

At Work with Young People
(Program Building)

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THE WARNER PRESS
Anderson, Indiana

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
YOUTH IN A CHANGING WORLD.....	4
ORGANIZE	8
YOU TOO MAY HAVE A YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY.....	18
BUILDING THE PROGRAM	21
GETTING OUT OF THE RUT.....	24
THE CHAIRMAN	27
SAMPLE ORDER OF SERVICE.....	29
TYPES OF PROGRAM	31
PRACTICAL PROJECTS	44
WHERE TO GET MATERIALS.....	61
CRITERIA OF SUCCESS.....	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY	64

PRINTED IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

YOUTH IN A CHANGING WORLD

Sometime ago a representative group of young people from many of the Christian agencies of North America met together in a prolonged conference and faced together their problems of living and their programs of work. They looked into the past. They surveyed their present. They faced deep needs. They assessed the future. Some of them expressed themselves as beginning "a new trail that is yet an old one." Of that trail they said:

"It led from a wooden cross on Calvary among the hills of Jerusalem down across the burning sands and deserts of the world. Here and there along its route it passed through deep shadowy valleys, yet in each valley there were cool refreshing springs. There also was found the Bread of Life. Sometimes a mountain peak has intervened. Its rough and jagged sides have torn the weary traveler's feet as upward he has pressed. But as he reached the top the scene below revived his tired soul.

"Now a new group starts on the trail. They have mapped the course ahead. The way must be made to a deeper realization of the ideals and personality of Jesus. It plunges far into an understanding of what Christian

conduct is. The trail must be shared with other youth. It leads to a realization of the values of worship and prayer. Step by step it comes to Christian unity. It climbs to a Christian society."

"The trail lies ahead.

*Then follow, ye who dare."*¹

Our present group of young people constitute the first generation to come to maturity since the World War. The post-war era has made great changes. The war mixed all peoples. Movies, airplanes, radios, automobiles, have wiped out provincialism. The new frontiers are international. They are victims first of this unprecedented outlook, then of a deadening depression.

Failure, frustration, apathy, unemployment face them (about 35 per cent of the world's unemployed are between fourteen and twenty-five years of age). The very nature of youth is such that something has to happen, else their pent-up energies will find outlets in youth movements such as we see in Italy, Japan, Germany, and Russia. Criminal records of the United States show quite an upward trend of offenders between the ages of sixteen and nineteen.

It is almost a platitude to mention the shift away from the home as the pivot of social contacts. The auto-

¹Quoted in *Christian Youth Building a New World*, International Council of Religious Education

mobile, the close contacts of boys and girls in school and college, at work, on street cars, in school busses, give leaders a task of many angles. To do the job worthily one must have the mind and soul of youth.

The newer educational trends, project teaching and free-activity methods, require a shift from authoritarianism in religious work. The I-know-what-is-best-for-them idea might as well be discarded. It will not work today. Those who fear democracy most are those who wish to utilize the plasticity of youth for indoctrination.

Young people are the hope of the Church. They are responding to the challenge to make this a better world, a warless world, a sober world, a Christian world.

The Sunday evening service should be a training ground for these soldiers of the cross. It should capitalize the daring, bravery, vigor, hope, and faith of the young people of the Church to usher in the brotherhood of man.

Professor William Lyon Phelps gives as a reason for youth's religious attitudes, and particularly their response to the spirit and message of Jesus the fact that "Jesus knew more political economy than all the professors in all the colleges of the world, and more about human hearts than Shakespeare."

The needs of the whole world and the interrelatedness of man should be presented—the millions of unchurched youth, groping for a cause on which to center their loyalties, youth who are capable of living on the highest plane

of moral conduct. The evening programs should be so vital, so alive, and so challenging that they become open doors of opportunity. They should "go somewhere." There will be alluring goals, objectives that require sacrifice, adventure, deeds of heroism; goals that embody the principles of a Christ who sought not his own, but who was ever on the alert for the cry of human need.

We cannot urge too strongly that youth build and administer their own programs, for the most part. If their religious ideals are to function in everyday life-situations, they must be the outgrowth of their own experiences.

Activity is one of the laws of growth—to grow in spiritual fervor and in strength of religious conviction, there must be abundant opportunity in this Sunday evening training school for practice in worship, praise, song, prayer, and fellowship. Frequent and satisfying activity in religious expression will strengthen Christian character.

ORGANIZE

Organize your group according to their needs. If the group is small, have a very simple organization: a president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer. These elected officers will appoint a program committee comprising three or four members whose duty it will be to carry the responsibility for the program. In some cases the elected officers serve as the program committee.

