great importance in determining the practise of the Presbyterian church in teaching children to pray.

2. The Place of the Teacher

a. Spiritual Life

At the beginning of each lesson plan is an opening paragraph which seeks to prepare the teacher spiritually for her task. Several of these stress the importance of the teacher's own spiritual development in connection with teaching prayer. A sense of working for and with God in teaching children is made a pre-requisite. It is suggested that the teacher's own personal and group worship will aid in developing this sense of fellowship.¹

It is forcibly brought out that the teacher cannot get over the true meaning of the prayer hymn Thou Art With Us, unless he has experienced trust in God at all times, even when all that can be seen is bad.² Spiritual readiness is seen to be the most important qualification the teacher can possess.

b. Methodology

It is the place of the teacher to guide children in Christian growth through prayer by keeping always in mind

1. Cf. Opening Doors, p. 49, Number 2.
Cf. Ibid., p. 34, Number 4.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 45, Number 3.

the goals he desires to have reached.¹ The effect this has on guiding the teaching is seen in this suggestion:

In the weeks before children's Day, the teachers will try to make this truly an experience for the children, of leading prayer, rather than of exhibiting their skill in singing. Plan and work together to keep prayerful feeling uppermost even in rehearsals, and most especially on Children's Day.²

Even after this unit on prayer has been completed the teacher is urged to keep on looking for ways of keeping in the children's minds their new understanding of prayer. He is also to evaluate carefully all prayers and prayer songs to see that they are in accordance with the concept of God and attitude toward prayer which the children have already learned.³

3. The Place of the Parents.

The home is given a place of great importance in the Presbyterian course. A real effort is made to get the teaching of the church into the teaching of the home that the home may supplement and solidify it in the child's daily experience. Each lesson in the course ends with a paragraph addressed to the parents and giving suggestions concerning both the responsibilities of the parents and the practical methods by which they may be fulfilled.

1. Ibid., p. 29, Number 3.

2. Ibid., p. 53, Number 3.

3. Ibid., p. 59, Number 3.

a. The Responsibility of the Parents

Because of the importance in the child's living and thinking the home presents a unique opportunity to teach the meaning of prayer. Parents are told:

Children love to do things with grownups and to do the same things that grownups do, even though they do not fully understand either the meaning or the way of doing so.¹

This being the case, prayer may be an activity that the whole family can participate in daily, and if the family is given to prayer it is hardly necessary to teach children rote prayers.² Prayer will become a result of their own living and thinking and thus the heart and center of their lives.³

The responsibility of the parents in the face of this opportunity is to make prayer an integral part of both their own individual lives and the life of the family. They are warned against seeking only to teach their children to "say prayers" while leaving prayer out of their own lives entirely. The result, it is said, will be a feeling on the child's part that prayer is not really a significant part of adult life.⁴ The parent must show by his own life that decisions are constantly to be made in the spirit of worship and prayer.⁵ Thus parents are advised:

1. Ibid., p. 52, Number 2.

2. Cf. loc. cit.

3. Cf. Taylor, op. cit., p. 30, Number 3.

4. Cf. loc. cit.

5. Cf. Ibid., Opening Doors, p. 52, Number 2.

It is good for your child to have a special time and place to pray, but it is also good to feel that talking to and with God is an ever present resource for life.¹

The parents can best teach this truth to their children by demonstrating it in their own lives. Times of spontaneous worship together as a family will also prove this to be true.²

b. The Means Parents May Use

1) To deepen their own devotional lives

When parents realize this is the most important thing they can do in order to teach their children to pray they will welcome suggestions as to how it may be accomplished. To this end parents are advised to make prayer books for themselves.³ Devotional materials are included in many of these messages to parents to form a nucleus around which it may be built.⁴

Devotional books they may use to enrich their own prayer life are also recommended. Two representative books on the list are: Every Day a Prayer, M.H. Bro, and Prayer, George A. Butterick.⁵

Another suggestion given is that parents adopt the same method Jesus used to increase a continuous God awareness leading to a deep prayer life - that is to use everyday

1. Ibid., p. 50, Number 2.

2. Cf. loc. cit.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 32, Number 3.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 37, 50, 54, Number 3.

5. Cf. Ibid., p. 62, Number 3.

things to remind themselves of God's presence. This experiment is assigned:

For one week whenever you touch a saltcellar, remember for a moment that Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth," (Matt. 5:13). Ask yourself: "What flavor am I adding to the family life of which I am a part? Is it a truly Christian flavor?" For one week, whenever you touch a light switch, remember that Jesus said, "You are the light of the world," (Matt. 5:14). Ask yourself, "Am I truly revealing to this family of which I am a part the beauty and joy of Christian living?"¹

In these ways the parents may deepen their own prayer life and thus be able to share with their children the honest results of their own experience in prayer.

