

CREATIVE DRAMATICS IN
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Barbara Jean Wallarab
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by

Barbara Jean Wallarab

AN ABSTRACT

Submitted to the College of Communication Arts
of Michigan State University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Approved: 

ABSTRACT

It was the purpose of this work to show the importance and possibility of a creative religious experience. Although there are many means at the disposal of the educator which provide an atmosphere conducive to creativity, that of creative dramatics and its related activities was the concern of this thesis. The objectives were to (1) lay a solid foundation confirming the importance of creativity in the religious experience and relate how creative dramatics is one valid and valuable method of attaining and maintaining a creative atmosphere; (2) show specifically how each of the creative dramatics activities could be applied in a religious education program.

An extensive investigation of the ideas of outstanding people in the field of religious education was made in order to establish a solid background for the value of a creative approach with children and youth in religion. In the field of creative dramatics many of the leading authorities were referred to. Miss Ward, foremost leader, and Helen Willcox, an early pioneer in creative drama in the church school whose ideas are still fresh and applicable, were major sources. Margaret Fisk Taylor was the major source for the material on creative movement.

The objectives were carried out by organizing and developing the material into four chapters which discussed:

- (1) Creative Religious Experience Through Creative
Dramatics

- (2) The Creative Dramatics Method in Religious Education
- (3) Role Playing in Religious Education
- (4) Creative Movement in Religious Education.

First discussed was the religious experience as a creative one, pointing out the aims and goals in religious education, and the value and use of various art forms in religious education. Out of this discussion evolved the idea of creative dramatics as a natural and logical method to employ in the church school. The child's physical, social, mental and religious development was correlated with his dramatic instinct at various ages. Dramatic activities appropriate for various periods in the child's life were discussed and related to the concerns of the religious educator. The process of story dramatization was outlined and specific examples of stories, poetry and other sources to use for dramatization were given. Sources and materials which are available for practical use were listed at the conclusion of the discussion.

The related activities of role playing and rhythms and creative movement were discussed separately because of their own particular significance. The role playing method was discussed and examples of situations adaptable in the church program were cited. In the section on creative movement it was shown how this activity is spiritual in its basic nature. Rhythm activities for elementary children which are preliminary to creative movement as a form of worship were discussed in detail in their relationship to a church program. Creative movement techniques and suggestions for songs and Scriptures which may be interpreted through movement were given.

The work was concluded with a final chapter summarizing
its content.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years creative dramatics has been introduced and successfully practiced in many religious education programs throughout this country. The continued and increased use of it points up its recognized value. The material which has been written for the area of creative dramatics in the church has been plentiful but limited to many short articles in magazines or single chapters in books. An extended examination of both the theoretical and practical relationships of creative dramatics and religious education has not been made. Since it is becoming a widely accepted and used method, such a study would seem to be justified.

The major terms of the topic will be defined and explained briefly here. Each of these will be elaborated upon as they are examined in the general text. The terms creative dramatics and playmaking are used interchangeably and refer to activities in which informal drama is created by the players.¹ The earliest of these with small children is dramatic play in which the child plays out real life situations as he becomes more conscious of the world in which he lives. Much of this dramatic play comes about naturally to the child without adult guidance as he plays house, store, school, fireman, and the endless other situations encountered in his daily environment.

¹Winifred Ward, Playmaking With Children (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1947), p. 10.

In guiding the child in creative drama one of the first activities introduced to him is that of pantomime. Pantomime is more than action without words; it is the portrayal of ideas through actions alone. Through gesture, bodily movement, and facial expression, a mood, or character doing some meaningful activity is created. From this non-verbal expression of significant activity evolves characterization, the portrayal of a person through the use of the whole body plus the voice. Once characters are established they are placed in situations which contain conflict. This conflict builds to a climax and is resolved in a conclusion, forming a complete story. These stories are dramatized spontaneously, i.e., without the use of a director. When they are a product of the players' own imaginations in which they have created their own dialogue and action, story dramatization is the result.

A closely related activity is role playing. Role playing is a technique in which people spontaneously act out problems of human relations and analyze the enactment with the help of participants and observers.² It is used with older children and adults in a group situation in order to clarify and better understand social issues. A complete story is not dramatized and the conflict may not be resolved during the role playing but only presented and examined in order to stimulate further discussion, thought and insight.

²Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., How to Use Role Playing, pamphlet #6 (Chicago 11, 1956), p. 5.

Creative movement in the church is the interpretation of a religious idea or mood through rhythmic movements and designs. It is more than pantomime; it is more closely related to modern choreography and is a definite form of worship. "It is an imaginative extension of intellectual conviction and spiritual insight."³ It is an outward physical expression of an inward spiritual feeling. Many times music, poetry or poetic prose will contribute as a background and direction for the movement.

Religious education is defined as: organized activities and experiences designed to guide persons to a greater awareness and realization of a Spiritual Power alive and at work in the world today. It is the seeking of ultimate Truth and the continuous striving to live according to this Truth.

The ideas and materials presented in this study have evolved from the Judaic-Christian heritage. This, in a sense, limits the use of the study to the Jewish, Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Protestant faiths. Each of these, in turn, because of their own specific doctrines and beliefs may find some of the particular suggestions and materials unsatisfactory to them. However, the basic concepts and theories may be applied and adapted to any religious organization which is striving to provide a creative and living religious experience for their children.

This work is not concerned with formal drama or any other of the arts such as music or painting but rather with creative or informal drama activities. The ages for this study are confined

³Margaret Fisk, The Art of the Rhythmic Choir (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 3.

to four through seventeen and the situations considered are those of weekly church school sessions, summer vacation church schools, and youth fellowships and clubs.

This work proposes to: (1) lay a solid foundation confirming the importance of creativity in the religious experience and relate how creative dramatics is one valid and valuable method of attaining and maintaining a creative atmosphere in a religious education program; (2) show specifically how each of the creative dramatics activities can be applied in a religious education program.

The first chapter will discuss the religious experience of the child as a creative one and correlate the aims and values of religious education with those of creative dramatics. The following three chapters will treat separately and in detail the methods of: (1) creative dramatics; (2) role playing; (3) rhythms and creative movement. Because rhythm and rhythm activities for the young child serve as a basis for creative movement and are of special significance in themselves they will be examined with movement even though they usually precede pantomime and story dramatization in the creative dramatics sequence. Each section will be concluded with suggestions of supplementary sources and materials which may be used for the specific activity. The final chapter will summarize what has been covered in the preceding pages.

CHAPTER I

CREATIVE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE THROUGH CREATIVE DRAMATICS

The twentieth century has been called the "Age of Anxiety" and as we look at the conditions in the world today there is reason to see why this may be true. In our own country not a day goes by when the newspapers are not filled with headlines showing evidence of the moral degradation which surrounds us. The young people of the nation are constantly exposed to forces and influences which may lead to destructive activities and attitudes. The same young people will be expected not only to live in this world but to live in peace or literally perish if their attempts fail. This peace must be more than an outer absence of war or hostility but a peace within the individual which allows him to attempt to solve his problems and differences by other means than futile armed aggression and physical violence. In our world of crime, hatred, injustice, and emotional immaturity, is there any means by which this peace may be achieved? Sir Richard Livingstone said in 1944:

If you want a description of our age, here is one. The civilization of means without ends; rich in means beyond any other epoch, and almost beyond human needs; squandering and misusing them because it has no overruling ideal: an ample body

with a meagre soul. . .Science and politics are essential but they are not enough without the spiritual strand, which, using the word in its widest sense, we may call religion.¹

It is now sixteen years later and our world still fits this description. Because our young people are in the process of growth and because they will be responsible for the survival of tomorrow the challenge of religious education is to find a way to reach children and youth in an attempt to guide them as they face the array of problems before them.

Religious education has never before had so serious a challenge to teach new ways in human relationships. To open up such burning contemporary issues inevitably involves danger; to evade them will invite disaster.²

Religious Experience As A Creative Experience

How may religious education contribute to the facing of the danger--the overcoming of the disaster? Psychologists have shown us that those experiences which we have as young children form ideas and patterns which make a deep imprint upon us and influence attitudes and behavior throughout life. A moral conscience and spiritual awareness should be brought to life and developed within the child in order to give a spiritual sensitivity to his adult decisions and responsibilities. However, although a degree of influence may be had upon an individual if he has contact with the spiritual as a

¹Richard Livingstone, On Education (Cambridge: University Press, 1954), p. 99.

²Sophia L. Fahs, Today's Children and Yesterday's Heritage (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1952), p. 186.

child, without constant cultivation the realities of life may smother out the seeds which were planted in childhood. The religious experience must be a vital and continuous creative process in order to be alive in the experience of men. A process is a constantly growing, ever changing, dynamic phenomenon. All experiences within the process interact and affect each other. The religious process is not a rebirth of the spirit but a series of rebirths as year by year familiar and oft repeated words and creeds suddenly take on new meanings and become living truths for the individual. The true religious experience is one of constant discovery and realization and cannot be separated from the life experience.

In his infancy the child obeys his father and much of his behavior is determined by the "no, no" or "do this", "don't do that" commands of his parents with no comprehension or questioning of the reason behind them. But as he grows he begins to wonder and ask why and seek explanations for the discipline placed upon him. And in finding the answers through questioning he comes to find, within his own self, the reasons for the danger or wrong doing in his activities and modifies them accordingly. Too many times this inquiring procedure does not appear in the realm of religious thought or is stifled by those to whom he turns. His religion becomes nothing more than a group of "thou shalt nots" with no real understanding of the reasons behind them. Soon he becomes disinterested or discouraged with this stuffy and meaningless religion and either departs from it completely or allows it to become merely a social

formality. It is the responsibility of the religious educator to see that this does not happen but rather that it becomes a vital and stimulating part of life.

It is not a way of life presented by an authority outside ourselves; it is rather a way of life that develops through a growing understanding of our own basic needs and deepest yearnings, and the needs and yearnings of others.³

Those in a position to guide the religious growth in a child (parents, teachers, church leaders) must realize that spiritual concepts are more than spoon fed doctrines and beliefs. They should be regarded ". . . as a vital and healthy result of his own creative thought and feeling and experience as he responds to life in all its fullness."⁴

This creative experience is concerned with self expression and is a personal one throughout the process of creativity. Creativity has occurred when, through conscious effort, interpretations are made and the child recognizes new relationships in thinking, learning, and doing. "It starts when the individual is directed by the experiences which he has had and ends in the form of a new expression."⁵

Through proper stimulation and direction, the child can develop certain innate qualities which he possesses which interact to produce creativity. He has imagination or the ability to

³Ibid., p. 135.

⁴Ibid., p. 16.

⁵Gladys Andrews, Creative Rhythmic Movement for Children (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954), p. 21.

see or go beyond reality or rationality as the average adult experiences it. Perception, grasping the essence of a thing seen for the first time, is his. The child possesses insight, feeling the vibration of human emotions before they become visible. Enthusiasm, the eagerness to enter into each newly presented experience is always evident. He approaches life with freshness and originality or spontaneity. Concentration, not being distracted or sidetracked by problems of everyday life is the final quality which helps to produce creativity in the child.⁶

If he is able to go beyond earthbound rationality; if he is capable of tearing away the extraneous and recognizing the core or essence of a Truth; if he can become sensitive to the feelings and thoughts of others; if he can maintain an eagerness for all of life; if he is not afraid of exploring original ideas or living according to newly realized Truths; if he is able to keep his highest thoughts and goals unburied by the innumerable everyday problems and perplexities, the child is in a position to attain a creative religious experience.

Aims and Goals of Religious Education

The aim and responsibility of religious education becomes a tremendous and exciting one in this light. The innocence, simplicity and purity of a child in his relationship to God is a spiritual reality. It is up the religious educator to

⁶Ruth Tooze, Storytelling (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 17.

guide the child in what is his natural capacity for a spiritual experience into a vital and mature spiritual experience. This will not be accomplished by merely throwing out information or performing traditional ceremonies which cloak the individual with a one day a week rite to be performed. It must be more than the repetition of words and thoughts of others. It must be a realization within each person and then acted upon by each. ". . . words and doctrines come alive only when they are expressed in actions."⁷

From the discussion of religion as a creative experience we have already implied the goals and aims of the religious educator. The most vital, overall aim of religious education is, ". . . to lead the child to a vital experience of God, to rediscover the experience of transcendence."⁸

From the Christian view its aim has been said to be to lead the child to see ". . . Christianity as a way of living, as a life that was actually lived . . . only personal experience will bring it to life."⁹ In doing this the religious educator is concerned with the individual, with the person. Each being has his own unique personality which sets him apart from every other. The leader recognizes these differences and respects them. He does not try to fit all into a mold but rather helps each to develop his own potentials to their highest degree.

⁷Fred P. Corson, The Christian Imprint (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), p. 103.

⁸Doris Chaplin, Children and Religion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 219.

⁹Livingstone, op. cit., p. 193.

Outward form will then take second place to inward growth. The wise educator will realize that, ". . . it will be the quality of the inner life rather than the forms of conduct which will make and keep life good."¹⁰

Recognizing that each religion will have its own specific aims and goals we will, for our purposes, summarize the aims of the religious educator as guiding the child to: (1) a discovery of a path by which he can seek communion with God; (2) growth in the development of the interaction of religious values, attitudes and concepts with everyday life; (3) a continuous and deepening realization of the significance of the religious experience in his own life and in the world.

