

**ONE YEAR OF SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
FOR YOUNG CHILDREN: A MANUAL FOR
TEACHERS AND PARENTS. PRESENTING
A SERIES OF SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
SELECTED, ARRANGED, AND ADAPTED FOR
THE USE OF THE YOUNGEST CLASSES**

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One Year of Sunday School Lessons for Young Children: A Manual for Teachers and Parents.
Presenting a Series of Sunday School Lessons Selected, Arranged, and Adapted for the Use of
the Youngest Classes by Florence U. Palmer

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BY

FLORENCE U. PALMER

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PREFACE



CENTURIES ago a great philosopher wrote: "When I was a child, I understood as a child." But it was left for a later age, for Pestalozzi and Fröbel, for the psychologists of our own day, to discover how the child "understood." Upon this discovery is being builded a new education.

The old axiom, "two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time," is true in the physical world; but in the mental world, she who is to touch the life of a child must put herself in his place—must see from his point of view. For the time her mode of thinking, the mode of the mature mind, must be set aside. She is to think along the same channel with the mind of the child, whose life can be measured in months—she is to understand as a child.

Linguists tell us they think in a foreign language. The task of the linguist is precisely the task of the teacher. She must study the child's language until she can think in it. In other words, she must discover his mode of thought.

Have you ever been reminded how far away your thought was from the child's? A father said to his four-year-old daughter: "I am going to New York tomorrow, and then I am going across the big ocean to Europe." She immediately asked: "Shall you drive old Doll?" The father was thinking in his world; the child in her own. She had never been far from home, and the one city that she had visited was within driving

distance. Her question was a natural one. Even if she had traveled, she could not grasp the thought of the miles to be traversed, for a young child has little conception of distance.

Question the first child (the reference is always to the young child) you meet, and his answer will prove that miles and furlongs mean nothing to him. Study his answers, and you will learn that distance, express it as you will, does not interest him. The fact that one city is so far from another adds nothing to the story. The child's hero may travel, but how far he goes is no matter: "Why did he go?" and "What happened?" are the questions in point. It is action the child craves, and the swifter event follows even the better he likes it.

While his hero is "doing," he is content—the "where" and the "when" matter little to him. To be sure, he asks "When is my birthday?" but the only impression he receives from the answer, "Months from now," is that he has a long time to wait. A mother, in trying to answer this very question, found she could give her child no conception of when his birthday would come until it was so near that, as he expressed it, "It's two sleeps and then it's my birthday!" Why should we expect a mind, the life of which can be measured in months, to catch the thought of time as expressed in months and years? A child can have as little conception of time as of distance.

The child has no past. His short life has contained only two or three important events. Can he grasp, in their connection with each other, the incidents in the history of a life or lives? If a long series of events are presented to him in story form (one event in a story), can he hold their connection? At the end of the last story will he have a picture of the line of events? To speak briefly, if it is the history of a life, or of a people, will he grasp it as a whole?

Who cannot put his finger on the Bible stories that he loved as a child? They stand out, one here and one there. Those that pertain to child-life appear the most vivid—the boyhood stories of Joseph and David. But what of those lives as a whole, the progress of events to the end?

Where is the man or the woman who, as a child, grasped the thought of the long journey of the Children of Israel? What impression was left? Now and then "a good story," in that long series of stories, left its picture; and that story is remembered quite apart from the rest.

Not that the story of the Children of Israel should not be told the young child, but it should be told as a whole. In a few minutes the child can hear of the few events that will most impress him in the journey of that Family of Children whom the Father cared for. He can be told, in his own language, and briefly, of the journey from start to finish. When the story is thus presented the events will not only appear in their connection, but he will see in those events the loving care of the Father.

"Are the 'good stories' of the Children of Israel to be taken from the young child?" some one asks. The plea is, not to take away the stories, but to remove the burden of their chronological connection. Tell the stories, but let each be complete.

To select a good story and to tell it is art; but this is not all: if the story is to touch the life of the child it must have some connection therewith; its hero must be the embodiment of some principle of right living that he can put into practice; his action must be such that the child can do likewise.

But, even when it is possible for him to imitate his hero, the mind of a young child does not respond at first call. The mother finds it takes time and patience to teach her child a single truth. Should the teacher, who sees him once a week, expect more?

If a truth, or principle, is to leave its impression it must be presented again and again; the first Sunday he can do little more than grasp the thought; the second, when he sees the same principle represented in the action of a new hero, it will begin to make an impression; on the third, when perhaps he recognizes it in the life of the Christ, he may resolve to do likewise. Even then he must be reminded again—and the reminding must be so tactfully done that he is entertained by it.

To do this, one must understand as a child; and, looking into the face of the four-year-old boy, say: "Thy way is my way."

I know a kindergartner who goes into the kindergarten room when she prepares her work for the children. There the children seem to be with her and she is with them. There their ways are her ways as she plans for their work and their play.

Come with me into a room where there are children. Real people are these. Their ways are not our ways; but, as the missionary must acquire a new language if he is to tell his pupils the story of Jesus, so we must acquire the ways of this people if we would possess the only means of touching their lives.

Here, with the children around us, let us work together. If some of the methods we take up seem strange and new, remember we are learning to think with the child, and to preserve for him the ways of childhood.

In the preparation of the following lessons, I gratefully acknowledge the aid of my sister, Loie S. Palmer, who has not only been a co-worker, but has experienced many of the lessons with the children.

F. U. P.

INTRODUCTION



IN OFFERING the Lessons here presented, I would like to direct attention to three points:

I. They are presented (with few exceptions) in story form. The story selected may contain several truths; but, as the child can grasp but one truth at a time, the story is told now for the purpose of pointing one truth.

In other words, it has one point, and one only.

II. The truth is one that touches the daily life of the child; that is, a story is told from a point of view that will bring it within the child's realm of thought and of action. For example, the story of Noah is told, not in its historical connection, but because the hero of the story was an obedient child of the Father.

III. Several stories relating to the same truth, or principle of right living, are presented in a sequence. In other words, the Lessons are presented under Topics.

In presenting these Lessons, the aim has been to give them in the order that will make the strongest impression upon the child-mind, all historical or chronological connections being set aside.

While each lesson has been prepared with these three points in mind, yet the intention has been to make the lesson suggestive rather than stereotyped. For example, in the "Point of Contact," or introduction, of each lesson, a line of thought is suggested to catch the attention of the child. At the same time the individuality of the teacher is to be maintained by leading the children along the suggested line, in her own way, to the Lesson Story.