2) To deepen family devotional life

Family worship can be either formal or informal. Of the two the latter is more important, but occasional formal family worship has values too.²

A prayer corner with flowers and pictures, it is said, may add to a worshipful atmosphere.³ Various source books containing worship materials suitable for use with children are listed.⁴ Several times a complete worship service that the whole family may use is included.⁵ For example on Palm Sunday it is suggested that the story behind the hymn, All Glory, Laud and Honor, be told, then that this hymn

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1. Ibid., p. 49, Number 3.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 60, Number 2.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 51, Number 2.
 4. Cf. Ibid., p. 62, Number 3.
 5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 37, 41, Number 3.

be sung, and finally, that the family devotion be closed with prayer.¹

The informal spontaneous moment of worship that happens during the day is even more important. This prayer hymn is given to illustrate this spontaneous worship:

Sometimes I say an extra prayer,
Besides the one for which I kneel.
I stand and look up at the stars,
And tell our Father how I feel.
I do not ask for anything;
I just feel happy through and through.
I let my heart give thanks and sing,
Till all the world seems good and true.

The parents' part is to be sure the child recognizes such experiences as prayer.² In such things as singing the Lord's prayer he can help to see that it is done with reverence and dignity so that it may be a genuine prayer experience.³

A final suggestion to parents to help them to make prayer a spontaneous experience is that they direct attention to the many times and places in which people acknowledge their need for prayer in everyday life. They may point out the use of prayer on public occasions or in stories and pictures.⁴ By these means parents can help their children grow in learning how to pray.

1. Cf. Taylor, op. cit., p. 59, Number 2.

2. Cf. Opening Doors, p. 50, Number 2.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 37, Number 2.

4. Cf. Ibid., p. 54, Number 3.

4. Emphases in Content

An analysis of the forty-two prayers for the teacher's use and the seven form prayers for class use shows the following kinds of prayers to be included: thanksgiving, intercession, petition, and affirmation.

a. Thanksgiving

The prayers of thanksgiving are short, usually expressing only one thought.¹ Thanks is given for daily blessings; food, homes, the church with its friendly members;² for God's love and His presence though He is invisible;³ for Jesus who came to bring love and peace and knowledge of God.⁴

b. Intercession

The prayers of intercession often begin, "Our Father, Bless..."⁵ Though there are a few prayers of intercession for general groups such as the sick⁶ and all who are doing God's work,⁷ the majority of these prayers are concerned with more specific needs of missionaries in various countries. For example it is suggested that prayer be made for the teachers and schools in Lampang, Siam, and that the class

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 27, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., p. 59, Number 4.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 39, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., p. 59, Number 4.
 3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 50, 52, Number 2.
 4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 27, 55, Number 1.
 5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 27, 33, 36, Number 1.
 6. Cf. Ibid., p. 27, Number 1.
 7. Cf. Ibid., pp. 31, 38, Number 1.

pray that Embudo Hospital will get the supplies and helpers needed.¹ The hymn "America" is used as a prayer for God's blessing upon the nation.²

c. Petition

The prayers of petition often have in them the phrase, "Help us."³ This is by far the most frequent of the various types. Twenty-four of the prayers studied included or centered entirely around this element of petition.⁴ One of the main emphases concerns good conduct in everyday life. Under this heading fall the prayers asking God's help to be good pupils, cheerful members of the home, and friendly loving neighbors.⁵

A more general prayer that comes under this category is the following.

Dear Lord, I know what is the right thing, and the best,
to do.
But I want very much to do the other.
Help me to choose the best.
Help me to be brave and strong and good.⁶

Another prayer usually coming under this classification is the prayer that we may follow Jesus' example.⁷ At Easter time

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1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 62, 63, Number 3.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 32, Number 4.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 54, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 44, 50, Number 3.
 4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 29, 33, 35, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 50, 64, Number 2.
 5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 35, 54, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., p. 48, Number 4.
 6. Taylor, Growing Pains, p. 51.
 7. Opening Doors, Cf. Ibid., p. 29, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., pp. 50, 63, Number 2.

this prayer is to be used:

Dear God, we pray that we may all with one accord follow Jesus in doing loving and kind things for one another, and may we carry this Easter thought throughout all our lives.¹

A second emphasis is the prayer that we may think about God and may remember that all good gifts come from Him and that He is always with us.² This prayer is typical:

Our Father, help us know that thou art with us, all the time, everywhere, when we are happy and when we are unhappy, when we are sick and when we are well. Help us remember to think of Thee often and to try to live every day in ways that are pleasing to Thee. Amen.³

d. Affirmation

The prayer of affirmation is found only three times. Each stresses decision and commitment. In the reading book on the Lord's prayer, this prayer of affirmation is found on the front cover:

Any times's the time for prayer
When I work or when I pray
In the morning, in the evening
I can pray.

Always God will understand,
Always listen, always care;
So at any time, I'll softly
Make a prayer.⁴

Another prayer in this same unit emphasizes the gladness that

1. Ibid., p. 64, Number 2.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 44, 50, Number 3.

Cf. Ibid., p. 38, Number 4.

3. Ibid., p. 50, Number 3.

4. Taylor, Thine Is the Glory, "God Listens", front cover.

is ours in helping to answer people's prayers by sharing.¹

At the end of a unit on "Brotherhood Town" this prayer of affirmation is stated:

Our Father, these are the things we want to remember and to do, not just in make-believe "Brotherhood Town" but all day long, everywhere. Amen.²

From the above it is evident that the primary emphasis in content is that God will help each individual child to live a life of personal integrity and thoughtful consideration of others which will show his relationship to God.