As a conclusion to the discussion of the aims and purposes of the religious educator the responsibilities to the child as stated in the Pledge to Children from the White House Conference of December 7, 1950, are outlined below:

1. From your earliest infancy we give you our love, so that you may grow with trust in yourself and others.
2. We will recognize your worth as a person and we will help you to strengthen your sense of belonging.
3. We will respect your right to be yourself and at the same time help you to understand the rights of others, so that you may experience cooperative living. . .
4. We will encourage you always to seek the truth.

¹⁰Corson, op. cit., p. 91.

5. We will provide you with all opportunities possible to develop your own faith in God. . .¹¹

Art Forms In The Creative Religious Experience

There are many ways in which one may strive to attain these goals of religious education. One of them is through the arts. The artistic or aesthetic experience contributes a height and depth of feeling to living which pure rationality does not necessarily attain.

Albert Einstein said, "It seems to me, that the most important function of art and science is to arouse and keep alive this feeling [cosmic religious experience] in those who are receptive."¹²

The expression of a truth through one of the many art forms may become a much more vital and meaningful experience than weeks of spoken words. That which is good and true cannot be separated from the beautiful, indeed, it is the beautiful itself.

The beautiful is inseparably united to the good and the true, and the human mind that has not developed the experience of it has failed to realize the whole of reality, for the very nature of the sense of beauty is such that through it we gain a clearer concept of the other two values. . . the desire for artistic enjoyment has been a potent factor in bringing a people back to higher ideals which underlie a peaceful intercourse between nations . . . a sense of beauty is as vital

¹¹Fahs, op. cit., p. 156.

¹²Albert Einstein, quoted in Lewisohn, "Drama and the Unseen Currents," Progressive Education (January, 1931), p. 92.

to the complete existence of the race as is the sense of justice.¹³

Christianity and artistry need not be isolated or separated from each other but each may enhance the other. Jacques Maritain, author of Art and Scholasticism, has said this:

If you want to produce Christian work, be a Christian, and try to make a work of beauty into which you have put your heart . . . Do not make the absurd attempt to sever in yourself the artist and the Christian. They are one, if you really are a Christian, and if your art is not isolated from your soul by some aesthetic system . . .¹⁴

Creative Dramatics In The Religious Experience

Creative Dramatics and its related activities give the child the awareness of beauty through drama and build within him an appreciation and deeper understanding of good drama which in later years will provide him with the ability to be a discerning observant or participant in formal drama within the church.

But creative dramatics has values other than that of the development of an appreciation for an art form. Inherent in its values and aims in any situation are those qualities sought after by the religious educator. Let us look closely at the goals and purposes stressed in this activity.

In creative dramatics the personal development of each participating child is the primary goal rather than the

¹³Herbert Langfeld, quoted in Doris Chaplin, op. cit., p. 219.

¹⁴Jacques Maritain, quoted in Margaret Fisk, op. cit., p. 3.

entertaining of a child audience. Under the guidance of an imaginative leader the children create scenes or plays based upon stories with which they are familiar, planning and improvising their own dialogue and action. Scenery and costumes are rarely used. After each portion of a story is planned by the children and played it is evaluated by the group and gradually a complete play is developed. One of the most valuable elements of this activity is the working together within a group and the opportunity given to every child to place himself in the position of another and try to understand how and why he feels and acts the way he does in various situations.¹⁵

The values of creative dramatics in a secular setting are many and can be summarized as:

- (1) Experience in thinking creatively and independently. Imagination, initiative, and resourcefulness develop rapidly in an atmosphere of skillfully guided creative dramatics.
- (2) Development of sensitivity to personal relationships and a deep human sympathy through analyzing and playing varied characters in diverse situations.
- (3) Practice in strongly motivated social co-operation.
- (4) Controlled emotional release. Healthy, constructive outlets are afforded for emotional drives in the dramatic stories and situations.

¹⁵Ann Viola, "Drama With and For Children: an Interpretation of Terms," Speech Teacher, (November, 1956), p. 305.

(5) Experience in thinking on his feet and expressing ideas clearly and effectively. Gains poise, as well as flexibility of body and voice.

(6) The beginning of an appreciation of a great art.¹⁶

The aim is not to make actors but to develop imaginative beings and appreciative citizens; to widen their horizons, mentally, ethically and spiritually.¹⁷ Personal appreciation, the power to enter into the lives of others and to realize how they feel and react to situations, is an element of great importance in the kind of character that religious education should seek to foster. We see that the aims of creative dramatics fit naturally into the aims of the religious educator. William Meredith states clearly how the two fields naturally complement each other:

Man's attitude toward his fellow men and toward God determines to a great extent his future course of action. How to arouse sentiment and create new outlooks upon life also is the problem of religious educators. Religion should create an appreciation for all the better and ennobling things of life. The growing popularity of dramatization as a method of awakening social, aesthetic, and intellectual interests, and of creating and sustaining Christian bearing toward one's fellow men, indicates that it is serving a truly educational purpose.¹⁸

The importance of the building of moral attitudes and concepts in creative dramatics cannot be emphasized too much

¹⁶United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., "Leads for Leaders", Informal Creative Dramatics With Children (Philadelphia: U. P. Church, U.S.A., n.d.), p. 9.

¹⁷Grace Overton, Drama in Education (New York: The Century Co., 1926), p. 93.

¹⁸William Meredith, Pageantry and Dramatics In Religious Education (New York: Abingdon Press, 1921), p. 112.

in considering its place in a religious education program. Miss Ward stresses this factor in her works. The widest opportunity for a leader of creative dramatics comes in the establishing of attitudes in character and personality. A large portion of the effort and time is spent in analyzing the characters, their actions, and reactions to their situation. Discussions of the motives of the characters, the ethical implications of what they do or say, and the cause and effect of their activities are necessary phases of this experience. As the participants are forced to think and express themselves concerning these elements, childish attitudes are gradually laid aside and mature and insightful ones develop. They are lasting ones because they have not been imposed by the leader but rather are a result of the child's own thinking and living through of the stories and lives of the characters. As the human qualities of the characters--honesty, deceit, courage, cowardice, love, hate, and other vices and virtues--are vividly exemplified through the characterizations the children cannot help but judge them according to their true worth.¹⁹

The ultimate objective of any learning experience in a church related situation is to help the students find a closer relationship with God. It has also been the tendency to regard the religious experience as something isolated from all other daily experiences. The creative dramatics method naturally

¹⁹Winifred Ward, Creative Dramatics (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1930), pp. 28-29.

integrates the everyday, vital experiences and feelings of the child with their deeper significance in relation to others and to higher ideals. In experiencing creativity, a glimpse of truth, a moment of beauty, the child's understanding of spiritual forces deepens.

Before one begins to use this method it is important that he has a knowledge of the reasons and significance of the aims and values of it and how these are applicable to religious education. Without these the results may be more harmful than helpful.

Many good people in their enthusiastic use of dramatic activities have been the greatest enemies to the movement. Before one can make skillful use of any device he must know the aim--the end to be attained...It is only as the use of dramatization can be defended in terms of ends that this method may be held valid. One must know the desired goal in order to make purposeful use of any method. While an aim without a method of attainment is useless, on the other hand, a method without an aim is blind.²⁰

Summary

It has been the purpose of this opening chapter to establish a solid background upon which to base the ideas and techniques in applied creative dramatics in religious education which shall be discussed in the following pages. It has been shown how a meaningful religion must be a creative one. This creativity implies questioning, searching, growing, experiencing life in all its fullness in order to come to a clearer understanding

²⁰Overton, op. cit., pp. 13, 94.

of the meaning of Spiritual Forces in our lives and making these Forces a vital and inseparable part of our existence.

The responsibilities and goals of the religious educator have been explored. The value of art forms as expressions of the spiritual experience were briefly discussed as an introduction to creative dramatics as a valuable method to be used in a religious education program.

After discussing the values and aims of creative dramatics it was shown how creative dramatics was a natural complement to the purposes and practices in religious education. The chapter concluded with the recognition of the fact that this method is meaningless unless first based upon sound thinking and purposeful action.

CHAPTER II

THE CREATIVE DRAMATICS METHOD IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The purpose of the first section of this chapter is to outline the child's physical, social, mental, and religious development. Section two will correlate this development with the dramatic instinct and specific dramatic activities he enjoys during the various periods of his life. Section three will examine all aspects of the story dramatization process, including suggestions for specific stories and materials to use for various ages. There will be given in conclusion to the chapter, a list of books and sources which the leader may find valuable in his work with creative dramatics.

The Child's Development

Although there is no distinct line that can be drawn separating each period of childhood development there are certain qualities and characteristics which consistently appear at various ages. It should be emphasized that the classifications given below over-lap each other and individuals within each will show varying degrees of development. However, in order to discuss these characteristics most effectively an age division similar to that employed in many church schools will be made.

Age	Grade	Church Department
5	Kindergarten	Kindergarten
6-8	1-3	Primary
9-11	4-6	Junior
12-14	7-9	Junior High
15-17	10-12	Senior High

For each group a brief summary of the physical, mental, social, religious, and dramatic development will be given to aid in understanding the reason for childrens' behavior. This knowledge will help in adapting the dramatic method in each period.

The Kindergartener

The five-year-old is energetic and restless. His attention span is short and when tired he loses his temper easily. He is enthusiastic about his activities and proud of his own accomplishments. His play involves the large muscles and he should not be expected to do close and exacting work.

This is the "Here and Now" or realistic period with primary interest in the familiar and immediate world of sounds, smells, and actions.

Socially, he is self-centered but is beginning to recognize the property rights of others. He is now able to play co-operatively with other boys and girls and finds security in the companionship of his young friends but needs much love from his family and teacher. He should be given responsibility for small routine jobs and given chances to "help".

He is beginning to understand the concepts of forgiveness and love and it is important that his questions are answered simply and patiently. His enjoyment of simply told Bible stories and tales revealing Biblical customs of daily life is now in evidence.

He hears the meanings of hymns, songs, and poems and loves the rhythm of words in family and group worship. Church is regarded as a "special" place in learning about God and the Bible.¹

His world of make-believe is his life and it colors many of his activities. It is his way of understanding the world and making clear to himself what he supposes to be in other people's minds. In his play he is constantly imitating the life happenings which go on about him and is "not so much concerned with the act as with the 'feel'".²

He loves to impersonate or voluntarily assume a temporary personality different from his own. It is a spontaneous self-expression in an attempt to enlarge his experience by living in a different environment and "being" a different person for a short time. The child's world of make-believe colors all of his activities. It is the way in which he makes clear to himself

¹United Presbyterian Church, Christian Faith and Life At A Glance (Philadelphia: Board of Christian Education, 1958), pp. 4-5.

²Grace Overton, Drama in Education (New York: The Century Co., 1926) p. 85.

what he supposes to be in other people's minds. It is essentially an impulse to understand the world and goes much deeper than imitation.³

The Primary

During this period the rate of physical growth and development is slower than that of the first five years. In the early primary grades the large muscles are still important and hand-eye coordination is not complete. Although he is energetic and full of life he tires easily and is subject to childhood ailments. He likes noisy and active outdoor games and sports.

He is able to handle most routine jobs and small chores and is able to take simple responsibilities and should be given the opportunity to do so.

Playmates become more important to him and many times he will have one special friend. He loves to do things in groups; he is making wider community contacts and joining organized groups such as Cub Scouts, Brownies and choirs. Going on excursions and day trips and learning about his community are favorite activities.

The attitudes which the teacher and parents have about religious concerns will be felt and unconsciously impressed upon the child. Many questions will arise in the realm of the religious which should be answered directly, simply and

³Ibid.

honestly. He has a fairly well developed idea of God as Creator but is puzzled how God can be in different places at the same time--how He can hear prayers from many persons all at once. He needs help in growing in understanding of the greatness of God and should begin to develop the concept of God as a Spirit, active in His world but also dwelling in the hearts of men. The love of God can be best shown through actions and attitudes of love in his environment. His concept of natural law is weak and he is likely to confuse God's activity with magic. He needs help in understanding that God works through laws which operate in human life so that he does not attribute all disasters and accidents to the will of God. He has a general notion of right and wrong, in accordance with the standards set by the adults in his environment. He knows that rightness and wrongness are different and that he must choose between them many times each day. He is curious about other churches and learns a great deal about them and about life in ancient times through projects, pictures and stories. He can cooperate with the church staff in simple duties and may share in church services occasionally through junior choir participation.⁴

His dramatic play will no longer deal with real situations and people but with fantasy and fairy tale characters. Stories of miracles will appeal to him. He especially enjoys rhythm,

⁴United Presbyterian Church, op. cit., pp. 4-5, and Mary Alice Jones, Guiding Children in Christian Growth (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), pp. 29-30.

pantomime and impersonation activities. As he reaches the third grade he will be better equipped to begin actual story dramatization. Until then he should dramatize short incidents within a longer story or stories with simple plots.

The Junior

As he reaches the upper elementary grades the child's physical development becomes refined. The small manipulative muscles are now usable and he has good coordination. However, in his hurry and enthusiasm he may be prone to numerous accidents such as tripping, breaking and spilling.

The junior's attention span is increased but he is in a hurry to become active. His interests are wide and he loves knowledge as such. He is able to discuss and report on topics of interest and becomes interested in science and geography and people and events of the real world. The world is no longer one of make believe and fancy. Now he is realistic and admires physical and moral bravery of historical figures.

Socially, taking increased responsibility and working with others on committees and in group activities are within the junior's capacity. Sex differences are evident and sometimes open antagonism between boys and girls results. Both boys and girls enjoy all kinds of creative activities which employ the arts.

