

to him? How should we treat the child's request that his prayers be not "heard" by some adult?

Formal prayers, if good in content, might well be used. They are the first steps that lead on to later participation in the common prayers of the church, of which the Lord's Prayer is the most universal and, we believe, the most perfect example. But we have specified that the formal prayer should be good in content. That is, it should be such as the child can understand and appreciate.

But there are seasons and times when the formal prayer will not adequately express the feelings of the child. It is when he comes to feel that prayer is talking with God, the heavenly Father. Out of several years of experience with the seven-year-old child I have come to think that most children believe that we pray so that God will take care of us, or that we may ask him for the things we need, or that we may thank him for all the friends we have and the pleasures we enjoy and the gifts we receive. But there is the occasional child, more mature in thought than the rest or more skillfully taught, who has come to realize that when he prays he talks with God, his heavenly Father, about any of his childish interests; hence the prayers: "O dear Lord, isn't it jolly to ride in a trolley-car?" from the youngster who has had a new and delightful experience; and "Dear Father in heaven, take care of the babies in the day nursery, and help kind people to give them enough milk to eat," from the more serious-minded six-year-old who has become interested in welfare work among his own city neighbors.

Most children "say" their prayers at night, before retiring. But two little girls in one class, of one home, had always said their prayers in French to their governess. So when the governess was dismissed, the children forgot how to "say" their prayers, and alas! they never prayed.

Another four-year-old is accustomed to pray at night. But there are times when he and his father have been having a frolic together before bedtime, when he does not wish to pray, so the father wisely excuses him. Is it not better that the child should go to sleep with the remembrance of a happy evening spent with his father, whom he can see, than that he should unwillingly pray to the Father whom he cannot see? Is not the social situation, here, clearly a religious one?

While visiting recently in a home where there is a small boy, I was interested in all that he said and did and was seeking for sources and causes of action. One evening, after he was prepared for bed, I entered the room for the last "good-nights." All went well until it was time for the prayer to be said,

"I don't want Miss Wright to hear me say my prayers." Do you suppose we remained in the room? No. Though he was only a tiny lad, he had a certain idea about prayer that night, and we were bound to respect his desire for secrecy.—Eleanor Wright, in *The Graded Sunday School Magazine*.



The Junior as a Hero Worshiper

By Mabel Crews Ringland, B.A.

Staying in the same summer cottage where I used to visit was a lad of about twelve years who was the most enthusiastic tennis player for his age I have ever seen. Besides being quite aware of his own ability in that direction, he was rather scornful of the girls in the house and would never condescend to play a game of tennis with them. One day I challenged him to a set or two, and, to his great amazement, beat him. I could see that he was altogether nonplussed, although he said very little, but his manner to me thereafter betokened the profoundest respect. He had great admiration for any one who could outstrip him in the ability he coveted most, for just at this time his ideal was to be an expert tennis player.

According to the Chinese, an ideal is literally "the thing you have your eye on." Every Junior has an ideal which he worships because he cannot help himself. He has his eye on some particular ability that he longs to possess and wherever he sees that ability he worships it. It will invariably be embodied in a personality, for deeds are the things that count with the Junior, and the person who can do the things he longs to do will be his hero.

So the Junior boy and girl are hero worshipers, although they are all unconscious of the fact. Physical strength and skill, daring and courage are what the boy admires most, because his own development at this period is so largely physical. He may find these characteristics in his father, perhaps in the Y.M.C.A. physical director, in his Sunday School teacher, or in a champion baseball player, but he is just as likely to admire them in a prizefighter, a pirate or a desperado in whom moral strength may be altogether lacking. Physical strength makes a strong appeal to the girl of this age too, and not until a few years later will she admire womanly charm.

Whatever the ideal be, it is certain that the instinct of hero worship is one of the most potent forces in moulding the young life and supplying incentives to action. The teacher's great responsibility, then, is to provide the right type of heroes, those in whom physical and moral strength are closely allied, and who are worthy of imitation. "The flame of hero worship," says Mrs. Lamoreaux