5. Specific Methods

Methods are definitely stressed, especially in the unit on prayer. Specific methods are not only suggested, but described in detail so that the teacher may the more readily put them into practise. The following are some of the methods recommended.

a. Conversation

Conversation is used to bind many other methods together. For example, it is used to show the implication of the story about Dr. Carver for the children's own lives. The teacher is to point up through conversation the way Dr. Carver often went away in quiet to talk with God.³ In another case conversation is used to prepare the way for prayer. After

1. Cf. Opening Doors, p. 38, Number 3.

2. Ibid., p. 35, Number 4.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 35, Number 2.

reading the prayer hymn "Thou Art With Us" the teacher is to let the children tell about some of the times when they have been lonely or unhappy. Then in the prayer he is to bring in a petition for God's help in facing some of these hard things the children have described.¹ Conversation is often suggested as a means of introducing new projects,² and of evaluating previous projects.³

b. Stories About Prayer

The reading book Thine Is The Glory contains stories interpreting the Lord's Prayer. Many of these are used in the worship services, as well as for the children's own reading. On the back cover the specific purpose of these stories is given; namely, that the children may better understand the Lord's prayer and that their own original prayers may be more meaningful.⁴ These stories are used in the class sessions too. At the end of the unit the teacher and children together discuss and write on the blackboard the new ideas that have been gained on prayer through the book.⁵ After spending one class period out of doors the class closes by the teacher's recalling how the family in Thine Is The Glory sang the Lord's Prayer on their picnic, and the class' singing

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 45, Number 3.

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 58.

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 56, Number 3.

Cf. Ibid., p. 49, Number 1.

4. Cf. Taylor, Thine Is The Glory, back cover.

5. Cf. Opening Doors, p. 36, Number 3.

it together.¹

Several other stories on prayer are used during the year. Two teach the value of private prayer, in the home and at all times.² The other two show that God uses people to answer prayers.³

c. Audio-visual Aids

1) Pictures

Three of the pictures, Talking With God, End of the Day, and Let Us Give Thanks, included in the set of teaching pictures which accompanies the course, are pictures on prayer. It is recommended that the teacher talk with the children about the different times and reasons for prayer, they suggest.⁴ Three pictures are suggested as possibilities for the room; Margaret Tarrant's, He Prayeth Best, Hilltop at Nazareth, and The Angelus by Millet.⁵ Another use of pictures is in the gift recommended for primary graduates on Children's Day; a folder containing a reproduction of Albert Dürer's, Praying Hands, and inside the story of how it came to be painted.⁶

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 39, Number 4.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 40, Number 1.
Cf. Ibid., p. 56, Number 3.
 3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 37, 60, Number 3.
 4. Cf. Ibid., p. 49, Number 2.
 5. Cf. Ibid., p. 64, Number 3.
 6. Cf. Ibid., p. 45, Number 3.

2) Records

At Easter time it is suggested that, if possible a record player be secured, and records of the Palms, oratorios, or prayer hymns with chimes or sung by a choir be played.¹

3) Creche

The teacher is advised to gather the children together around the creche after a Christmas candlelight service of worship, for the closing prayer.²

d. Methods Used in Teaching Specific Prayers

1) Prayer Hymns

The teacher is to read the words of "Just Before I Sleep Tonight," a prayer hymn of thanksgiving, and suggest to the class that it is a tune to which they can well write other thank you words. This is an activity they are to complete during the week. The teacher is to outline this process to them:

1. Decide on the gift of God for which thanks is to be expressed.
2. If the choice is difficult to fit into a rhyme, use it within a phrase, as, "For my house so dear."
3. Talk about the circumstance in which thanks are to be expressed...

The final advice to the teacher using this method is to make the result their own and not expect a professional finish.³

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 57, Number 2.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 59, Number 1.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 49, Number 1.

Another method suggested to enable the class to learn a prayer hymn is illustrating it. Two hymns said to be suitable for this are "Praise Be to God" and "O God Whose Laws Will Never Change." One of the best ways to display the individual illustrations is to make an extension booklet in which the cards are put together in accordion style.¹

2) Bible Prayers

Some of the prayer-psalms expressing whole-hearted thankfulness such as Psalms 111-118, 120-134, are to be read during the Thanksgiving unit.² These can be used at other times of the year as well. Another use of the Scripture is in Bible birthday verse prayers. At the beginning of the year each child is given a special birthday verse such as "What time I am afraid I will put my trust in Thee." During the unit on prayer the teacher is to plan for a time when some of the children may pray their verses aloud.³ Several Bible prayers printed on the activity sheets are to be bound together into individual prayer books. After these have been completed the children are to take turns reading these short prayers from the Bible, and then discuss the times when they might like to use them.

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 34, Number 3.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 49, Number 1.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 44, Number 3.

The method of memorization is advised in connection with this. The teacher may say, "If we learned these prayers by heart perhaps very often during the day we could pray them."¹ After these prayers have been memorized they also may be used to pray aloud.²

3) Prayers of Dedication

Two books that the children make are dedicated. The first, the prayer book, is to be dedicated by the children's reading together the poem on the title page, "God Listens," followed by a prayer led by the teacher.³ The second, a book the children have made about the church, to be given to the minister to show newcomers, or to be given to the kindergarten department, is to be dedicated at the time of the offering, with a simple prayer followed by singing some "church" songs and the recitation of Psalm 122:1, or Psalm 100.⁴

4) Graces

At Thanksgiving time parents are advised to guide conversation with their children at the table in the direction of thankfulness for everyday gifts, and to use the Hebrew expression of thanks as a family grace to which they are to add their own expression of gratefulness.⁵

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 48, Number 3.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 60, Number 3.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 50, Number 3.
 4. Cf. Ibid., p. 62, Number 4.
 5. Cf. Ibid., p. 50, Number 1.