If the group is large, the organization may be more complex; as for example, one person could be appointed to act as chairman of the musical committee, one as chairman of the ushering force, one as chairman of a decorating committee, one as chairman of an advertising or publicity committee; appoint a librarian, a pianist, or whatever your own situation suggests. The form of organization should always fit the group rather than bending the group to conform to a certain organizational plan.

The youth program will be closely related to the organizational set-up. The experiences of the group will determine their organizational needs; hence the necessity of making the organization fit the individual group experience. Out of their own organization will grow a well-

rounded, completely balanced program which will also be their own.

THE FIVE-POINT PLAN

The five-point plan, or commission plan, briefly explained here is an adaptation of one used by many groups. Regardless of whether you adopt this plan or some other, if the program is to develop well-rounded Christian characters it will naturally fall into groupings similar to these.

The fourfold personal development — mind, body, spirit, and social attitude—requires thinking, worship, play, and service, or social contacts. The four are adequately cared for in the commission plan, whereas there is a likelihood of overlooking some phase of the needs of youth if the plan is not used.

Each Local Society Divided into Five Groups.—One group will consist of the officers and will be known as the Council; the other four groups are known as Commissions. All of the work and activities of the local young people's society are carried out by these five groups, each having its separate work to do.

Every Member a Worker.—This group plan provides that every member of the society shall be a member of one of these five groups. Now, since all of the work and all of the activities of the society are carried out through these five groups, every member is a worker. That is as it should be. Every young person should feel his particular

responsibility for helping to carry out the purpose of God in his life. Every member is, through this plan, brought into active participation in the work of the group.

Five Fields of Activity.—The five groups into which each local young people's society is divided will cover the whole range of Christian activity and work. These groups are as follows:

1. Council—Leadership.—The elected officers of the local society, the adult counselor, and the pastor constitute the Council. The main function of the Council is to supervise the whole work of the society, to participate in certain activities of the group, and to be responsible for certain meetings. Membership on the Council usually denotes training in leadership.

2. Devotional Life Commission.—One-fourth of the members of the society, not including the officers, are appointed by the Council or allowed to choose (in which case it usually equalizes quite naturally) to serve as members of the Devotional Life Commission. The main work of this commission is to make plans for carrying out activities and work in the local society with special emphasis on the Bible, evangelism, prayer, personal devotions, and group worship.

3. Stewardship Commission.—One-fourth of the members of the society, not including the officers, are appointed by the Council to serve as members of the Stewardship Commission. The main work of this commission is to

make plans for carrying out activities and work in the local society with special emphasis on the nation-wide and world-wide work of the Church, stewardship of life, time, and substance, giving, and missions.

4. Service Commission.—One-fourth of the members of the society, not including the officers, are appointed by the Council to serve as members of the Service Commission. The main work of this commission is to make plans for carrying out activities and work in the local society, with special emphasis on church work, church attendance, Sunday-school work, and community needs. Each community has needs peculiar to itself. This group may participate in jail work, scout work, missions, girl reserves, orphanage work, etc. The Commission should assist young people in choosing a Christian vocation and in dedicating themselves for Christian service; it should present to them the value of Christian education.

5. Fellowship Commission.—One-fourth of the members of the society, not including the officers, are appointed by the Council to serve as members of the Fellowship Commission. The main work of this commission is to make plans for carrying out activities and work in the local society, with special emphasis on friendliness, youth rallies and conventions, increased membership, recreation, and social affairs.

Young people naturally desire to be with others. They also have the instinct for play. These two instincts find

expression in the social life and recreational life of young people. If this social and recreational life of young people is guided and made thoroughly Christian, it will help in the development of true Christian character. If proper guidance is not given, young people will suffer in character. This fellowship section will seek to suggest worth-while ways in which Christian fellowship may find expression in social and recreational activities.

Friendliness on the part of young people is one way of showing the Spirit of Christ. Such friendliness needs to be cultivated, and one purpose of this section of your young people's group is to point out ways in which friendliness can be shown: through cheerfulness—thus bringing enjoyment to others; enriching the lives of others by sharing with them; cultivating a feeling of comradeship with others (races, classes, neighboring churches), and in many other ways. Fellowship through friendship is at the very heart of the Christian way of living.

SUGGESTIONS

If the recreational activities are to be of value to the group, they must be properly conducted. Recreational leadership, therefore, is a vital necessity in the Church, and especially among young people. Certain members of the Fellowship Commission should undertake to study recreational leadership. Here are some ways in which it can be done.

1. Attend a course in a Standard Leadership Training School. Such courses are part of the curriculum of training in Christian education. In many communities such training schools are held, and often courses in recreational leadership are given.

