

its meaning on the blackboard or by stories or pictures.

2. Let the children repeat the words.
3. Have the air played on the organ or piano.
4. Let the teacher sing it alone.
5. Let the children sing it with the teacher, learning one or two lines at a time.
6. Let them try to sing it without the teacher.
7. Get the children to promise to sing the new piece at home through the week.

The Banner Class.

BY MRS. GEORGE ARCHIBALD.

THIS is a true story of a banner class:

In a certain Sunday school was a class of six girls. All were from respectable and church-going families, and three were of considerable social importance—as social importance goes in this world. The teacher was faithful, fond of her charge, and took pride in their behavior and studiousness, for each girl was regular in attendance, quiet and attentive during lesson hours, and invariably perfect in recitation. These points, in connection with the unflinching contribution, made and kept the class the banner class of the school.

Now, a banner class gets its name on the front blackboard, is mentioned in all public reports, and is pointed to with pride—so to speak—on all occasions set more or less apart as days wherein the condition of the Sunday school receives especial notice. It has earned these things, it deserves them, and it is an unappreciative and mistaken soul that would withhold them. But it needs, besides, a specific and careful instruction which it doubtless seldom gets. However, let us not interrupt the story to indicate here what that instruction should be.

There came into the banner class one day a child of suitable age and intelligence, but, as it proved later, the child of a half-sick, "shiftless" mother. The superintendent was absent that Sunday, and it had devolved upon his assistant to place the new scholar. Perhaps his inexperience disqualified him from considering classification from every standpoint. Perhaps it is not easy for anyone to know where any new pupil will be sure to fit best.

The teacher looked a little doubtful and the children a little disapproving at sight of the newcomer. She was decently clothed in the barest sense, and she did not look ambitious. It developed that she was not ambitious.

Now, an unambitious scholar is a drawback to perfect records, and the teacher realized that

she had something to do to preserve the standing of her class. She, therefore, with pains and particularity explained to her latest charge the high standard she would be expected to attain.

The new girl listened with interest and pleasure. She liked the honor of belonging to such a company, and she felt a young thrill of emulation. But habit is stronger than a first impulse, and, though she meant all she promised, the new girl was a novice in precision, and did not bring herself up to the requirements of perfection. Sometimes she was tardy, sometimes absent; sometimes she forgot her penny, and sometimes she forgot her verses. So it came to pass that the banner class ceased to stand at the head of the honor roll, and not infrequently sat in shame to hear another preferred before it.

At last several of the girls talked it up among themselves, and resolved to speak to their teacher of the past and of the future. And the nature of their speech was such that they chose a Sunday when the delinquent member was not in her seat. The whole talk, pro and con—with very little con—was about the propriety of gently managing a transfer of the new girl to some other class of less distinction. There were five in favor of such a disposition as the only means of regaining lost prestige, and only one voice—silent until pressed for an opinion—was lifted in sympathy for the offender.

"Her mother," said this small voice, "is not like our mothers, and that makes a difference, and makes her not so much to blame. And I would be sorry for her if she had to go out of the class when she wants to be in with us. Besides, she learns a little now, and maybe she would feel bad to think we didn't want her and would leave the school. Then she wouldn't learn anything. And, anyway, we can all be perfect just the same, even if the whole school doesn't know it." *

After these things had been said by a bashful but earnest little girl there were a debate and a decision. What the decision was I leave the reader to divine. My own further part in the matter is a brief conclusion:

"Competition," some one said, "is the life of business," by which he clearly meant the business of this world, and not that to which Christ referred when he said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

A class cannot become a "banner class" without doing excellent and commendable work, but it is possible to miss the title and yet to do a better thing than bear the title. "Anyway, we can all be perfect just the same, even if the whole school doesn't know it!"

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