In Sunday School a singing grace is to be learned.¹ The picture of a family with the father saying grace may be used to start a conversation about some of the things which should be included in a grace.²

5) The Lord's Prayer

A number of different methods are used to teach the Lord's Prayer. The stories in Thine Is The Glory, center in how Don and Polly, two children their own age, discovered what the different phrases in it mean. Many of these stories are used in the worship services as well.³ The Lord's Prayer is sung by a soloist after the first of these and this is followed by silent prayer that the reading book may increase their understanding of it.⁴

A unusual setting of the Lord's Prayer is printed on two of the activity sheets which the children are to mount on heavy cardboard, tie together with a ribbon and take home, to be sung by the whole family.⁵ They also are to learn the song in Sunday School.⁶ The Lord's Prayer is used as a guide to silent prayer in the following manner:

Today we're going to pray the Lord's Prayer in a little different way. We are going to say each part of it and then be still and think about what it means. We're going to remember what Don and Polly found out about it,

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 36, Number 3.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 43, Number 2.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 35, Number 3.
 4. Cf. loc. cit.
 5. Cf. Ibid., p. 36, Number 3.
 6. Cf. Ibid., p. 45, Number 3.

and some of the things we found out ourselves. When we come to the last part (for Thine is the glory) we'll sing it together.¹

6) Guided Prayer

At the end of the unit on Brotherhood Town, the teacher is to review the rules the children agreed they would try to follow in their make-believe town. She is to suggest that they all bow their heads and after each rule she will stop while they pray silently, "God help me to remember and to try hard to keep this rule."²

e. Projects

Several projects are proposed through which the children may better learn the meaning of prayer.

1) Synagogue Service

The worship service for one Sunday just preceding Thanksgiving is patterned after the Jewish Synagogue service. The setting is made as authentic as possible and attendant, rabbi, and cantor are chosen to lead the rest of the group. Besides the form prayer of thanks and petition, the class is to have written in preparation, their own thanksgiving prayer, which is read by the cantor just before the closing benediction.³

1. Ibid., p. 58, Number 3.

2. Ibid., p. 35, Number 4.

3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 47,48, Number 1.

2) Children's Day Program

The children are to be given an opportunity to help decide on the way they will tell the congregation how the Lord's Prayer was given. The natural suggestion will probably be that someone tell the story. The teacher can then say something to the effect that perhaps the story-teller would like to make believe he is one of the disciples. If the class is not too large the other members may be disciples too, who carry on a conversation before about some of the things (which they have been studying) which Jesus did and said. After the story has been told of how the Lord's Prayer came to be given, they may converse naturally on what it means to them.¹

Their part of the service is to be concluded by singing the Lord's Prayer. These three ways of making it real prayer instead of just singing are suggested: while the children are practising it, the director is to stress their responsibility in leading the whole congregation in prayer.² At the time of the service itself both children and congregation are to bow their heads and close their eyes for the song.³ And after it is over, during the next class session, the teacher is to help them evaluate by asking if they felt

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 43, Number 3.
 2. Cf. Ibid., p. 48, Number 3.
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 53, Number 3.

their song was truly a prayer.¹

3) Wall Hanging

This project is recommended to prevent the last two sessions in the unit, following Children's Day, from becoming anti-climactic. Each child is to make a large wall hanging to take home as part of a worship center. This project is introduced by telling the story of Ming-ong's altar, followed by conversation concerning a special place in the children's homes where they could have a worship center. The motto to be spatter painted or crayon stenciled on the hanging is, "Any Time's the Time for Prayer." Specific directions are given as to how these processes can be carried out to get the best results.²

D. A Comparison Between Theory and Practise

The basis for comparison between theory and practise is found in these three phases: goals, place of the teacher, and methods.

1. Goals

There is a very close correspondance between the goals set forth in theory and those stated in the curriculum. In some cases they are identical. For example both the theory

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 56, Number 3.

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 55-58.

and practise set forth the goal of reality in expression - that prayer must be talking to God in the honest thought and language of the heart. This is carried further in the goals of the curriculum by application to hymn and form prayers.

Following Jesus' example is stressed in both theory and practise, both in goals and content. The goal in theory of not dictating to God what He should do but confiding in Him and seeking His will is found in practise in the concept of God set forth. His wisdom and dependability in governing the universe forbids demanding that He do man's will. His love invites confidence and friendship. It is also found in the goal, in practice, of fellowship followed by action, and is emphasized in content by the frequent petition to know God's constant presence and do His will in everyday conduct. Another goal set forth in theory which finds constant expression in the curriculum is that prayer shall be natural and at any time or place. Both content and practise in the curriculum bear this out. The goals set forth in theory are all present in the practise. The goals in practise develop more fully the concept of God, which, however, is found in embryo in the theory.