2. Correspondence courses in recreational leadership, in connection with Christian education, may be taken through the home-study division of your Church Board—the Board of Christian Education.

3. Conduct such a class in your own church. The leader may take the course by correspondence, and then teach the group.

4. Attendance at a recreational institute. Often such institutes are held in connection with Y.M.C.A. activities. Then in camps, Y.W.C.A. meetings, conferences, etc., such courses are given.

GROUP RESPONSIBILITY

Each of the five groups in this organizational set-up is responsible to carry out the program of activity and work that especially falls upon that group or commission. In addition, each of the commissions has charge of a certain number of the regular Sunday young people's services. Each commission will average one meeting each month, and not less than nine during the year. This twofold responsibility of each group, or commission, makes for a

well-balanced program of work and activity on the part of each commission and each member.

A PROGRAM OF WORK

Many young people's groups have failed of their objectives because they have not had a well-worked-out plan. Other young people's groups have drifted along through the year because no definite plan of work has been set before them. Young people want to work; they are ready to enter enthusiastically into a plan that will set before them some worth-while activities.

One outstanding feature of this plan is that by means of a well-worked-out program for the entire year, activities dealing with the devotional life, with stewardship, service, and fellowship, are presented to the society. This program of work is made up at least three months in advance so there is always a complete three months' program of work planned. The four commissions are responsible for the carrying out of this program, under the supervision and leadership of the Council. Each commission, together with the Council, works out the program of work for its own commission. In working out this plan, or program of work, certain objectives, or definite goals, are set before the group. From these they select and build their programs. In this way the entire group is acquainted with the objective, or goal, toward which it is striving.

An interest-finder, made out by Professor Walter S. Haldeman, head of the Religious Education Department of Anderson College, and designed to help leaders and organizers to get the right persons for the various positions in the young people's society, is given here. Give these blanks to all the members of the society, and then file the filled-out blanks for frequent reference. (See next page.)

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are essential to direction. If we are going nowhere, we will likely arrive without directed effort. If we hope to achieve, we must have objectives toward which we are working. A list of objectives is given here; others which fit into the needs of your own group may be added.

1. To make pungent the need of winning others to Christ and to prepare members of the group for the task of evangelizing.
2. To increase the outreach from friend and neighbor to include those of other races and lands.
3. To create within the group feelings, such as that expressed by the apostle Paul: "I am debtor."
4. To give youth expanding ideas of God and an ever growing conception of our part in extending his kingdom.
5. To bring them to a sympathetic realization of the sacredness of human personality.
6. To show them that living a Christian life is the natural, happy way to live, that it is an ongoing life.

YOU TOO MAY HAVE A YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY

Let us suppose there is no organized group in your community, and work from that premise, though, of course, the suggestions will be quite as applicable to established groups wishing to enlarge, reorganize, or rejuvenate themselves.

First, take a comprehensive inventory of your neighborhood, whether it is a rural, urban, or a big-city community.

How many young people in your group are within the age range you wish to reach?

Check on their general station. How many of them belong to rich families, poor families? How many have college advantages? How many had to quit high school and go to work? What kind of work do they do? labor? farm work? Are they apprenticed to artisans or professional men? All these factors have a relationship to the type of society you establish.

Is the community overchurched already? Would the kingdom of God be extended more if you started work in another section? Are there foreign, neglected, underprivileged groups who may be heart hungry? Are there

live youth organizations through which a large segment of the young people have an outlet—a chance for self-expression and service—such organizations, for example, as the Y.W.C.A., Y.M.C.A., Boy and Girl Scouts, Temperance Groups, Service clubs, etc.?

Second, secure a place for holding the services, a place as nearly permanent as possible. A church, preferably (if you are starting a youth group in an unchurched section, you may be the nucleus of a future congregation), though in many cases a large room, a home, a public hall, a room in the public library or the school building may be the best available place. Wherever you meet, make the room and the approach to it just as cheery and inviting as possible.

Third, get out invitations to as nearly the whole youth populace as possible. Personal invitations carry more weight than any other kind, and are more likely to bring attendance. Other methods, however, have proved themselves worthy. Bulletin boards in shops, schools, stores, gas stations, railroad stations, etc., can be utilized to good advantage. Have on these bulletin boards a neat little notice with a strong invitation. A letter or card mailed to the prospective members is, next to the personal invitation, probably the best.

Notices in the local papers explaining the nature of the project and asking for cooperation and attendance will help.