If simply stated, great ideas can be understood. The ability to think in terms of meanings rather than facts only is reached. He is now able to understand and put into action

the love concept and finds more ways in which he may serve others. At this time he may attend the morning worship services more regularly and become familiar with the church sacraments and their significance. Learning how the Bible was made and preserved and how the early church began with Paul's work are topics to be introduced to the junior.⁵

The development of his dramatic instinct will largely be a result of his environment: the number of playmates and their cultural background; the space and facilities which have been available up to this time for dramatic activity; the encouragement, disapproval, or indifference of parents and teachers toward him; and his reading habits. Group participation now becomes foremost and he as an individual is important for what he contributes as a unit in the group. The spontaneous dramatization of a story with a beginning, middle, climax and end is desired. There is no longer satisfaction with the playing of isolated incidents. The center of interest is mankind, real people rather than animals or fantasy. Stories of heroes are well liked. A distinct period of preparation is needed and one playing of the story is not sufficient for him. The group works harder to create the appropriate atmosphere than they did when younger and may want to use a suggestion of properties and scenery. The dramatic unit is not complex and contains much action rather than long passages of dialogue. The need for an audience is still not felt.⁶

⁵United Presbyterian Church, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

⁶Helen Willcox, Bible Study Through Educational Dramatics (New York: Abingdon Press, 1924), pp. 34-35.

The Junior High

Upon reaching the age of eleven or twelve and through to the mid-teens many changes will take place within the child. It is the period of puberty and the attainment of sex characteristics. There is much physical change and because of rapid muscular development, gangliness and awkwardness abound. There is a continual breakdown of childhood patterns and a self-concern over the physical and emotional changes going on within. The boys become active participants in sports while the girls' active participation in games lessens and is supplanted by active spectatorship.

There will be an increasing ability to deal with ideas, words and symbols. Discussion may be held on the basis of research and reports. The imagination takes flight in the world of books and literature and there is an awakening interest in adult men and women and all their works and ways. Characters in literature will be infused with the adolescent's own personal emotions.

He is increasingly aware of society and the center of influence is shifting from the home to peer groups where the desire to conform with the group is intense. He wants to be independent from adults but still needs direction and a feeling of security from the home. He wants to be recognized as an individual, not as a child.⁷

⁷United Presbyterian Church, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

He will sense the seriousness of life as he finds himself in a world which is ready made for him. There will be a sense of the insignificance of human life compared with the vast span of the ages and the incredible size of the universe; a sense of incompleteness and frustration in many experiences even though they are enjoyable ones; a sense of the sacred as something which is at once overwhelming and attractive.⁸

He is concerned with the formation of ideals and spends much time in daydreams in which he creates a world and his relationship to it, not as it is but as he wishes it to be. The ideals which he forms now will, in many cases, direct his conduct throughout life.⁹

In early adolescence the religious curriculum may go back over what has already been put before him but will now be re-interpreted in a new light. He will see the whole Bible as one story of God's activity in history and seek an understanding of great themes such as: who man is; what God wants of us; what he has done for us. He will see questions about the church's action in the world in the light of events in the past and the present, and consider its witness to the world of today. He will understand the church as a community of people working to carry out God's will.¹⁰

⁸Victor A. Murray, Education Into Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 83.

⁹Overton, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

¹⁰United Presbyterian Church, op. cit., pp. 5-7.

Now the "whole world is a stage and he is playing the leading role."¹¹ His dramatic instinct becomes a stronger and clearer challenge to the leader who works with him. The junior high person has increased capabilities of appreciation which have come with the years, richer possibilities of interpretation, and the ability to undertake a real task and hold it until its accomplishment.¹²

His sense of form in drama is rapidly developing and more interest is shown in the setting. There will be more comments on co-participants' lines and actions, and characters will be discussed more in detail. There is a new appreciation of individuality and personality. An awareness of more subtle dramatic effects is developing, such as irony and suspense. An audience is desired at this stage of dramatic development.

The Senior High

As the youth progresses through high school he grows out of the awkward age and almost completes his growth as he approaches his senior year. There is a continued independence from the family, and group standards are the determining factors for many activities and attitudes. Groups of both sexes are testing authority and tradition. This is a period of dating and co-educational activities; a period of experimentation in ideas and social relationships.

¹¹Overton, op. cit., p. 61.

¹²Charles A. Boyd, Worship In Drama (Philadelphia: The Johnson Press, 1924), p. 4.

There is a keen appreciation of the difference between claims that persons or institutions make for themselves and their actual worth or performance. The meaning of evil and good becomes significant. Much attention is given to the practical implication of religious faith. Responsibilities of church membership are faced and the church as the conscience of the community in social action is personally felt.¹³

We see these concerns manifested in the dramatic instinct. The high school person is fond of subtle moral problems and often discusses them with an amazing cleverness or sophistry. He sees the bad in the good and the good in the bad. He questions the conventional answers and attitudes. He is curious to discover the underlying principle that unifies the qualities of the characters and welds them together into the person. He perceives the importance of the mind and establishes attitudes toward life and its purpose. He now prefers formal plays or pageants which he has created himself and which he may present for an audience. Rhythmic choir participation and role playing also contribute to the dramatic activity during this age.¹⁴

Dramatic Activities

Having briefly viewed the progressive growth of the child, giving special attention to his religious and dramatic development

¹³United Presbyterian Church, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

¹⁴Willcox, op. cit., p. 64.

let us look more closely at the dramatic instinct and how it may be utilized in the religious education program.

It has been said that the function of the dramatic instinct is to: "Aid the individual in adjusting himself to his spiritual environment, as the instincts of hunger and self-preservation aid in adjusting him to his physical environment."¹⁵ The following pages will show how the spiritual environment may come alive to the child through creative dramatics activities.

The Kindergartener

Because the kindergartener is active and restless the creative dramatics activities which are introduced by the teacher should contain much action and little plot. In working with the child and encouraging him in his dramatic play it is important that acquiring an outer imitative technique does not become an end in itself. Rather, outer movement is the means to a higher end, that of the expression of inner spiritual awareness.¹⁶

The stories and activities chosen for this age should help the child as he begins his exploration in the new world of understanding people and relating himself to them. The stories used should be short and simple with the emphasis on action, for the average listening span is relatively short and the power of concentration is undeveloped. The

¹⁵Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 78.

sentence structure used in the stories should also be brief and the vocabulary should be simple. There should be just a few characters doing things in familiar surroundings.

Bible stories which can be played effectively if kept simple are the Christmas story and the story of the Good Shepherd, both of which show God's love for us. In the latter story the children especially enjoy being the sheep while one is the shepherd who makes sure all his sheep are safe.

In order to help them in understanding the love concept, events in which love is shown through action in everyday life may be employed. They may play such situations as: (1) helping mother and father at home: washing dishes, making beds, sweeping, dusting, baking, setting the table, planning surprises, raking leaves, pushing a wheel barrow, cutting hedges, watering flowers and washing the car;¹⁷ (2) helping an old person, or another person in need, across a busy street or carrying a package for him; (3) sharing toys and other possessions with others.

The ways in which God shows His love to us through nature can best be shown through rhythm activities which will be discussed in detail in a later chapter. There are many aspects of nature which the children enjoy playing. They love to be the many things which God has given us; animals, flowers, trees, sunshine, rain and snowflakes.¹⁸

¹⁷Ruth Lease and Geraldine Siks, Creative Dramatics In Home, School and Community (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 288.

¹⁸Winifred Ward, Playmaking With Children (New York: Appleton Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957), p. 201.

Other types of activities for this age may be short incidents involving:

- (1) manners and customs of Bible times
- (2) familiar home situations
- (3) rhymes and short poems
- (4) songs
- (5) incidents which happen in class or objects brought to the session may be adapted by the quick thinking teacher (a quarrel over a toy may result in a playing activity involving the idea of sharing; a letter brought may lead into the postman as a helper in the community and this could introduce discussion and playing about all the kinds of people in the town who serve us.)

It is important to point out that at this age the leader should not expect to work toward polished, individual performances. The emphasis, rather, should be on group interaction in a spirit of joy and growing awareness of life about them.

The Primary

The first and second graders will enjoy the same type of activities and stories as the kindergarteners. However, they are able to concentrate longer now and can begin to appreciate simple plots. Pantomime, in which their action expresses an idea or a complete situation, such as David watching over his sheep and killing the lion when it attacks, proves to be enjoyable and provides a good basis for characterization. Other

pantomime activities might include many of the occupations in Biblical times; the various attitudes of the travelers in the parable of the Good Samaritan; or any of the characters to be played in a story, poem, or song. The leader should be sure that the information given to them and the action decided upon is authentic and correct.

The stories should have plenty of action and contain a simple dramatic plot. Stories containing symbolism should be avoided as it will probably be misinterpreted or missed completely by the concrete-thinking primary child. In playing the stories it is important now to talk about the characters their relationship to each other, their motivations and feelings.¹⁹

Incidents in the life of Jesus and Old Testament figures such as Joseph, Moses, and David are good ones for the latter part of this period.

Specific examples are as follows:

- (1) Incidents in the life of David
 - a. David as a shepherd
 - b. David's triumph over Goliath
 - c. David's refusal to take revenge on Saul
in the cave
 - d. David's friendship with Jonathan
- (2) Incidents in the life of Joseph
 - a. The coat of many colors given to Joseph, and
the brothers' jealousy of him
 - b. The brothers throwing Joseph into the pit
 - c. Joseph in Egypt, forgiving his brothers

¹⁹Olaf Hanson, "Please Tell Me A Story," International Journal

(3) Incidents in the life of Moses

- a. Pharoah's daughter finding him in the reeds
- b. Moses and Aaron before the Pharoah

Many stories of contemporary life or of people and places other than the United States may also be adapted to dramatization. The stories related in the various church curricula and lesson outlines also may provide sources for dramatization, provided they possess inherent dramatic qualities.

Poems also provide a good basis for creative play, creative dramatics, and rhythmic movement. The following four books of poetry contain selections which can be used in these activities. Under each book are listed specific poems included in it. In each collection there are many other poems not listed which are adaptable to various situations.

Hubbard, Alice and Babbitt, Adeline, The Golden Flute, John Day Company.

"Clouds," Helen Wing
 "Morning Clouds," Nellie B. Miller
 "The Wind," Christina Rossetti

Stevenson, Burton E., Home Book of Verse For Young Folks, Henry Holt and Company.

"Clouds," Norman Ault
 "The Building of the Nest," Margaret Sangster
 "The Grass," Emily Dickinson

Literature Committee of the Association for Childhood Education, Sung Under the Silver Umbrella, The Macmillan Company.

"The Falling Star," Sara Teasdale
 "The Tree Stands Very Straight and Still,"
 Annette Wynne
 "Autumn Woods," James S. Tippet
 "White Fields," James Stephens
 "April and May," Anne Robinson
 "A Summer Morning," Rachel Field

McFarland, Wilma, For A Child, The Westminster Press.

"Daisies," Frank D. Sherman

"Come, Little Leaves," George Cooper

"The Baby Seed Song," Edith Nesbit²⁰

Other sources may be hymns, letters, weekly bulletins or papers, current books, newspaper clippings, life situations, Bible stories made contemporary, and pictures.

The Junior

The junior ages, nine, ten, and eleven are the optimum years for story dramatization. This group is now ready for more complex plots and characters. Their interest in heroic figures and their desire for adventure and realistic stories open up many possibilities from the Bible. Examples from the Old Testament are:

1. Joshua and Caleb - two of the twelve spies sent into Canaan, the Promised Land
2. The Division of land between Abraham and Lot
3. Gideon breaking the idols in his father's household (Judges 6:1-32)
4. The story of Joseph
5. Isaac and the Wells (Genesis 26:18-32)
6. Fate of the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:1-27)
7. The story of Elijah
8. Prophets such as Amos²¹

²⁰Lease and Siks, op. cit., pp. 242-243.

²¹Willcox, op. cit., p. 51.

Many of the parables of Christ are now effective:

1. The Good Samaritan
2. The Prodigal Son
3. The Ten Talents
4. The Wise and Foolish Virgins

Incidents in the Life of Christ:

1. Jesus choosing Peter for His Disciple
2. Zaccheus
3. The Widow's Mite
4. The Woman at the Well
5. Jesus In the Temple As A Boy
6. The Rich Young Ruler²²

As in the primary age group poetry, songs and non-Biblical stories can also be adapted to the juniors.

The Junior High

In the years of early adolescence the story dramatization is still valuable as the stories and their meanings become more complex. It is at this time that a desire for an audience may arise. It is necessary for the leader to be especially aware at this time that:

Young people need to learn the difference between the theatrical, which should not be brought into the church, and the dramatic. The theatrical expression is always external, something put on. The dramatic is always genuinely felt, arises in the inner self and moves outward.²³

²²Ward, op. cit., p. 203.

²³Harold Ehrensperger, "Drama Is At Home In The Church," International Journal of Religious Education, XXXIII, No. 10 (June, 1956), p. 17.

Up to this time the children have been eager to participate in creative dramatics without thought of an audience or with little self-consciousness. But as they desire an audience and become more conscious of their physical appearance they may tend to think of the outer effect they are making rather than the inward feelings they are experiencing. It is the leader's responsibility to keep them aware of the fact that the outward form is an expression of the inward feeling. The junior high person who has never done this type of activity may be too self-conscious to begin participation in it now. The leader must be sensitive to the group and its reaction if this is new to them.

In leading the stories the teacher should guide the students in discovering within old favorite characters, qualities which they had not been aware of before. The shadows and subtle blendings of the heroes may now be brought out more clearly. More complex plots as well as characters will challenge the teenager who has had previous experience in story dramatization. The lives of the Biblical characters may now be played in greater detail. The children will be able to understand the growth and change that came about in these heroes through their lives. Suggestions for various incidents which involve opportunity for character development are listed below.