2. Place of the Teacher

Though the phraseology is somewhat different, theory and practise closely agree on the requirements of a teacher who is to teach children to pray. The theory states the

requirements as being a consistently reverent attitude and spiritual resources from which to draw. Corresponding attributes set forth in practise are deepening personal worship and experience of spiritual lessons before attempting to impart them to pupils. Two requirements found in theory, not specifically set forth in practise are sensitivity to the readiness of the children for prayer and variety in wording of prayers. The danger of "rut" prayers however is carefully guarded against in the content of the prayers given, and the program is flexible enough for the teacher to use her own judgment as to when the children are most ready for prayer. The function of the teacher - helping to deepen fellowship, guiding from a simple thank you prayer to the deeper prayer seeking to know God's will, and creating desire on the part of the children to express themselves to God - set forth in theory, is not explicitly stated in practise, but does determine many of the emphases in content and method.

The place of the parent is only briefly touched upon in theory while in practise it is developed much more fully. Both bring out the importance of consistency between the actual practise of prayer on the part of the parents and their teaching of prayer to their children.

3. Methods

Specific methods are set forth only in a cursory manner in theory while in practise they are suggested in great

detail. However every method that is set forth in theory is carried out in practise. The worship atmosphere is carried out through selected pictures on prayer. The use of beauty in sound is carried out in practise through Easter prayer hymn records. Theory advises making the opening class prayer set the mood, and the closing one bring the lesson to a climax. In practise prayer is not included in the class session as often as in the worship service. When it is, however, it almost always comes as the climax of the lesson. Another suggestion in theory carried out only partially in practise is the memorization of a wide variety of prayers to use at home. The memorization of a few short Bible prayers is suggested only once in practise. The home worship centers advised in theory are emphasized in the program through the methods of story, discussion, and project.

E. Summary

This chapter was centered in a study of Presbyterian materials in order to discover the theory and practise of teaching children to pray. It included first an analysis of the theory set forth in the pamphlet, Helping Children With Prayer and in several articles included in the teacher's quarterly, Opening Doors, October 1948 - September 1949. This was followed by an examination of practise found in the curriculum for the same period.

Theory and practise were found to be in close agreement on goals, the place of the teacher, and methods. Theory was seen to determine content in the curriculum to a large extent.

The main goals were discovered to be a reality in expression, a concept of God which produces fellowship on which prayer is based, a natural attitude toward prayer so that it can be anytime and anywhere, and prayer that will produce results in life.

These goals were seen to underlie the content of the prayers recorded for both the teacher's and children's use. The main emphases in these prayers were found to be thanking for material blessings and for God's presence; asking God's blessing on specific mission schools, on their own Primary department and on other more general groups; asking God's help to choose the best and to live a life patterned after Jesus' example; and affirming desire to do God's will in everyday life.

The place of the teacher and even more of the parent was found to be help of utmost importance. The basic prerequisite of both was seen to be a deep personal experience of the reality of prayer in their own lives, and next in importance was sensitivity to the children's readiness to pray.

Methods, it was discovered, have been given detailed consideration in these materials. Both for the teacher and

parent methods are carefully outlined. Primary emphasis was seen to fall on those methods which were aimed at making prayer, particularly the Lord's prayer, meaningful and real in the children's lives. Specific methods used a great deal were found to be conversation, stories, and projects. Audio-visual aids, original prayers, and form prayers were also used occasionally, it was discovered.

These findings point to the fact that the Presbyterian church considers teaching children to pray one of the main goals in its program. In fact this statement is made, "The basic idea and points of view with which this unit on prayer is concerned underlie all the work of Christian education."¹ This is the reason that prayer is given such a primary place in the course.

1. Ibid., p. 59, Number 3.

CHAPTER V
A COMPARISON OF
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WITH RESPECT TO TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY

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A COMPARISON OF SELECTED DENOMINATIONAL MATERIALS WITH RESPECT TO TEACHING CHILDREN TO PRAY

A. Introduction

An analysis has been made in the first four chapters of the principles and practise of teaching children to pray set forth in the materials of the Northern Baptist, Congregational, Protestant Episcopal, and Presbyterian U.S.A. denominations. In this chapter these finding will be compared of the basis of primary emphases in goals, concept of God, place of the teacher and parents, content, methods recommended, and the importance placed on teaching prayer in the program of Christian education.

B. Goals Emphasized

Three goals are held in common by all four denominations. The first is a sense of fellowship with God in prayer, a sense of companionship with One who has a personal interest in the individual. The second goal is a sincere expression of feelings and thoughts to God. It was evident that all four denominations hold that this can only be true if preceded by the first goal, for only a sense of God's presence and love will invite such confiding of thought. The third

goal common to all four is the necessity for prayer to be a motivating power in life.

Prayer is to be a means whereby strength is gained to live a better Christian life and be truer followers of Christ. Fellowship with God in prayer must be followed by action.

A goal stressed by the Baptist, Congregational, and Presbyterian churches is the attitude of complete naturalness and spontaneity, so that sometimes prayer may be telling God a story, and it may take place at any time or place, and in any position. This is not true of the Episcopal church, it was discovered. The attitude of complete reverence is its primary goal; thus it rules out as being too familiar, prayer that is chiefly centered in human experience. Position and place are of great importance, though one goal is understanding that prayer can be at any time, during the week as well as on Sunday. The preferred place is the church however, and the preferred position, kneeling.

Of central importance in the Baptist and Episcopal materials is the goal of group worship in prayer. In the Baptist church this is through writing or saying a prayer together; in the Episcopal church through participation in the prayers of the Church service.

