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Problem or Challenge (July 1959)

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What is the perennial problem of every Sunday School? We are all aware of the answer, to reach unsaved youngsters in the area for which we are responsible.

Regardless of the size or efficiency of our present operation, it is still our mission to effectively reach those outside of Christ in our area. If this aspect of our work is not being done, then ours is a hidden light.

Why do we have this problem? Reviewing our present efforts will aid in determining the cause. The annual contest held in most Sunday Schools is typical of the means by which we attract new members. The inviting is done by the youngsters; the result is dependent upon the amount of enthusiasm available.

If a certain few are “contest winners” and live in a heavily populated area, then the rest of the youngsters become discouraged and quit early in the race.

Keeping the visitors who were brought in through a contest is another problem. Unfortunately, too often the mortality rate is quite high.

The short-comings of the contest or campaign method do not mean that they should be discarded. They serve a definite purpose or we would not still be using them. But in order to cover the area of our responsibility these avenues of approach should be supplemented.

How can this be accomplished? Basicly by using the homes of the believers. You are the one best suited to reach the children in your neighbourhood — I in mine.

There is also an advantage to this method. You are not in competition with any organized group or church. Yours will be the only home “entertaining” the children. This, of course, can open many more doors and grant many opportunities for witnessing.

How the children can be reached is very simple. A Bible Club meeting after school once a week, a lesson, a memory verse, a contest or awards, and, of course, refreshments, proved very fruitful in some areas.

Another means is a specialized Activity Club, for those a little older. Any and all types of adult activity will interest this group. Originality is not important, for if two or more clubs are using the same activity, competition can be fostered to the profit of all. Needless to say, there must be a gospel message at every meeting.

Some homes and neighbourhoods will be more suited to a Game Night type of operation. Game Night consists of an evening when the entire home is turned over to the teen-agers. After 3 or 4 hours of games and something to ward off “impending starvation”, the house rule of “no gospel, no games” is invoked, and again you are reaching your area with God’s good news.

All of these activities can be handled at the home level and provide a constant means of reaching children for Christ.

How will this supplement our present Sunday School and Youth Work? Very easily, for each week in the Bible Clubs, Activity Clubs, and the Game Nights, an invitation is extended to come out to Sunday School or other appropriate activities.

If the Sunday School is going to have a D.V.B.S. in August, then, two or three clubs could conduct a small three-day D.V.B.S. prior to this. Then, when the interest is at its peak, an appropriate announcement is given about the large D.V.B.S. which will last for two whole weeks, etc.

Whenever a contest or campaign is being conducted, all of these groups will act as “feeders” to the main effort. For those who are attending both the outside clubs and the Sunday School, there are the advantages of Christian fellowship, plus the added gospel testimony.

Another important aspect is the profitable utilization of the various abilities to be found in any assembly of the Lord’s people.

The suggestions above certainly are not a “cure-all” for our task of reaching youngsters with the gospel. They do represent a means of correlating our efforts and talents in order to fulfil our commission as ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“In every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42).