(1) Joshua

- a. The Scout - Numbers 13 and 14
- b. The Leader - Joshua 1
- c. The Judge - Joshua 9
- d. The Governor - Joshua 20

- (2) Saul, how he came to be king
 - a. People's request for a king - I Samuel 8:1-22
 - b. Anointing of Saul - I Samuel 10:1-16
 - c. Popular Acclamation - I Samuel 10:17-24
 - d. Rescue of Jabesh-Gilead - I Samuel 11:1-11
 - e. Coronation of Saul - I Samuel 11:12-15
- (3) Both books of Samuel
- (4) Nehemiah and Ezra - restoration of Jerusalem
 - after the exile - requires more imagination and
 - creative work on the part of the leader and players
- (5) The Prophets

Selections from the New Testament might be:

- (1) Incidents and parables from the four Gospels
- (2) The Acts
 - a. Stoning of Stephen - Acts 7
 - b. Road to Damascus - Acts 9:1-8
 - c. Visit by Ananias - Acts 9:10-18
 - d. Persecution by the Jews - Acts 14
 - e. Incidents on his missionary journeys - Acts 13-20
 - f. Imprisonment experiences - Acts 16 and 24
 - g. In Rome - Acts 28
- (4) The Witness of Peter and John
 - a. Healing of the lame man - Acts 3:1-16
 - b. Hearing before the council the day after their
 - arrest in Jerusalem - Acts 4:1-22
 - c. Deliberations of the council after the second
 - arrest of Peter and John, when they were condemned

to be flogged - Acts 5:12-42

- d. Return of Peter to the house of Mary, mother of Mark, on his release from imprisonment - Acts 12:1-17²⁴

Other topics of interest are the lives of saints, events in church history, and contemporary figures of the church.²⁵ Role playing, the playing of problems which the young people face in life is an effective technique and will be discussed in a separate chapter.

Another variation at this point in development may be semi-spontaneous drama in which the situation and characters are described to the group a week in advance. Each person is given a general topic which he is supposed to incorporate into his dialogue. He will think about and do research on this subject in the coming week. Although actual lines are not written or memorized the players will have one or two rehearsals in which they work out their action and general dialogue. The situation is then played before the group the following week. Suggested topics are: "Why I Am A _____" (pertaining to the faith or denomination to which he belongs); incidents in the early history of the church; the beginnings of Protestantism; the church's stand on pacificism or disarmament; and other contemporary issues.²⁶

²⁴Willcox, op. cit., pp. 23, 62-64.

²⁵Ehrensperger, op. cit., p. 4.

²⁶Marjorie Curry, "Experimental Projects Written On the Junior High Level to Illustrate Drama In the Field of Christian Education Within the Local Church" (unpublished Master's thesis, Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary, 1953), p. 54.

Creative dramatics may also be used in formal plays which the older junior high schoolers may wish to present. There are three different ways it may be incorporated. (1) At tryouts, after the people are familiar with the situation and characters, short scenes with spontaneous dialogue may be given. This rids the actor of his book and line-reading and enables him to show the director his ability with characterization and bodily movement. (2) During rehearsals formal scenes may temporarily be turned into improvisations in order to achieve naturalness in players who tend to recite lines. (3) Improvised dialogue may be developed in crowd scenes.²⁷

The senior high school students will also enjoy semi-spontaneous drama, however, at this age their interest turns to formal play production. Creative dramatics activities which the older adolescent enjoys are those of role playing and creative movement which will be discussed in the following chapters.

General Uses of Creative Dramatics

It has been shown that there are many situations in which creative dramatics may be adapted at the various ages. Although the Bible story or other written material with religious values is the most common basis, there are many other opportunities for its use, such as:

- (1) Supplementing a group experience (Example - after a missionary talk the group may play out a story involving his work)

²⁷Ann Viola, "Drama With and For Children: An Interpretation of Terms," Speech Teacher, V, No. 4 (November, 1956), p. 304.

- (2) Suggesting the right attitude to take in everyday problems (Example - losing games, getting along with siblings and parents)
- (3) Making background material come alive (Example - the occupations of people in Old Testament times)
- (4) Preparing the group for a challenging or new experience (Example - joining church, welcoming visitors to the class)
- (5) Helping build standards (Example - behavior on dates)
- (6) Incorporating creative dramatics in a worship service at a youth meeting or in a service for a special seasonal occasion.

The leader must constantly use as much originality, awareness, and resourcefulness as possible in order to make the creative dramatics experience a fresh and vital one.²⁸

Story Dramatization

Since story dramatization comprises a large portion of the activities in the field of creative dramatics it is necessary that its techniques are understood. The following phases of the process will be discussed:

1. Choosing the story
 2. Telling the story
 3. Preparing the dramatization
 4. Dramatizing the story
 5. Evaluating the story
-

Choosing the Story

All stories are not suitable for dramatization. The leader must be able to recognize the story with dramatic potential and likewise the story which lacks dramatic elements. Not only the dramatic values but the religious and educational values for the particular age involved must be analyzed.

The religious implications will be noted first. It should have a significant message for the world today and be selected with regard to the spiritual needs of the players. Which truth or truths (of all those possibly inherent in it) will be meaningful for the particular group? Many stories from the Bible may be dramatic but may have no meaning for the child or merely confuse him in certain phases of his development.

In considering the educational values the first consideration must be that of truth. The story must embody essential truths of human life and character. The characters in it must be true to themselves and to life. There should be enough characters in it so that each player will be given opportunity for active participation sometime before the dramatization is concluded.

The characters within the story will largely determine the dramatic potential of a story. First, there should be a hero-figure or a protagonist. He is the pivot on which the plot revolves, the connecting link between the other characters,

the unifying force. He should be intelligible to those people playing the story. They should be able to understand and sympathize with him. There will be a character who interferes with the hero's interests and activities. He is known as the antagonist. This interference with the hero will take different forms: (1) a character showing open hostility to the protagonist; (2) an innocent misunderstanding on the part of someone else which interferes with the protagonist's goal; (3) and in stories for older children, an antagonistic force within nature or within the hero himself and not another actual character. The supporting characters will reinforce either one of the two conflicting forces.

As has already been implied in the discussion of characters, there must be conflict of some kind. It does not have to be physical combat but can be qualities of character and personality within the characters or social forces which cause the struggle. Another element within the story must be suspense, which has significance. In other words, the players must care what the outcome is. The suspense should culminate in a decision which is felt to have importance. The conclusion must follow the logic of cause and effect in the moral realm; it could not have ended otherwise. The characters remain true to themselves.²⁹

Qualities to look for in considering dramatization should be: true-to-life characters; plot containing conflict; suspense

²⁹Willcox, op. cit., pp. 10-11, 18, 24.

and decision; worthwhile and significant theme or central idea; and possibilities for action and dialogue.³⁰

To summarize, one may ask these three basic questions when considering a story to dramatize in religious education: (1) Has it inherent dramatic values? (2) Has it an ethical or religious message for the church and for the world today? (3) Is it appropriate in subject matter, form, and teaching, to the stage of development of the persons who are to handle it?³¹

Setting The Mood

It is the leader's responsibility to create an atmosphere conducive to creativity and to bring to the children his own "firm convictions and deep personal experience, through his appreciation and knowledge of it, in the religious heritage of the race."³² He must be able to help them feel the joy of discovering new truths and of old truths applied to new situations.

". . . to some children, this vicarious experience provides the only opportunity to experience beauty."³³ It is up to the leader to proceed gently but with enthusiasm and to allow his imagination to soar with the children's, so all

³⁰Barbara Anderson, "Creative Dramatics -- A Good Way To Teach," International Journal of Religious Education, XXXIII, No. 2 (October, 1956), p. 8.

³¹Willcox, op. cit., p. 9.

³²Hulda Niebuhr, Ventures In Dramatics With Boys and Girls Of the Church School (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935) p. xvii (introduction).

³³Margaret Woods, "Creative Dramatics," NEA Journal, XLVIII, No. 5, (May, 1959), p. 53.

the participants, eager or shy, experienced or newcomers, may be able to share the joy of creativity.

The leader must be able to arouse the curiosity and interest of the children so they care what happens. ". . . the child is motivated [to action] by the mood set by the teacher."³⁴ His own attitude will help to set the mood desired. Other helps in gaining interest and awakening the imagination may be appropriate recordings, hymns, letters, short films, objects, pictures, or questions.

A good motivating activity involuntarily captures the child's interest and carries him into the enthusiasm of group discussion without his realizing it. The leader should keep certain considerations in mind as the motivation period is prepared. He should think of the children and the material. The story must be analyzed in order to find the theme and strong appeal. Then the kind of receptive mood that must be created for the specific story must be determined. It is important that the motivation does not become more involved than the actual creative dramatics experience. The children should not be so overwhelmed with an abundance of introductory material that the actual playing period is a letdown for them. Motivation approaches should be varied and fresh in order that the children respond eagerly each time.³⁵

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Lease and Siks, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

Telling The Story

The storyteller is the medium through whom the story comes to life, the transmitter, the reflector, the catcher of the spark between man and man, God and man.³⁶

The effective storyteller will use all the experience he has had and will build the richest background possible in order to cultivate the spirit of storytelling. Preparing stories to tell is not isolated preparation for each one but rather a continual process, reading and thinking about as much literature as possible and gaining experiences of beauty which will become a part of him and in turn enrich the stories he tells. He must like, enjoy and want to tell the story. It must belong to him, knowing it so well that there is no possibility of forgetting it. He must develop his voice so that it has the correct pitch and appropriate strength. He must practice the pacing of the story, working on changes in tempo and using pauses effectively. The words used must fit the story, must be appropriate to the characters, the time, and the place of the action. One must never talk down to the children but yet use vocabulary which will be understandable by the listeners. He will not sacrifice the literary values of a great story by watering it down into words of one syllable for his young audience. He will wait with this story until the listeners reach an age of understanding and appreciation of it as it was written.³⁷

³⁶Ruth Tooze, Storytelling (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 15.

³⁷Ibid., p. 40.

Each leader will have his own individual method of preparation and presentation of the story but a few steps to follow are:

- (1) Outlining the story including the introduction, main events, climax and conclusion
- (2) Having a clear mental picture of each phase of the story
- (3) Practicing looking at the audience and speaking to them
- (4) Practicing telling the story to an imaginary or actual small audience
- (5) Using direct discourse whenever possible
- (6) Coming to know the story so well that the enthusiasm for it shines through to the listeners.³⁸

Jeanette Perkins Brown has expressed the idea that there is too much "pouring-in" in storytelling and not enough opportunity given for a pouring out by the children after the story has been told. "Emotions are roused for which no outlet in action is provided." The listener completely identified himself with the hero. He not only toils and suffers with him vicariously, but he also vicariously enjoys the unearned emotional satisfaction of the hero's earned reward and feels no need for real effort on his part to achieve such satisfaction.³⁹

³⁸Hanson, op. cit., p. 4.

³⁹Jeanette P. Brown, The Storyteller In Religious Education (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1951), p. 6.

Similarly, the limitations of listening only have been expressed by Morrison:

To teach is to tell, but it is also to live and to understand, to stimulate thinking and wondering, to provide rich experiences, to extend horizons of expression, to help children use what they learn, to guide them in becoming active learners---involved, participating, searching.⁴⁰

In these examples we see two affirmative reasons for using the creative dramatics technique. On the other side of the picture it should be emphasized that even if the story passes the "dramatic potential" test, before using it for dramatization the leader should be able to say "yes" to the following final criteria: (1) Can it be brought into line with the problem of the lesson? (2) Will it aid in making the situation real? (3) Will it aid in giving the mind clearer precepts?⁴¹ After having answered these questions affirmatively the leader may proceed to the planning of the dramatization with the children.

Planning the Dramatization

Before the leader attempts to guide the children in planning and carrying out a dramatization he should have a clear idea of the many possibilities which the selections offer. He must have considered the various characters and their personalities so he can lead the class into purposeful

⁴⁰Eleanor Morrison, "Use Many Related Teaching Procedures---Third and Fourth Grades," International Journal of Religious Education, XXXV, No. 7 (March, 1959), p. 18.

⁴¹Overton, op. cit., p. 95.

pantomime and characterization. He should have reflected on several possible scenes of action which will enable him to ask stimulating questions to guide a class into informal playing within a one-hour period.⁴²

Although the children will be eager to play the story immediately upon the teacher's suggestion to do so (in many cases, if they are familiar with story dramatization they will suggest it themselves) there needs to be planning and working on characterization. Working on characterization can be one of the most beneficial phases of the process. In leading this part the teacher should see that great care is taken to:

. . . relate the feeling to the action, so that the stirring of the imagination and emotions to an appreciation of the characters represented may be the means of developing a more sensitive response of the human being to the real world.⁴³

Discussion and practice should be had in characterization and dialogue before they are actually incorporated into the actual playing. It is important to talk about the way in which the inside feelings of the character affects his outward action. Inner thoughts and feelings affect posture, walk, facial expression and bodily movement. They should each "try on" the various characters, getting the "feel" of them. Each child should have an idea of the kind of person each character is. He should know how he looks, how old he is; how he feels toward the other characters. The main characters

⁴²Lease and Siks, op. cit., p. 175.