Three goals proposed by the Baptist church, but not mentioned by the other denominations, are unembarrassed, direct, thoughtful public prayer, individual decision as to a

special time, place, and manner for prayer, and prayer as a means of strengthening in temptation and joy in penitence.

C. Concept of God

In the Baptist, Congregational, and Presbyterian materials the concept of God desired is clearly defined. In the Episcopal materials it is not stated directly but can be deduced from the content of the prayers.

In all four denominations, but especially in the Congregational, the concept of God is to determine the content of the prayers. All four hold to a God of dependability and order. The Congregational materials carry this to the extent of teaching that God never breaks into this order, and emphasize that He uses people exclusively to carry out His purposes rather than acting directly in His universe. The other three denominations also recognize this but allow more place for God's supernatural activity in His universe. For example the Congregational materials set forth the concept that God reveals Himself in prayer, by giving inner strength to live a Christian life. The Presbyterian materials, on the other hand hold to the concept that God reveals Himself in prayer by making the individual more certain of His will just as He revealed His will more clearly to Christ when He prayed. The other three denominations are also agreed that God often answers prayers through giving the individual strength to act

himself, or through other Christians who will do His will, but do not go to the extreme of believing that is the only way God can answer prayers.

All four denominations are in complete agreement on the concept of a personal God who shows loving concern for all men because He is the Father of all men. The reason, it is held, that all do not share the same blessings is not favoritism on God's part but selfishness on man's part. Thus it behooves all who are blessed in material things to share.

The concept of God held to be most important in the Baptist materials is that God is a Friend who likes to have His children tell Him when they are glad (prayer is not to be only a solemn thing) and is willing to help them when they are sorry for having done wrong. In the Congregational materials the concept to be conveyed is that of a God of order who has entrusted to man the responsibility of carrying out His purposes. The Episcopal church stresses the character of God as One to be revered and obeyed, yet One who is near and gracious and patient. The Presbyterian church emphasizes the righteousness of God and the responsive righteousness demanded of His children in personal and social relationships.

D. Place of the Teacher and Parents

All four denominations hold to the importance of the teacher as a guide, both in attitude toward and in shaping

the concept of prayer. The Baptist and Presbyterian materials stress the importance of the teacher's own depth of prayer experience as a pre-requisite to leading children into real prayer. Congregational materials give less emphasis to the place of the teacher and hold that prayerful living is the chief requirement of the teacher. There is no mention of specific responsibilities of the teacher in Congregational materials. The other three each have a different emphasis as to the main responsibility of the teacher. Baptist materials state that the teacher must first analyse each child's devotional life and adapt her teaching on the basis of this knowledge. The teacher is to help the child clarify exactly what he wants to say in prayer. The Episcopal materials define the teacher's main responsibility as being guiding the child to express his needs and then help him to relate them to the Lord's Prayer and other prayers used by the church. The Presbyterian materials set up the teacher's responsibility as being to guide the child from a simple thank-you prayer to a sincere expression of desire to do God's will.

The place of the parents is considered most crucial in the Presbyterian materials, due to the great opportunity parents have to make prayer an integral part of their children's own living. Several emphases were found to be peculiar

to the Presbyterian Church. One is the insistence on the parents' own spiritual growth as the most valuable preparation they can make to teach their children to pray. A second is the value placed on making the most of opportunities that arise during the day for spontaneous worship, as well as planning more formal family worship together.

Both the Congregational and Baptist materials, bring out the necessity of the parents' understanding prayer to be the natural expression of the child's feelings, so that they will not force their children to "say" prayers at certain times as a matter of duty, but encourage joyful confiding in God when the child especially feels like praying. The Congregational church advises that the teacher meet with the parents several times to discuss such ideas. The Presbyterian church relies a great deal on the materials sent to the parents to set forth suggestions on how and what to teach their children in prayer. The Baptist church makes no specific suggestions as to how the parents may make prayer important in their home, but includes several prayers in the pupil's leaflets for the family to read together. Seemingly the Episcopal church places little importance on the place of the parents. The only suggestion made concerning them is that the family worship together in the church.

E. Content

Several of the main emphases in content are shared by all four of the denominations. One is that of thanksgiving for the blessings of life such as home, school, nature, food, and church. The Baptist and Congregational materials most specifically relate thanksgiving to all areas of life, while the Presbyterian materials are more general and the Episcopal materials briefly touch on it.

Prayers of thanksgiving are more frequent in Baptist and Congregational materials than in Episcopal and Presbyterian materials in which the larger proportion is devoted to prayers of aspiration and affirmation. Two emphases found only in the Congregational materials are thanksgiving for the people who have made happy experiences of life possible, including artists, national leaders, and others, and thanksgiving for the abilities God has given which make it possible to share the blessings of life.

Thanksgiving for God's presence and revelation of Himself is another emphasis common to all four denominations. The Episcopal church especially stresses the qualities of God's character shown in His dealings with men as a subject of prayers of thanksgiving. Both the Congregational and Presbyterian also include as a subject of thanksgiving Christ and the lessons He taught about God.

One of the most important emphases in the prayers of aspiration is a petition for God's help in loving and sharing

with all people. This is true of all four denominations and applies both to those far away on mission fields and to those near at home, such as schoolmates and family. Ethical conduct is defined largely in connection with relations to other people in all the denominations except the Episcopal, where the stress is placed upon relation to God, without excluding the other entirely.

