

runs off into every detail and side track. Keep to the main track. See again the story of the Prodigal Son, with its one clear line, action following action, a continuous movement. If the movement stops, interest flags.

Here is a little child's story. Notice the movement, "One day I went to sea in a life-boat—all at once I saw an enormous whale, and I jumped out of the boat to catch him, but he was so big that I climbed on his back and rode astride, and all the little fishes laughed to see."

*There must be a definite point.* Some call this a climax. Any incident we tell, or narrative, has a specific meaning or point, or we would not tell it in ordinary conversation. If what we intend is not clear, we failed. The story is told because of its point. If that is not clear, it should not be told. If it is clear, no explanation or moral tacked on is necessary. To tack on a moral is like tying a flower to a plant. What is wanted is to let the plant itself blossom. Then stop as soon as the story is done. Anything added spoils it.

*Let the characters speak and act for themselves.* This is easy when the story is seen and felt. "Mr. Redbreast said, I will build my nest here," is much better than "And the robin said that he would build his nest."

Compare the ever popular "Who killed cock robin?" "I," said the sparrow." The use of the direct form helps to make the story vital and to visualize it. It is always a good plan to repeat some striking sentence, like the refrain in a song. A good example is Kipling's "waving his wild tail and walking by his wild lone" in *The Cat that Walked by Himself*.

*What stories to avoid.* Marie L. Shedlock, in her fine book, *The Art of Story Telling*, wisely tells us to avoid stories that are introspective, sentimental, strongly sensational, outside the child's experience, have coarse fun, deal with infant piety and death-bed scenes, are mixture of science and fairy tale, and arouse emotions that cannot be translated into action.

*Take time.* New beginners especially are tempted to go too rapidly. The story is worth telling. The children are enjoying it. Haste will spoil it. A judicious pause at certain points is very effective.

*Avoid over-emphasis.* Over-emphasis means no emphasis and is monotonous. Do not be sensational. And, above all, tell such stories as are worthy of a permanent place in the child's life.

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## The Church and the Little Ones

BY REV. D. N. McLACHLAN, B.A.

The duty of the church to little children between the Cradle Roll and the Sunday School is receiving closer examination. Every one admits the importance of this period, and no one should shrink from the responsibility involved. There are at least three ways by which the church may be of service to the little ones.

*First*—The church may encourage parents to tell Bible stories to the younger children in their homes. There is good Biblical warrant for this: "Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation."

There are parents who try to shift this responsibility by asserting that the Sunday School is the place where children will be taught Bible stories. The Sunday School cannot and never was intended to take from parents the privilege and duty of training their children in morals and religion. Where the Sunday School is failing, the failure is due largely to lack of cooperation from the home.

Other parents plead that they have not the "knack" of story telling, therefore they cannot tell Bible stories. It is our duty to

society, they say, that each of us shall stand in the place where we can best serve society. "Each in his place" is an excellent motto, but under normal conditions, that parent does not live from whom God has withheld the ability in some measure to tell Bible stories to his child. Elaborate explanations are not required. Even the moral contained in the story need not be indicated.

The late Dr. Harris, superintendent of education in the United States, was undoubtedly right when he insisted that to emphasize the moral in a piece of literature is to destroy the moral. The moral will make its own impression. Tell the story of Joseph, without comment, to a child, and bitter tears will silently flow, because the child is in perfect sympathy with Joseph in his sorrow and suffering. Hence for little ones the narratives of the Bible are needed, not its doctrines.

*Second*—The church, by a series of meetings for parents, or by addresses from time to time at a regular service, may instruct parents in the best methods of telling Bible stories to their children. For example:

(a) It can be made plain to them that just