⁴³Overton, op. cit., p. 96.

may first be pantomimed with the entire group taking part. Each child, in his own place, will do a specific action in the way he thinks the character would. Individuals may then try on various characters as the remainder of the group observes.⁴⁴

By experiencing a variety of emotional characterizations, a child will learn to distinguish between destructive and constructive emotions and he will find this experience of value in personal application. The dialogue should be introduced as naturally as possible. The children should be encouraged to think aloud in proper sequence some of the things that might be said.

All the children should be allowed and encouraged to take part in the discussion and decisions which will be made. The planning period should include these considerations by the group.

- (1) How many and what scenes are to be included?
- (2) How many characters are to be included in each scene?
- (3) Where in the room each action will take place.
- (4) How each scene will begin - who begins the scene and what are they doing?
- (5) Where the exits and entrances are to be.⁴⁵

The importance of good listening and watching should be stressed if a part of the group will not be participating in the first playing.

⁴⁴Lease and Siks, op. cit., p. 173.

⁴⁵Eleanor Morrison, "Use Many Related Teaching Procedures," International Journal of Religious Education, XXXV, No. 5 (January, 1959), p. 14.

Playing the Story

The actual playing period is the most valuable part of creative dramatics for it is here, as the child plays his character and reacts to others who are playing with him that understanding, insight and emotional release are most likely to take place. The outer mechanics of the playing may be poor in first attempts but this does not necessarily indicate that there has been no inner growth within the child because of the experience. During the first playing the children will discover many things which they forgot about in their planning or which need modification or enlargement. The evaluation period, therefore, is another vital phase to the creative dramatics process. It helps to improve the subsequent playings and to gain deeper insight into the characters and plot through discussion.

Evaluating the Dramatization

During the evaluation and the re-planning session in which the children decide on improvements to be made, the leader should let the children express themselves and try their own ideas even if he can see they are making errors. For "play loses its dramatic value. . . when it ceases to be creative expression and is organized and imposed upon a person or group."⁴⁶ This does not mean that he stays completely out of the picture. It is necessary that he guide them by an occasional suggestion or a question which will provoke thought.

⁴⁶Ehrensperger, op. cit., p. 17.

Words of encouragement are needed to be given by the leader, also. His ability in guiding the children will be improved as he actually works with them. It is only through the actual experience that he will become more adept and sensitive in this special kind of leadership. Miss Ward expresses the role of the leader in this way. Children cannot create "out of a vacuum" but must discuss and experiment with the scene in many ways, being encouraged with sincere praise from the leader. He should not impose his own standards but remain flexible enough to accept ideas and interpretations other than his own, thereby helping the children set their own standards by which to grow. The teacher must gain rapport with the children and guide their efforts, not direct them.⁴⁷

There are many things which the leader of creative dramatics should remember.

- (1) Know your children; become sensitive to their needs and feelings.
- (2) What happens to the child is always more important than what happens to the play.
- (3) Never force a child to take part, yet see that all the children are given the opportunity to participate in some way.
- (4) A well-planned motivation is essential.
- (5) The children should know the story well before attempting to dramatize it; it must be clear in their minds.

⁴⁷Ward, Playmaking, p. 278.

- (6) The groups should share in the planning process.
- (7) Avoid telling exactly what to do and how to do it.
- (8) Let the children evaluate their own efforts as much as possible.
- (9) Find something good in the contribution of each child.
- (10) Play the story as many times as the children are eager to do so, giving many different children the opportunity to play the different parts.
- (11) Don't be easily discouraged if first efforts seem to fail. Improvement comes to both the leader and the children through experience.⁴⁸

Possible Problems

When a teacher becomes enthusiastic over the use of creative dramatics it is important that he not over-use it or think it an answer to all his classroom problems. It should always have spiritual values and never be used merely as a "time-filler."

The possibility of confusing merely spectacular effects with essential dramatic and spiritual values should be pointed out. Examples of this are Jacob's dream as he wrestles with

⁴⁸United Presbyterian Church, Informal C.D. With Children (Philadelphia: Board of Christian Education, n.d.), p. 9.

the angels on the ladder or the rolling back of the Red Sea for Moses and his people to pass through. The exploitation of a small child because he will look angelic in certain poses, such as being small Samuel in a prayerful attitude, must also be avoided. Each situation must have particular value and meaning for the child himself.⁴⁹

When playing just a portion of a story the leader must be careful that it does not lead to misunderstanding or misconception of what eventually happens. An example of this would be that of playing the scene in which Joseph is thrown into the pit by his brothers. The players should know that this is not how the story ends but is only a small part of his life.

The spiritual values, their emphasis and message must be carefully thought through. For instance, the story of Esther has many natural dramatic elements in it but its content is a glorification of revenge. The character of Esther should be stressed and the story clearly placed in its historical setting. The character of Ruth is another example. Her readiness to change her religion was a matter of course for her time and culture. People changed gods as they moved from place to place for they believed that each country had its own set of gods. Naomi, with her convictions, is the main character in the story.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Willcox, op. cit., p. 17.

⁵⁰Ward, Playmaking, p. 198.

The question about playing the part of Jesus is often raised in religious education. It may be pointed out that Jesus came to earth as a human being and was a man who mingled with men. The stories show His warm, human qualities and are identifiable with the finest qualities in our own lives. The children can be prepared for the experience of having Jesus as the central figure in a creative play by making it a high privilege to play this part. The whole group may grow in reverence and in the feeling that Jesus was a real person.⁵¹

One of the biggest practical problems encountered is the training of leaders. A teacher with no training or background or having no feeling for the dramatic should not attempt creative dramatics. Workshops and/or weekly training sessions or classes should be attended before using this activity in the church school.

At least an hour should be allowed for work in a story dramatization. In many cases the vacation church school session proves to be a more satisfactory arrangement than the Sunday school session. In nice weather it is possible to play the stories outdoors in order to have more freedom and space. With careful planning and arranging, space can be made available in the average building. The biggest problem is that of teacher training rather than time and space.

⁵¹Ward, Playmaking, p. 198.

Sources and Materials

The amount of literature being written in the area of creative dramatics is steadily increasing. Many of the denominations have available through their boards of education books, pamphlets, booklets and articles about it which are easily obtainable at low cost. There will be no attempt to give an extensive list of suggested materials but only those which are most outstanding. In turn, in each of them will be found bibliographies giving a detailed account of books useful in the field.

Other bibliographies may be obtained by merely writing to the following places:

United States Children's Bureau
Washington, D. C.

(a yearly list of books for children,
representing a careful selection covering
a wide range of interests, annotated and
classified by interests and ages.)

Association for Childhood Education
National Education Association Building
Washington, D. C.

("A Bibliography of Books for Children,"
classified and annotated.)

American Council On Education
Washington, D. C.

("Reading Ladders for Human Understanding,"
annotates by age groups, books which are
helpful in developing inter-group and
interracial understanding.)

National Conference of Christians and Jews
203 N. Wabash Ave.
Chicago 1, Illinois

("Reading For Democracy," helps develop good
will among cultural and racial groups.)

International Council of Religious Education
("A Child's Religious Library," a brief
list of religious books for children.)⁵²

⁵²Jones, op. cit., pp. 157-158.

The books listed below have been found to be valuable to the present writer and have been suggested by authorities such as Ward (creative dramatics), Tooze (storytelling) and Chaplin (religious education).

The first section will give books for use by the leader for creative dramatics and storytelling. The second section will contain titles of stories and collections and other sources which may be used by the children themselves.

These books may be obtained through any good general or religiously affiliated book store.

Sources for Leaders

- Barton, Lucy. Costuming the Biblical Play. Walter H. Baker Company. 1937.
- Brown, Jeanette Perkins. The Storyteller in Religious Education. Pilgrim Press. 1951.
- Burger, Isabel. Creative Play Acting. A.S. Barnes & Co. 1950.
- Cole, Natalie. The Arts In the Classroom. John Day Co., 1940.
- Haaga, Agnes, and Randles, Patricia. Supplementary Materials for Use In Creative Dramatics With Younger Children. University of Washington Press. 1952.
- Lease, Ruth G., and Siks, Geraldine B. Creative Dramatics for Home, School, and Community. Harper and Brothers. 1952.
- Niebuhr, Hulda. Ventures in Dramatics. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935.
- Sawyer, Ruth. The Way of the Storyteller. Viking Press. 1942.
- Shedlock, Marie. The Art of the Story-Teller. Dover Publications. 1951.
- Smither, Ethel. The Use of the Bible with Children. Abingdon Press. 1937.

Ward, Winifred. Playmaking With Children. D. Appleton-Century Co. 1957.

Ward, Winifred, ed. Stories to Dramatize. Children's Theatre Press. 1952.

Willcox, Helen L. Bible Study Through Educational Dramatics. Abingdon Press. 1924.

Sources for Children

Stories of the Bible

Bowies, Walter R. The Story of the Bible. Abingdon.

de la Mare, Walter. Stories From the Bible. Cosmopolitan.

Hogner, Dorothy. The Bible Story. Oxford.

Jones, Rufus. The Boy Jesus and His Companions. Macmillan.

Klaber, Florence. Joseph, The Story of Twelve Brothers. Beacon Press.

Petersham, Maud, and Petersham, Miska. The Christ Child. Doubleday. The Story of Jesus. Macmillan. Stories From the Old Testament. Winston.

Smither, Ethel. Early Old Testament Stories. Abingdon.
Later Old Testament Stories. Abingdon.
First To Be Called Christians. Abingdon.

Yates, Elizabeth. Children of the Bible. Aladdin Books.

Stories and Sources With Religious Background

Bailey, Albert E. Daily Life In Bible Times. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Bainton, Roland H. The Church of Our Fathers. Scribners.

Ceder, Georgiana D. Ann of Bethany. Ethan, The Shepherd Boy. Joel, the Potter's Son. Abingdon.

Fitch, Florence Mary. One God. Lothrop. Their Search for God. Lothrop.

Foster, Genevieve. Augustus Caesar's World. Scribners.

Lau, Josephine. Beggar Boy of Galilee. Abingdon.

Niebuhr, Hulda. Greatness Passing By. Scribners.

Shore, Maxine, and Oblinger, M. M. The Slave Who Dreamed.
Westminster Press.

Smither, Ethel. A Picture Book of Palestine. Abingdon-Cokes-
bury Press.

Stories of Saints and Heroes

De Wohl, Louis. St. Joan, the Girl Soldier. Farrar Straus.

Farjeon, Eleanor. Ten Saints. Oxford U. P.

Cullen, Margaret. St. Francis of Assisi.

Gaer, Joseph. Young Heroes of the Living Religions. Little.

Jewett, Sophie. God's Troubadour (St. Francis). Crowell.

Larnen, Brendan, and Lomask, Milton. St. Thomas Aquinas and
the Preaching Beggars. Farrar Straus.

Pauli, Herta. Bernadette and the Lady. Farrar Straus.

Summary

In this chapter the development of the child, with special emphasis given to the religious and dramatic instincts, has been explored. The periods of growth have been divided into five sections according to age and common characteristics. Stories and sources which are appropriate for each period have been given. The basic process of story dramatization which can be adapted to any of the age levels has been explained. Included in the discussion were possible problems and common errors confronted in working with this activity. A brief list of the most valuable bibliographies, books, and stories which are available for further study in the various aspects of the field concluded the chapter.

This material gives a basis for understanding what creative dramatics in religious education is in terms of specific and concrete ideas and methods for use in the church school. The fundamental understanding gained and interest created from it may lead the reader to further investigation of creative dramatics by reading books which give in great detail general creative dramatics techniques, and by attending workshops which will result in actual practical experience in the church program.

CHAPTER III

ROLE PLAYING IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In adolescence or throughout the junior and senior high school experience we have seen how the child becomes more and more concerned with social problems and is guided to a great extent by the actions and attitudes of his peer group. He is now more capable of and eager to discuss problems and gain insight into them. For these reasons role playing, a form of informal drama, may play a valuable part in the youth group activities of the church.

The purpose of this chapter is to show exactly what role playing is; its values, its uses, and its process. In describing the basic techniques and methods of role playing, the creative aspects of it will be emphasized. The discussion will reveal that this activity is a natural tool for grappling with the problems and questions which religious educators must bring before their young people. The last portion of the chapter deals with specific illustrations of role playing activities which have been successfully conducted. This will help to clarify the meaning and method of role playing and also give a direction and a concrete basis from which to apply it in future situations.

Role playing is "the spontaneous acting out of roles in the contest of human relations situations."¹ The terms socio-drama and role playing are used interchangeably for they both refer to the interaction of people as they face and attempt to solve problems by the assuming or "putting on" of personalities different from their own.

An operational definition will best show what role playing is. The leader(s) of a group becomes aware of a general social problem or a specific situation which the group is facing. Either this specific situation or a situation which exemplifies the general problem is described to them by the leader. Certain members of the group either volunteer or are asked to assume the "roles" of the persons in the situations presented to them. The players then act and talk as they think the "problem characters" would. After a time the leader stops the scene and the group discusses the attitudes and ideas brought out in it. When all these steps have been followed, role playing is the result.

The values of role playing are many. It helps the person to "get out of himself" and see himself as others see him. Many times a subject or situation may be too sensitive an issue to handle in an ordinary discussion but by seeing or experiencing it from a more objective viewpoint and taking it out of the personal context, playing the ideas of other personalities, decisions and understanding may be reached. It

¹Adult Education Association, How to Use Role Playing, pamphlet #6 (Chicago 11, Illinois, 1956), p. 1.

allows many attitudes and feelings that fundamentally affect the group process, but which are usually left unexpressed and subjective, to be brought before the group for review. It clarifies the issues and "clears the air".