Another common emphasis in the prayers of aspiration is a petition asking God's help in following Jesus. Each denomination gives this a different twist. The Baptist materials include the petition that we may live like Jesus; the Congregational that the lessons He taught may be remembered; the Episcopal, that we may desire to please God as He did, and the Presbyterian, that we may follow His example in conduct.

The major contrasts in content emphases of the denominations seem to be caused by the concept of God each desired to convey. In keeping with the concept of God as a Friend who wants His children to tell Him all the happy things that happen, the major emphasis in the Baptist materials is praise and thanksgiving for all the happy experiences of everyday life. In contrast, the major emphasis of Episcopal materials is not experience-centered prayers but prayers of aspiration seeking to know and do God's will, and this is in keeping with the concept of God as One who is to be revered. In the

Baptist prayers God is almost always addressed by the familiar "You," and the prayer is closed with a simple Amen. In the Episcopal prayers God is addressed by the more formal "Thou," and the prayer is usually closed, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Another major contrast in content emphases is between the Congregational and Presbyterian churches in the matter of intercession. The Congregational church emphasizes the prayer for God's help that the individual praying may be a blessing to other people. The Presbyterian church on the other hand combines with this many prayers of intercession asking God's direct blessing on different groups and His meeting of specific needs. This contrast too, is in keeping with the varying concepts of God, the Congregational church holding that God works only through people, and the Presbyterian church believing that He works both through people and directly by His own supernatural power.

F. Methods

A large variety of methods are used by the four denominations in order to accomplish the goals set up. All four use conversation as the cement to hold the other methods together. For instance in the Baptist materials it is often used to introduce silent prayer, in the Presbyterian to apply stories. Stories about prayer are used most in the Episcopal

and Presbyterian materials though there are also a few stories about prayer in the other materials. In each case the stories are used to build up the desired concept of God and prayer in the child's mind. The two stories in the Congregational materials, for example, show how God answers prayer in accord with the laws of the universe; three of the stories in the Episcopal materials build up the idea of the significance of the church as a house of prayer.

Form prayers are used by all four denominations. This method is used the most frequently in the Baptist materials where the method of repeating line after line is practised, as well as that of reading together. Another method used by them in connection with form prayers is the word book, which is designed to make meaningful words in these form prayers that are beyond the understanding of the average primary child. Several of the form prayers used in the worship service are composed by the children themselves in the Congregational, Episcopal and Presbyterian materials. In the Episcopal materials it is recommended that the children be allowed to choose the form prayers they would like to use in the worship service. The use of the Book of Common Prayer is unique to the Episcopal church.

The Lord's Prayer is taught by all four denominations and all four sets of material include a story on how it came to be given. The Baptist materials suggest memori-

zation which is also the end result desired in the Presbyterian materials but is achieved through a variety of other methods similar to the Presbyterian church. Besides bringing out its interpretation in many stories, it is heard as a solo, learned as a class song, dramatized, and used as a guide for silent prayer.

Silent prayer is another method used by all four denominations, and again it occurs most frequently in the Baptist materials. In contrast to the Presbyterian practise of guided prayer the Baptist church seeks only to prepare the child for silent prayer by a few suggestions beforehand, for suggestions during the time of silent prayer are felt to be an intrusion. The Episcopalian church uses the method of silent prayer the least.

The writing of original prayers is also a method held in common by all four denominations. An emphasis peculiar to the Baptist materials is allowing the child complete privacy in writing his own prayers. The Episcopal and Presbyterian materials also advocate prayers written together by the whole class.

Prayer hymns are used the most by the Presbyterian church. The Lord's prayer is given special emphasis as a prayer hymn. Two related methods used by them are writing original stanzas for a prayer hymn, and illustrating a prayer hymn. In the other denominations several prayer hymns are

learned in the course of the year by singing them over a period of weeks.

Spontaneous sentence prayers are suggested by only one denomination, the Episcopal. The Presbyterian materials suggest several times that one child lead the whole group in prayer, but the content of the prayer is outlined for him.

Memorization of prayers is a method used by all four denominations. The Baptist, Congregational, and Presbyterian churches introduce it in the class room. After the prayer has been memorized it is used in the worship service. The Presbyterian church also stresses that it be used at home and in everyday life. The Episcopal church includes several prayers in the pupil's book to be memorized at home and used by the individual in the church sanctuary.

The making of a prayer book is a method employed by the Baptist, Congregational, and Presbyterian churches, but not by the Episcopal. The Baptist church encourages the children's own initiative by having them collect and copy the prayers and prayer hymns they like best, as well as write prayers of their own to include. The Congregational and Presbyterian churches on the other hand print a set of prayers which the children are to bind together as a prayer book.

The Episcopal and Presbyterian materials include special reading books for the child to use at home. Both include special prayers, stories about prayer, and a letter

from the editor. These two letters stress reality of expression both in form and original prayers.

Dramatization is a method used only once during the course of the year by the Congregational and Presbyterian churches. In the Congregational church it is used to teach the value of having grace before meals. In the Presbyterian materials it is used to make Christ's giving of the Lord's Prayer real to the children and to deepen its meaning for their own individual lives.