Role playing is widely recognized as a method of helping people to broaden their understanding of and to empathize with others. The gaining of insight into personal as well as other people's feelings also may result from a role playing experience. Because it is a way of experimenting with human relations in a learning situation, the participants can make mistakes and try new approaches without chancing the damage that experimentation in real-life situations may involve.²

Socio-drama stimulates and motivates discussion because of the concrete and vivid way in which it presents the problem. Everyone becomes involved and group action becomes more dynamic. Although mainly social in purpose, it calls into action latent individual capacities.³

Role playing also gives the leader insight into the way in which individuals and the group as a whole see themselves and others. For example, a socio dramatization may reveal that a young person has a false impression of the way his parents think or feel about him. The leader, noting

²Ibid., p. 7.

³Charles Burns, Jr., "Using Role Playing in Christian Education," International Journal of Religious Education, XXXII, No. 5 (January, 1956), p. 13.

this misconception, may correct it by conducting further role playing sessions and discussions on the problem.

As has already been indicated, role playing is especially valuable for the development of attitude changes within the individual. In order to show this through the scientific method, an experimental situation was designed in which two groups of eight members each were worked with for three weeks, for two hours each week. The one group had discussions about various problems and the other group role played the same problems which group "one" discussed. The justification for using it as a method for producing attitudinal and behavioral changes was based on the listed seven criteria. They worked from the hypothesis that role playing experiences increase an individual's:

- (1) leadership initiative
- (2) prominence in the group
- (3) ability to aid in the attainment of group goals
- (4) cooperativeness
- (5) friendliness to others
- (6) desirability as a friend
- (7) general social adjustment.

It was reported after extensive testing that there was a greater change among role players than among the control subjects.⁴

⁴John Mann, "The Effect of Role Playing Experience on Self-Ratings of Interpersonal Adjustment," Group Psychotherapy, XI (March, 1958), p. 27.

Before continuing with the process of role playing, the values of it will be briefly summarized. It can aid in improving interpersonal and intercultural relations by facilitating insight and understanding of others in religious fellowships. It helps in changing attitudes and behavior by: (1) securing a new-found ability to look objectively at oneself; (2) seeing oneself from the other's point of view; (3) better understanding of the causes of behavior; and (4) beginning to face reality. It develops spontaneity and stimulates group participation by giving increased freedom to do so. It encourages group members who characteristically do not enter into the discussion to contribute in the analyzing of the problem. It helps the individual with inner conflicts and problems.⁵

The Role Playing Process

Setting the "Stage"

The type of problem presented to the group will depend somewhat on their experience and age, and their number. The larger and less mature they are the more general and simple the problems will be. Before introducing the ideas to them it is necessary to sensitize the group to a feeling of need for this activity; disturbing their complacency and making each person aware of his need for learning and understanding.

⁵Rosemary Lippit and Ann Hubbell, "Role Playing for Personnel and Guidance Worker," Group Psychotherapy, IX (April, 1956), p. 103.

This may be accomplished through discussion, films or recordings, or a story or case presented by the leader.

The physical preparations are few! a chair or two, a table, and space for action is all that is necessary for almost any role playing situation.

Defining the Problem

The explanation of the scene to be played should give enough background and content so that all will understand the situation and know the types of persons to be played but not in so much detail that there is no room for original thought or creative feeling.

They should know the attitude of each of the people toward the problem and any outstanding reasons why they feel as they do. The personality of each character should be clear in the minds of the players. The time and place and the immediate specific conditions of the situation should be known, also, before the playing commences.⁶

Casting the Scene

Persons should be chosen because it is thought they can carry the role well and are not likely to be threatened or exposed by it. No player should be stereotyped for certain kinds of roles or be type-cast. The leader should see that no one is over-urged to take a role or asked to take a role unless he is definitely willing to do so. In casting an

⁶Burns, op. cit., p. 13.

unfavorable character it is wise to assign it to a person who has enough status in the group or personal security to carry it without stress.⁷

After being cast the players may be given a few moments to think through their characters. Especially for an untrained group the leader must take responsibility for getting them into the role by asking them questions about their characters.

The Playing

As the action begins the leader should take a "back seat" and be heard only if a beginner is in trouble and would seem to profit by the suggestions of a line to say or some action to take. The spontaneity of the situation must be protected above all. It is from the spontaneity of reactions that the "reality" arises. The atmosphere should be one of permissiveness so that the real feelings of the players may be voiced and shared rather than the "right" or "expected" answer be parroted. The participants must play their roles in response to their associates' words and attitudes as well as convey their own personal interpretation of the part. They must continually remember that role playing is interaction.

The length of the playing will vary for each situation. It is largely a matter of the leader, through experience, "feeling" when the appropriate time has arrived to conclude. Time must be allowed for enough interaction to take place so

⁷Adult Education Association, op. cit., p. 13.

that the entire group will be able to have enough concrete reactions in order to analyze the playing and see the problem in a new perspective. To be worthwhile it should continue for at least three minutes. Six to eight minutes is a good length but not necessarily the best. Other criteria for cutting the action may be:

- (1) It has developed enough so the group can project what would happen if the action were continued.
- (2) The players have reached an impasse and the action and conversation are becoming repetitive, irrelevant, or sluggish.
- (3) A natural closing has been arrived at.⁸

Analyzing the Playing

Much of the value of this technique depends upon the discussion following the spontaneous dramatization. The effectiveness of this discussion is limited in turn by the accuracy and relevance of the observation by the group while the role playing is in progress. The leader can help improve observation by pointing out to the audience certain qualities and attitudes to watch for before the playing begins. Sometimes, various members of the audience may be assigned specific characters to observe and note their reactions to the other

⁸Ibid., p. 17.

characters. The group develops new insights and perceptions to the degree to which they are able to empathize with the players.⁹

If the players comment first on why they acted and spoke as they did it allows them to set the tone for constructive criticism. If they show by their own observations that they are not self-conscious in analyzing the characters they portrayed, and not themselves, the observers are more likely to feel free to express their full reactions.¹⁰

The discussion must be guided with tact and diplomacy. The leader must be sensitive to the personal feelings and sensitive spots in the group. Keeping the evaluation as impersonal and objective as possible will help in this matter. It is important that the observers focus their discussion on the situation and the characters portrayed rather than on the acting ability or the convincingness of the interpretation of the roles. The main emphasis should be on how this playing has furthered the understanding of the problem or situation to be solved. This can partially be done by commenting about what they actually saw rather than restricting their remarks to only what should or should not have been done. The group may speculate upon what the individuals were feeling, what they wanted from the fellow players, why they acted the way they did, and what they all can do to help improve the situation.

⁹Mary Carter and Louise Schryner, "Human Relations--Best Relations," Library Journal, LXXXIII, No. 1 (January 15, 1958), p. 129.

¹⁰Adult Education Association, op. cit., p. 18.

Besides oral discussion, reaction sheets, anonymously filled out, may be given the group. This helps transmit the group's feelings and aids the leader in planning for the next session. It also gives the members an opportunity to express their feelings and helps them summarize the session for themselves.¹¹

The situation may be re-played after the evaluation period in several different ways. The changes may be:

- (1) using the same people for the same characters but changing some attitude or quality within the character,
- (2) the persons within the role playing group exchanging roles to see what the situation looks like from a different angle
- (3) an entire new "cast" playing the situation.

Variations may take the form of a soliloquy in which one player shares his normally censored feelings and thoughts. The "alter-ego" technique follows the same idea: an example might be that of a father and son having a conflict over the use of the family car. Four people would be involved in the role playing. Two of them would be the "surface self" of the boy and the father. The other two would be the "inner self" of the boy and the father. This is more complex and needs an experienced group who work well together and can time their spoken thought well so that complete confusion is not the result. It can be most effective.¹²

¹¹Lippitt and Hubbell, op. cit., pp. 107-108.

¹²Burns, op. cit., p. 13.

Because the group usually responds enthusiastically to role playing it is important that the leader does not over-use it. Only when it deals with social problems and seems to be the best method to gain understanding and possible solutions should it be introduced. The director should take care that the sessions do not become only "fun" or "acting" periods but that they are sincere and serious efforts toward insight and growth.

Illustrations of Situations

The most common use for role playing will be that of solving typical problems common to teenagers and their church communities. Incidents involving church loyalties, family relations, race relations, and school problems are just a few of the general topics which may serve as bases for this activity. Some suggestions for situations which may be adapted, modified or merely serve as "thought stimulants" are outlined below.

(1) The youth fellowship has been trying to get permission to send two representatives to the annual all-church meeting in which plans are made for the following year. They want to show the adults that they can take responsibility. They have succeeded in doing this and their representatives are chosen and ready to go when they discover that the time and date for the meeting coincides exactly with the biggest dance of the year. Almost every member of the youth group is planning to go to the dance, including the two representatives. What are they to do?

Setting: It is a week before and the two representatives are talking over the problem with the youth leader.

(2) Helen is angry with her mother for making her do all the "dirty work" around the house (empty garbage, burn trash, go to the store, etc.) while her brother "sits around doing nothing." "It isn't fair!" she complains.

Setting: Her mother has just asked her to burn the trash and Helen rebels! Her brother is in the room, lounging in a chair with a Popular Mechanics Magazine taking all of his attention.

(3) A Negro family has just moved into the neighborhood and has two children the same age as most of the youth group members. It has been suggested by some of the members that they invite the new "kids" to their next meeting. Tom and his friends, who are quite active in the group, say they will quit if the Negro family joins them.

Setting: It has been two weeks since the new family moved in and the president of the group (as yet, he has expressed no definite view on the problem) and Tom and Bill, who wants to invite them, are outside the church, talking before the meeting begins.

(4) John accidentally broke a lady's window while playing baseball. As soon as it happened he immediately started to run away and urged the others to join him but they didn't. He is angry with them for not doing so because he feels they would have wanted him to run with them if they were the ones who had broken the window. The woman saw John running away and knows

he was the guilty one although he hasn't returned to the scene of the "crime" as yet.

Setting: It is the next day and John is not speaking to two of his fellow ball players who are trying to talk to him about it. The arrangements for paying for the window have not been settled yet.

(5) A Republican state senator is coming to talk about the "Christian and politics--Can They Mix?" Sue and Joe are not coming to hear him because their father is a Democrat and he said they didn't have to sit and listen to the senator if they didn't want to. "Everyone knows what crooks the Republicans are!" is his final say on the subject.

Setting: Sue and her friend Betty are arguing heatedly about Sue's attitude. They are in the school cafeteria eating. The civics teacher happens to pass by their table with his tray and hears that they are talking "politics" and "government". He makes a casual remark to them about their interest and Betty then asks him if he will talk to them a minute about their disagreement.¹³

Another use may be that of preparing for some event in which the youth group is to participate. An example of this possibility is described in the following paragraphs.

The church is growing and changing but the youth group doesn't seem to be getting any larger. So they decide to get all the names of new young people in the church area who are

¹³Suggested by ideas in Marjorie Curry, "Experimental Projects Written on the Junior High Level to Illustrate Drama In the Field of Christian Education Within the Local Church" (unpublished Master's thesis, Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary, 1953), pp. 47-52.

not attending. They also check in their old records and make a list of all the old members who have dropped out but who still could be active. They decide to go out in couples and visit each of the people. In order to practice the "approach" they will take in talking to their "prospects" and also to become acquainted with various attitudes they will be confronted with, they role play the possible situations. Each couple has an opportunity to "interview" while the others play the roles of the various people.

Old Members

(1) Girl quit because she was bored with the church activities.

(2) Boy got his hot rod about six months ago and works on it or is at the track most of his spare time.

(3) The girl isn't home but the parents urge the visitors to come in and they tell them how much they want "Jill" to start going again but don't know what to do with her; she won't go and won't tell them why not.

(4) Boy is going steady with a girl who isn't interested in church activities. They go to the show or bowling on Sunday evenings.

(5) Person is now attending another church and is active in its youth group.

Possible New Members:

(1) Parent comes to door and becomes angry when they explain their mission and indignantly tells them to leave and slams the door in their faces.

(2) A very shy girl who is interested shakes her head "yes" timidly but with no conviction when they ask her and tell her about their group. All her responses are one or two word answers.

(3) A boy who "knows everything there is to know about religion" plies them with questions concerning their doctrines and beliefs and gives them a detailed account of his previous activities in all phases of church life. He thinks he will attend their meetings and get them straightened out.

(4) A girl who really isn't at all interested.

(5) A boy who responds with interest and says he will start coming.¹⁴

A third variation is that of developing a creative drama out of a role playing situation. A most effective sample of this was given by a group of ninth graders as a result of a week's camp experience in a combination role playing-creative dramatics experiment. The problem they were given to consider was that of juvenile delinquency and the Christian's attitude toward it. In the first morning's devotional period they were told of an actual happening in Philadelphia a few years ago. A young Korean exchange student went out to mail a letter one evening and was attacked by a group of boys who killed him in the scuffle. There was no personal animosity toward the victim. They had never seen him before; he just happened to be the unfortunate person who was walking alone in

¹⁴Suggested by ideas in Hulda Niebuhr, "Trying on Life," International Journal of Religious Education, XXXI, No. 2 (October, 1954), p. 12.

that vicinity at that time. Earlier in the evening the boys had tried to attend a local teen dance but were refused entrance because they were not properly dressed and did not have the money for admission. After leaving the dance they wandered about the streets. Then, when they saw the lone Korean they attacked him. The boys were captured and their story headlined the newspapers. The American public was outraged at their deed and demanded severest judgment upon them. The Korean family, after hearing of their son's death considered the matter and sent word that they wished to press no charges and asked that the boys be given as light a sentence as possible. In the meantime, they were raising a fund in their village, in their son's memory. The money was to be used for scholarships for the boys to go to college when they were released. They said that as Christians they believed this was the action they should take.

The camp groups decided they would like to use this happening as a basis for thinking about this problem confronting all teenagers. Aspects they wanted to consider were:

- (1) What might have been the general background of the boys?
- (2) What were the individual boy's personalities like? their problems? were they all just "no good"?
- (3) What may have been the particular circumstances of this specific evening? Why were the boys together?
- (4) What was the deciding factor in their decision to attack the victim? How were they feeling? What did they want?

(5) What were their feelings immediately at the time of the murder? What did they do?

(6) How did the Korean family react to the news of the son's death?

(7) How did they arrive at their final decision? What were their motivations?

(8) What was the law's attitude toward the boys? toward the Koreans' decision?

(9) How did the boys feel when before the judge? upon hearing the Koreans' attitude?

The group broke up into small buzz groups each discussing and playing the roles involved in the various questions under consideration. As they played the various scenes they decided to make them into a play, showing the whole progression of events. They created a remarkably sensitive and insightful final product. On the stage was a large platform which they played on for indoor scenes. Street scenes were played on the floor level. A table and chair were on the platform and adapted for use for each scene. Music and simple lighting were incorporated.

Before the scenes began one of the boys who was in the gang appeared and sang, as if to himself, the popular teenage song at that time, "I'm Just A Lonely Boy". This theme ran through the playing. The idea of each person being alone, not knowing what to do, not being able to find a place or a purpose, was brought out as perhaps a major reason for what happened. The different types of boys portrayed were: the leader of the

gang, rough and tough; the boy who was his good friend but more sensitive to the "right", a sympathetic and likable character; the timid fellow who didn't really want to be in the gang at all but was too afraid not to go along with it. The other three "knew their way around", were bored and restless, had potential ability if placed in a different environment.

The several scenes were:

(1) One boy in his home and his mother and sister asking him why he didn't stay home more. The mother, tired and worn out.

(2) Another boy in his home and the parents are angry and shouting at him and each other about various home problems. The boy leaves in disgust.

(3) These two boys and three others are standing on a street corner making fun of a timid fellow in the neighborhood who is on his way to the store for his mother. They "persuade" him to forget about it and come to a dance they've heard of.

(4) Girls selling tickets to the dance, music and dancing in the background.

(5) The boys arrive and are refused admission.

(6) They go out on the street, angry, not knowing what to do; wishing they had some money.

(7) The Korean boy is in the home in which he lives, writing a letter to his family. He talks to the woman of the house about his family and life in the U.S. and then leaves to mail his letter.

(8) The boys are standing on the street and the Korean student walks by. No one else is about. They get the idea to just "take him down" and see if he has any money on his person.

(9) They attack him and suddenly he stops struggling. He is dead. They are unbelieving and frightened. And then they scatter in all directions.

(10) The Korean family receives notification of their son's death. They are stunned and sorrowful. The mother suggests they go and pray.

(11) The boys are standing (heads erect, eyes down, hands behind their backs, feet apart) in a triangular formation on the platform in a 3/4 position to the audience. The judge is talking to them very sternly. He then tells them of the family's reaction to the tragedy. They say nothing at all and when he excuses them they turn and slowly walk away, one by one. As they go, the song "Lonesome Valley" is sung quietly in the background. During the last verse (You must go and stand your trial, you must stand it all alone) only one boy is standing by himself. As it ends, he also exits.

It had a strong impact upon the audience and would seem to have a lasting effect on the participants.¹⁵

Summary

The values of role playing for a group as well as for individuals were first pointed out in this chapter. Following this a discussion was had of the process to use in working with socio-drama. The last portion dealt with actual illustrations of it, showing three possible variations: (1) a technique

¹⁵James Buell, director, presented at Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, July, 1959.

for the sole purpose of gaining insight and understanding into social problems; (2) a method to use as a pre-experience or "trying on" of a new situation soon to be faced; (3) a basis for a creative drama, in which no lines are written or memorized, but a complete play is worked out.

CHAPTER IV

CREATIVE MOVEMENT IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. Its first objective is to explain how creative movement of the body may be a means to a spiritual experience. For many years a stigma has been placed upon the use of bodily movement as a form of worship in the church. Activities which in any way may have a relationship to the term "dance" have been frowned upon. It is important to show that the principles and concepts behind creative movement in the church today have a religious and spiritual foundation.

The use of creative movement as a conscious form of worship is preceded by experience in rhythm activities. Therefore, the second portion of the chapter discusses the use of such activities with children in the religious education program. Section three discusses the use of creative movement with the adolescent. The chapter is concluded by a list of sources which will be valuable for the leader of rhythmic activities to acquire.

The Judaic-Christian heritage has explained the human body as divine and spiritual, maintaining it was created not

only for physical use for also for spiritual honor. The physical being is for man's work but first for God's work, allowing Him to come to His most complete revelation and service in the world, through each individual. The body is the House of God. He dwells in the body and through it finds expression in the life of man.¹

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? Glorify God, therefore, in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

I Corinthians 6:19, 20.

This concept places upon man a renewed dignity and a tremendous responsibility. If this idea becomes significant to the individual, his life takes on new meaning and purpose.

It is the task of religious education to lead each person into a new realization of the use of the body as a means of worship and spiritual power. One of the best ways this can be done is through creative or symbolic movement. Other terms which may be used interchangeably with creative movement are choric movement, religious dance, and rhythmic choir.

Erika Thimey, a pioneer in this field, said in explaining her reasons for her experiments in symbolic movement:

Believing the body to be an instrument of the soul, I have sought to create a new form of worship through the art of the body in motion. It is my intention that this worship be not merely for the personal gratification of the participant, but that it serve mankind by bringing a sincere religious experience to the congregations that behold it.²

¹Fred P. Corson, The Christian Imprint (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), p. 96.

²Erika Thimey as quoted in Margaret Fisk, The Art of the Rhythmic Choir: Worship Through Symbolic Movement (New York: 1955), p. 10.

Others have expressed its therapeutic and religiously uplifting values for the participating individual as well as the observing congregation. Margaret Fisk Taylor has said that whether it is for the sake of presenting it before a congregation or for the sake of each individual experiencing this feeling its first purpose must be that of "being adequate to meet this hour in existence--full of power, vision and faith."³

Symbolic movement is the expression of a religious idea, thought, or feeling through the art form of movement. The bodily movement is noble, reverent, solemn and full of holy grace. The entire body expresses an idea or feeling.

The movement is not just a method of going from one place to another, but it is felt and guided as each part of the body reaches into space with dignity and purpose.⁴

"It helps each individual to experience the finding of union with God. . . it is a basic approach to direct religious experience." It offers growth spiritually, through the expressing of spiritual vision; mentally, through understanding and planning with a group; physically, through training in posture and body coordination; socially, through group activity; psychologically, through practicing exercises that release tensions and express faith and joy.⁵

³Margaret Fisk, "The Bible Into Life Through Symbolic Movement," International Journal of Religious Education, XXXII, No. 3 (November, 1955), p. 16.

⁴Martha Cornick, "Religious Dance," Motive Magazine (March, 1954), p. 17.

⁵Margaret Fisk, "Spiritual Therapy Through Symbolic Movement," International Journal of Religious Education, XXX, No. 6 (February 1953), p. 12.

Creative movement is an active form of worship. It is not thought or speech alone but it involves the whole nature. It is universal in its expression. "It expresses the joys and sorrows, the fears and hopes of mankind today. And yet, not only mankind today, but of all men and of all races in all ages."⁶

Creative Movement for Primary Children

Rhythm is a part of all life. We see evidences of it all about us in nature; the seasons, the rotating of the heavenly bodies, the flapping of the wings of a bird, the beating of the human heart.

. . . if we look carefully about us we shall perceive that all natural movement, whether it be produced by a human being or by natural forces, is rhythmical.⁷

It is more than just stress and meter. It is with the rhythm of the whole that one must strive to be in accord. It must be within the person and all his functions. He must be made aware of the existence of rhythm in all the universe in order to intensify and beautify his abilities. "The more the sense of it is developed in movement, the more artistic and free will be the result."⁸

⁶Curt Sachs as quoted in Fisk, The Art of the Rhythmic Choir, P. 28.

⁷Carrie Rasmussen, "Rhythm in Bodily Action and Creative Dramatics," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXII, No. 1 (April, 1936), p. 291.

⁸Ibid.

Some children seem to have an innate sense of rhythm while others have to be directed to a feeling of it. But in either case, movement is the child's most natural and satisfying means of expression. It is his universal language. Through it he can communicate his thoughts and feelings. Because large, free movements are natural outlets for his thinking and feeling, guided creative rhythms can help him in organizing and experiencing his feelings in outward form.⁹

The religious educator is not concerned with the attainment of a highly polished technique or set pattern of movement; he is primarily concerned with the spiritual development within each child. An expressive rather than an impressive experience is sought.¹⁰

In watching and working with children in religious dance, Ruth St. Denis said:

I see children growing straight and well-proportioned, swift and sure of movement, having dignity and grace, and wearing their bodies lightly with power.¹¹

A ten year old expressed her feelings in this way, "I love to dance because it makes my mind and body strong and I am able to express my soul."

⁹Gladys Andrews, Creative Rhythmic Movement for Children (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954), p. 25.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 34.

¹¹Fisk, The Art of the Rhythmic Choir, p. 56.

In order to be able to direct rhythmical activities it is necessary to know the fundamental elements of them. Rhythm has been scientifically defined as, "the measured release and recovery of energy and consists of repeated units or patterns which take form in line and design, and movement." In movement there is time, a definite portion of duration; force, power or energy; and space, distance or area.¹²

The leader may utilize the natural and spontaneous movement in directing rhythmic exercises, such as walking, running, skipping, marching, and hopping. It is the leader's responsibility to set the situation and make the children aware of the movement possibilities of their bodies. For instance, in introducing a session, the leader may say, "We all have arms; what can we do with them?" As the children make attempts at different types of movement, new ways may be suggested to them and they may experiment with these suggestions. The leader does not think for the children, however, but rather helps them in thinking through their rhythmical problems for themselves. They should be encouraged verbally. It is of primary importance that the leader take clues from the children rather than always giving clues to them.¹³

¹²Elizabeth Sehon and Emma O'Brien, Rhythms in Elementary Education (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1951), p. 6.

¹³Andrews, op. cit., p. 35.

Rhythm may be guided through the use of various types of accompaniment. These may range from simple hand clapping or foot tapping to using a record player. The percussion instruments are those which produce sounds when they are struck. Any of these make excellent forms of accompaniment.

A general classification of them is as follows:

1. Drum, wood and gourd instruments - for walking, hopping, leaping, jumping, skipping, galloping, running
 - a. drum
 - b. tambourine
 - c. claves and rhythm sticks (produce stacatto sounds)
 - d. wood and temple blocks (produce hollow sounds)
 - e. rattles and maracas
2. Metal Instruments - sustained movement such as bending, stretching, twisting, turning, swinging, and swaying
 - a. gong
 - b. cymbal
 - c. triangle
 - d. bells
3. Keyboard Instruments
 - a. Xylophone - simple melodies and differences in pitch
 - b. Piano - produces melodies, harmonies, and rhythm simultaneously as well as moods and qualities of sound
4. Vocal Accompaniment
 - a. singing
 - b. spoken words
 - c. chants

The pianist plays a most important part in the rhythms period for he can:

- (1) Quickly make adjustments to the mood or spirit of the activity
- (2) Accent the music and rhythm at will
- (3) Change tempo, intensity and quality
- (4) Start and stop wherever required or desired
- (5) Cut, lengthen or play selected portions of the music as desired.¹⁴

Each of these accompaniments can be adjusted and used for the various ages.

The kindergarten and early primary child should be given the opportunity to use large muscles, become aware of the various parts of the body, and learn to respond to definite rhythms.

There are locomotor movements in which the child's complete body is moved or transported from one place to another; and axial movements in which he stands in one place and flexes and extends his body in many directions from one central point. Suggestions for each of these are listed and may be incorporated into specific topics and lessons according to the leader's imagination and ingenuity. They may proceed out of a study of God's Wonders in Nature, Community Helpers, Daily Duties, and the capturing of moods and feelings.

¹⁴Sehon, op. cit., pp. 19, 26.

Locomotor Movements

Walking

- a. tired, sad, glad, proud, lazy
- b. various animals - Noah's Ark or God's creations
- c. mother, father
- d. David and Goliath - difference between large and heavy steps and light and agile steps

Jumping and Hopping

- a. fast and slow
- b. animals and birds
- c. bouncing balls
- d. popcorn
- e. hail stones

Running

- a. joyful, fearful
- b. butterflies
- c. bees
- d. waves
- e. snow

Leaping

- a. glad, proud, lazy
- b. zig-zag
- c. over puddles
- d. lightning
- e. rain

Skipping

- a. on a hot day
- b. on a cold day
- c. little and big steps

Sliding

- a. fast, slow, lazy
- b. quietly

Galloping

- a. fast, slow, friskily
- b. messenger's horse
- c. parade horse

Axial Movements

Complete Flexion and Extension (bending and stretching)

- a. butterflies from the cocoon
- b. sun rising and setting
- c. planting seeds
- d. bread rising
- e. pumping water
- f. water fountain
- g. flowers growing
- h. ringing church bells

Twisting

- a. sowing seeds
- b. water sprinkler
- c. weather vanes
- d. sweeping
- e. looking in back of selves

Swinging and Swaying

- a. trees
- b. fields of grain
- c. flowers
- d. water ripples
- e. bells ringing
- f. rocking baby in a cradle

Striking and Beating

- a. cleaning rugs
- b. beating drums
- c. ringing gongs
- d. to show power, anger, defiance¹⁶

These movements may be combined into a unit expressing a theme or showing a process such as:

(1) Seeds curled up snugly in the earth, lying very still, then slowly uncurling as they grow, suddenly peeking up above the ground, sprouting new green shoots and leaves, wiggling toes as the roots grow downward, swaying with the ground and turning to seed to be covered by snow, sinking into the ground to wait once again for spring.