It is evident that the Presbyterian church places more importance on audio-visual aids than do the other denominations. Suggestions found only in their material include three pictures on prayer for class study, several that would be suitable for wall pictures, records of Easter music, and the use of the creche in connection with a Christmas prayer. The Congregational materials recommended a picture study once and suggest the use of tangible prayer reminders such as beautiful objects from nature and a triptych with a prayer verse on it. The Baptist and Episcopal materials make little use of audio-visual aids.

Projects are most strongly emphasized by the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches. Both denominations use projects connected with the church and worship.

The Presbyterian and Baptist materials also include a project designed to encourage prayer at home during the week - the making of a picture easel and a prayer motto wall hanging to be used in a home worship center.

Prayer in the church sanctuary is stressed in the Episcopal materials and is also given some emphasis in the Baptist materials. Specific methods, however, differ. The Baptist materials suggest preparation for this experience by discussion and writing together as a class a prayer which can be a pattern they can follow upon entering the church. The Episcopal materials give two prayers to be memorized, to be said upon entering and leaving the church. The prayers used during the church service are discussed by the whole class afterwards.

G. Importance of Prayer in the Program

The relative emphasis given to the teaching of prayer in each denomination's program of Christian education can be determined by comparing the proportionable amount of material devoted to it. On almost all counts the Presbyterian materials lay the greatest stress on prayer. It is the only denomination that devotes one entire unit to prayer. The other denominations have throughout the course single lessons in which prayer is central, but have no concentrated unit on prayer. The Baptist, Episcopal and Congregational materials rank second, third, and fourth respectively in the number of lessons cen-

tering in or referring to prayer. Presbyterian materials again rank highest in the number of teacher's prayers given, namely 42. Next in number are the Congregational materials with 34 and the Baptist materials which include 22 teacher's prayers. None at all are given in Episcopal materials, as the teacher is to compose her own prayers.

The Presbyterian materials also include the greatest number of prayer hymns, but the Episcopal materials contain the most stories on prayer.

From the above analysis it is seen that in the Presbyterian materials prayer is given a place of great importance.

CHAPTER VI
GENERAL SUMMARY

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The problem with which this thesis has been concerned is to discover how prayer is taught children of primary age level by four major Protestant denominations, namely, Northern Baptist, Congregational, Protestant Episcopal and Presbyterian, U.S.A., in their materials for both teachers and children.

The following method of procedure was used in solving the problem. The church school worker's magazine, Baptist Leader and Children's Religion (Congregational), for October 1948 to September 1949, plus specific pamphlets on prayer published by the Baptist, Congregational and Presbyterian churches were analyzed for the theory set forth by these three denominations on teaching children to pray. The Episcopal church did not publish any such materials. Then the curriculum materials for primary age level published by all four of the denominations were examined for the practice of teaching children to pray revealed there. Following this, a comparison was made between the theory and practice observed in each of the denominations. Finally a general comparison was made between denominations with respect to teaching children to pray. On the basis of this analysis the findings which follow were evident.

In each of the three denominations in which a comparison between theory and practice was possible there was found to be close correlation between the two. Basis for comparison of major emphases in the four denominations was found to occur in goals, in the concept of God underlying prayer, in the place of the teacher in guiding a child in his praying, in the desired content of prayers, and in the specific methods held to be most effective in accomplishing the goals.

Three goals were discovered to be common to all four denominations. Prayer is to be a sincere expression of feelings and thoughts to God. For example, the prayer of aspiration, seeking to do God's will, is not to be taught until the child is ready to pray it sincerely. The second goal held in common is an experiencing of fellowship with God in prayer. The third is that prayer is to be a strengthening factor in life, a motivating power to a more Christlike life. One goal found to be particularly prominent in all except the Episcopal materials is a completely natural and spontaneous attitude toward prayer. Group worship in prayer is a goal seen to be emphasized in the Baptist and particularly the Episcopal materials. An underlying goal in all the materials was discovered to be a true concept of God, who is a God of order and uses people to carry out His will.

The place of the teacher was held in all four denominations to be that of a guide into the right attitude and

content of prayer, both by personal depths of prayer experience, and by sensitivity to the child's readiness. The place of parents was found to be stressed to the greatest extent in the Presbyterian materials, least in Episcopal materials. The parents are seen in the Presbyterian material to have the major share of opportunities and responsibility to teach the child to pray spontaneously when the occasion arises.

Several main emphases in content were found, in analyzing the above denominational materials, to be held in common. The first is thanksgiving for the blessings of life such as home, nature, and church. Thanksgiving for spiritual blessings such as God's presence and revelation of Himself is another emphases. In the prayers of aspiration it was observed that two emphases stressed a great deal in all four denominations are desire for God's help in following Jesus and in sharing and helping all.

A large variety of methods was seen to be recommended in the materials. Included are: conversation, stories and reading books bringing out the concept of God and the desired attitude toward prayer, form prayers, silent prayer, guided prayer, writing of original prayers both individually and as a class, learning, writing and illustrating prayer hymns, memorizing short Bible or other form prayers, making prayer books, dramatization of a situation involving prayer, and audio-visual aids, and projects, such as a wall hanging with

a prayer motto.

A comparison of the amount of material devoted to teaching prayer in the materials examined indicated that all four denominations recognize the importance of prayer for children. However, it was evident that it is considered of greatest importance in the Presbyterian materials since prayer occupied the most space and is given the greatest emphasis.

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