(2) Caterpillars spinning cocoons, resting quietly in them then gradually emerging, stretching their wings and flying about as butterflies.

(3) How we are sent our water -- different kinds of clouds (frothy, filmy friendly ones; fat, fluffy ones; black rain-filled ones); rain, hail, snow, rivers and seas, wells (dipping into them with a bucket), fountains.

These are just a few suggestions for the type of rhythmic activity appropriate for this age group. Margaret Fisk Taylor's

¹⁶Sehon, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

books Time for Wonder, written especially for the young primary child, and Time for Discovery, for older primaries, are two excellent sources for further investigation. They are included in the list of suggested sources at the end of this chapter.

Creative Movement for the Junior Child

The juniors will have more ideas of how to incorporate kinds of movement into various stories they wish to express rhythmically. They will be more aware of mood and emotion, and enjoy working with the Judaic-Christian cultural heritage which would include the Jewish folk dances. In some groups there may be a member or two who will be able to compose their own simple melodies for accompaniment and should be encouraged to do so.

A Thanksgiving theme can be well adapted to movement. Possible activities making up a complete unit might be:

- a. plowing the earth
- b. sowing the seed
- c. cutting the crop
- d. gathering the grain
- e. gleaning in the fields
- f. Thanksgiving procession
- g. rejoicing (Psalm of Thanksgiving)

The Christmas story with accompaniment of the various Christmas carols can also be effective. One group of children form a circular star and move across the "heavens" to the east.

People working in the fields, shepherds tending their flocks, and the regal wise men studying the heavens, all stop their activities to look at and follow the star. Each of these groups will be moving rhythmically to represent their respective tasks. As they follow the star the angels appear and proclaim the good news through creative movement, also. Each group will conclude its movement as the members within it bow before the Christ in the manger.

Gustave Holst's recording of The Planets also provides a basis for original and creative movement as they explore and come to an increased knowledge of the wonder of God's creation, the universe. Included in the same theme might be the hymn, "This Is My Father's World."

Creative Movement for the Adolescent

As children approach junior high and high school their movement can become more reverent and have a more conscious feeling of worship. They begin doing much of their movement for the church sanctuary as they interpret rhythmically Scripture and hymns.

With adolescents religious dance can most easily and naturally achieve psychological and aesthetic effects. It can help them to realize the religious experience in a new dimension. Instead of knowing "about prayer", they can say that they have "experienced worship".¹⁷

¹⁷Fisk, The Art of the Rhythmic Choir, p. 12.

Technique and specific, planned gestures will mean little and lose their significance if the participants are not made aware of, and experience the inner feeling of reverence. It is only when there is an outward manifestation of this inner awe that creative movement in the church is meaningful.

The leader should have an inner sense of serenity, assurance and joy which radiates about him as he guides his pupils. Besides being trained in technical matters and having a sense of creativity the leader should also be sensitive to the need for dignity and beauty in a church sanctuary, and enjoy experimenting with movement and designs.¹⁸

A basic attitude for the group to take toward the selection with which they are working may be taken from a statement by Isadora Duncan when she told her dancers to:

. . . listen to the music [poetry, Scripture]
with your soul, feel an inner self awakening,
feel that it is by its strength that your
head is lifted, that your arms are raised,
that you are walking toward the light.¹⁹

The three, universal symbolic movements of worship may be used as a basis for much of the choric movement in the contemporary church. These three actions out of which all other movement may evolve are: (1) actions of humility, kneeling and bowing the head; (2) actions of prayer, centering of the hands in meditation; (3) exaltation of the spirit, upward reaching of aspiration and joy.²⁰

¹⁸Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 36.

²⁰Margaret Fisk, "Religious Expression Through Rhythm" International Journal of Religious Education, XXIX, No. 6 (February, 1952), p. 9.

In beginning work with choric movement the simple, everyday action of walking should be introduced. Basic requirements for this, as for all other action, are simplicity and integrity. Walking sessions may be based on Scripture references such as: ". . . walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4) or "If we walk in light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." (I John 1:7). The walking should be done with spiritual awareness and sensitivity, letting it truly be an expression of the whole person.²¹

Other sources for walking may be "Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley" and the parable of the Good Samaritan with the walks of the various people who see the Samaritan on the road, accompanied by music.

Kneeling is a basic response of the human spirit. The attitudes of kneeling may be those of humility, penitence, quiet waiting, relinquishing of pride, or the giving over of troubles and burdens. Calls to worship such as, "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker," may serve as a basis for experience in kneeling. Portions of many hymns may also suggest kneeling. An example of this may be the line, "Drop thy still dews of quietness, Till all our striving cease---" from the song "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind."

²¹Fisk, "Bible Into Life Through Symbolic Movement," op. cit., p. 16.

To reach up after kneeling is as natural as breathing after exhaling. There are many portions of the Bible which are full of the sense of lifting up our souls, of reaching upward: "I would that men would pray everywhere lifting up holy hands." (Timothy 2:9). The Psalms offer many possibilities for praise and exaltation.

Specific songs and selections from the Scriptures may be adapted to the experience and needs of individual rhythmic choirs. The following are examples of selections which have been used successfully with creative movement choirs.

1. My Faith Looks Up To Thee
2. Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
3. Worship the Lord In the Beauty of Holiness
4. Gracious Spirit, Dwell With Me
5. Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
6. God So Loved the World (Steiner)
7. Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley
8. In Christ There Is No East or West
9. There's A Wideness In God's Mercy
10. For the Beauty of the Earth
11. This Is My Father's World
12. Joy To the World
13. Angels From the Realms of Glory
14. Gloria In Excelsis Deo
15. O Come, O Come, Immanuel
16. Psalms: 23, 100, 139, 150 (music by Cesar Franck for 150)

17. The Beatitudes
18. The Good Samaritan
19. The Prodigal Son
20. The Lord's Prayer
21. I Wonder As I Wander
22. Ruth (music by Franck)
23. Mary's Boy Child (Harry Belafonte)
24. When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
25. Yigdal (Jewish hymn)

For anyone who plans to work or experiment with creative movement in the church it is suggested that the works of Margaret Fisk Taylor be added to the permanent church library. Her books cover all age groups; give invaluable detailed information about techniques, activities, selections; and give a history of creative movement. They are not only practical but above all, inspiring. The beauty of her personality and faith shines through her written words. Her series includes the following books:

The Art of the Rhythmic Choir: Worship Through Symbolic Movement. Harper & Brothers, 1950. This is a basic book in rhythmic movement which gives ideas for the use of it in the church and gives the leader basic background materials and techniques.

Time For Wonder. (from author, mimeographed).²² For six and seven year old boys and girls, but adaptable for children four to ten. Contents include: wonders of nature, seeds, raindrops and sunbeams, butterflies, and spring's awakening; "For the Beauty of the Earth;" change of moods, etc.

²²Author's address: Mrs. Margaret F. Taylor, 30 N. College Street, Athens, Ohio.

Time For Discovery (from the author, mimeographed)

For eight and nine year old boys and girls, but adaptable for children ages eight through eleven. Contents include: discovering how we move: bend, run, leap, jump, walk, stretch; creative movement dealing with planets, storms, and the ocean. Creative design suggestions for: "This Is My Father's World;" "All Creatures Of our God and King"; "Twelve Days of Christmas", etc.

Time for Understanding (from the author, mimeographed)

For ten and eleven year old boys and girls, but adaptable for children ages nine through thirteen. Contents include: contrast of movements and moods, movement with stories, poems, sculpture, creative design suggestions for: "In Christ There Is No East Or West"; "The Lord's Prayer," etc.

Creative Dramatic Movement With Children (from the author, mimeographed)

Complete manual for leaders with material covered in Time for Wonder, Discovery, and Understanding as well as additional material covering different subjects to interpret.

Look Up and Live. St. Paul, Minnesota; Macalester Press, 1953.

For adults using symbolic movement to express religious ideas and moods. Contents include the interpretation of spirituals: "Nobody Knows the Troubles I've Seen"; "Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley", etc. Also hymns: "Dear Lord and Father;" "Rejoice, Ye Pure In Heart"; and "The Lord's Prayer".²³

Other books giving aid in techniques and suggestions in the field of rhythmic movement are:

Andrews, Gladys. Creative Rhythmic Movement for Children. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954.

Dixon, Madeleine. The Power of Dance. The John Day Company, 1939.

Evans, Ruth. Forty Basic Rhythms for Children. U. S. Textbook Company, 1958.

Sehon, Elizabeth and O'Brien, Emma. Rhythms In Elementary Education. A. S. Barnes and Co., 1951.

²³ Margaret Fisk Taylor, Time For Wonder, 1959, p. 43. (Mimeo)

Underhill, Evelyn. Worship. Harper and Brothers,
1937.

Summary

This chapter has defined and explained the spiritual values which creative movement has in the church. Rhythmic movement for the primary child was introduced with a discussion of rhythm which is an essential and basic element of all movement. Types of movement that could be incorporated into various activities were discussed and specific units to develop were suggested. Discussions and suggestions for the junior child and adolescent were also given. Specific selections to be used in the church as well as books which are helpful guides in creative movement endeavors were listed as concluding material in the chapter.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In order to meet the needs of the moral and spiritual problems of the present day and world it is necessary that the religious educator lead his people into a vital and living religious experience. It was the purpose of this work to show the importance and possibility of a creative religious experience. Although there are many means at the disposal of the educator for providing an atmosphere conducive to creativity, that of creative dramatics and its related activities was the concern of this thesis. The objectives were to: (1) lay a solid foundation confirming the importance of creativity in the religious experience and relate how creative dramatics was one valid and valuable method of attaining and maintaining a creative atmosphere; (2) show specifically how each of the creative dramatics activities could be applied in a religious education program.

An extensive investigation of the ideas of outstanding people in the field of religious education was made in order to establish a solid background for the value of a creative approach with children and youth in religion. In the field

of creative dramatics many of the leading authorities were cited. Miss Winifred Ward, foremost leader, and Helen Willcox, an early pioneer in creative drama in the church school whose ideas are still fresh and applicable, were major sources. Margaret Fisk Taylor, the most active contributor to the rhythmic choir idea in the United States, was the primary source for the material concerning creative movement.

The objectives were carried out by organizing and developing the material into four chapters which discussed:

- (1) Creative Religious Experience Through
Creative Dramatics
- (2) The Creative Dramatics Method In Religious
Education
- (3) Role Playing In Religious Education
- (4) Creative Movement In Religious Education

First discussed was the religious experience as a creative one. The aims and goals in religious education and the value and use of various art forms in this field were pointed out. Out of this discussion evolved the idea of creative dramatics as a natural and logical method to employ in the church school. The first chapter showed why the creative dramatics experience in religious education is a valuable one.

Before discussing the specific methods of creative dramatics, the child's physical, social, mental and religious development was correlated with his dramatic instinct at various ages. Dramatic activities appropriate for various

periods in the child's life were discussed and related to the concerns of the religious educator. The process of story dramatization was outlined and specific examples of stories, poems and other sources to use for dramatization were given. Sources and materials which are available for practical use were listed at the conclusion of the discussion of the creative dramatics method in religious education.

The related activities of role playing, and rhythms and creative movement were discussed separately because of their own particular significance. The role playing method was discussed and examples of situations adaptable in the church were cited. In the section on creative movement it was shown how this activity is spiritual in its basic nature. Rhythm activities for elementary children which are preliminary to creative movement as a form of worship were discussed in detail in their relationship to a church program. Creative movement techniques and suggestions for songs and Scripture which may be interpreted through movement were given. The works of Margaret Fisk Taylor and others in the field were suggested for the person interested in applying this technique in religious education.

After establishing a common ground and applying specific creative dramatic techniques to the work in religious education, it was shown how the correlation of the two fields is a reasonable and practical one. Although creative dramatics would seem to be one effective method for stimulating and developing creativity in religion it was not suggested that it is the only technique to use in the creative work of the religious educator.

The basic philosophy and theory behind creative dramatics may be applied to the materials used in almost any religious faith. The frequency of the use of Christian sources and materials inevitably came about because of the writer's limited background and not because of inherent limitations within the technique. It may be effective in many religious organizations.

The use of creative dramatics in religious education has been in effect for several years but its growth has been slow because of the lack of leadership and a creative spirit within the church. Further work and study in this field is necessary in the practical training of leaders of young people. The danger in using creative dramatics in the church is that people who are enthusiastic about its principles attempt it without having had any training in how to apply its techniques with children.

This study has attempted to justify the use of creative dramatics in the church program. It then has given an overall view of the possibilities which this activity may offer. Its primary purpose has been to examine its scope and potential effectiveness rather than give a detailed report of the practical aspects of it. Sources already giving that type of information have been suggested for the further investigation by the interested reader. The next and most important step in this field is the actual experience. It develops the imagination and skill which no amount of reading will do.

In conclusion, this study has shown that theoretically and practically creative dramatics when skillfully guided can lead to a living and vital religious experience for the child.

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