Fourth, see that the first service makes them *want* to

return. A program planned so that the whole service runs like a piece of well-oiled machinery will give the project an atmosphere of worth-whileness. Rousing group singing helps to break the ice. If every person present is asked to introduce himself, it may help him to feel initiated, and to feel a personal interest in the project.

BUILDING THE PROGRAM

I shall not undertake a formula, rule, or set of rules. My earnest conviction is that every group of young people, in every church of the land, small or large, rich or poor, can build its own program in a creative adventure. "This is *our* group, and we wish only the best for it" is a feeling that can mature under proper conditions.

Your group is highly cultured and educated. That type of persons will build a program to satisfy their own need.

Your group is composed of timid, rural people. Then, the type of program *they* build will fit *their* capacity.

Program building must of necessity proceed from group needs; these needs vary according to locality, age, whether the young people are married or single, whether students or workers. The program committee will take these matters into consideration and will try to adapt the program to the greatest needs and will vary it to "feed the whole flock."

If mistakes are made, as they will be, pass them up without too much ado. We learn by experience. By this statement I do not mean that the leader absents himself entirely from the program building. Rather, he is a mem-

ber of the group, differing only in experience. This experience will keep the program from going on the rocks, from too much of one diet to the neglect of other just as necessary phases of spiritual development.

The leader will assist the youth to analyze their ideas, ideals, and attitudes to see if they are wholly Christian. He will point them to the great treasures of knowledge and the experiences of great souls of yesterday. He will guide them in evaluating past and present happenings in the light of accurate knowledge.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE PROGRAM

1. The program should cover adequately the three relationships. These are found in Jesus' two commandments: (a) *God*; (b) *thy neighbor*; (c) *thou*. On these hang all the law and the prophets. They comprise the whole duty of man.

2. In time all the areas of experience should be brought into the program: religious, social, recreational, educational, citizenship, vocational needs, preparation for marriage and home, the love life.

Perhaps some of these areas are cared for by other agencies, in which case you could omit them. However, there is great need to go into all these phases from a Christian point of view. The Church should minister to the *whole person*; and until our youth workers recognize

this fact and plan accordingly, the mortality rate in our youth groups will continue to increase.

Every member of the group should be used, in time, in some capacity. Each member should leave each service with a sense of achievement, a sense of worth-whileness.

GETTING OUT OF THE RUT

CHANGE

Change the diet, change the content of the program, and change the order of service. Still more important is a complete change in the type of service.

SUNRISE SERVICE

Have a sunrise service occasionally, with the theme, "The Sun of Righteousness," or "Awake to Serve," or something suggestive of the dawn of day or the sunrise.

VESPER SERVICE

A vesper service on a hillside, by a stream or lake, in a wood or meadow, at the seashore, when all nature is hushed, when the great shadows are falling, when even the birds' song is silenced and the crickets' chirp is still, is one in which the soul seems to reach out to God. The worshipers feel His sacred presence in all the quiet life about them.

CAMPFIRE

Around the glowing embers of a campfire is a wonderful opportunity for fruitful worship. The young people

are contemplative; they seem to reexamine their relationship with God, and to open up new segments of their lives to unselfish service.

NATURE SERVICE

Have a nature service. Is there an observatory or a large telescope near you? If so, a study of the heavens—the sun, moon, and stars which God has created—will bring him near. A study of trees, flowers, and butterflies, giving the religious interpretations, will be a very profitable service. Never let an opportunity pass wherein the group may worship on successively higher levels. For example, a study of the intricacies of the things which God has created should heighten our reverence for him.

COMMUNION

Have a communion service in which the young people themselves officiate.

BROADCAST

A program can be built almost entirely around the idea of a "broadcast." Place the loud speaker in the front of the room; the announcer and participants should be out of sight. Sometimes a person who is too timid to get up in front of an audience will enjoy addressing them in this fashion.

SERVICE FOR ALL

Develop such a comprehensive program that every talent in the group will find expression, such as vocal music, instrumental music, art, drama, story-telling; entertaining, such as readings, impersonations, etc.; ushering, song directing, debate, speech, and poetry.

THE CHAIRMAN

Usually one of the persons who is responsible for building the program acts as chairman, though not always. This honor should be passed around. The chairman's task is *not* to do a lot of talking or to summarize every speech and comment on every prayer or song, but to see that the whole program runs smoothly and to be ready to step into a vacancy or take care of an unforeseen emergency at a moment's notice.

Before the program proper gets under way the chairman should welcome all visitors, introduce strangers, and make his announcements.

A very effective service is one in which the chairman writes out the order of service and gives a copy of it to each participant so that in turn each will rise, or come to the front for his contribution, with no word of introduction. For a chairman to be heard too frequently in "We will now be favored—"; "At this time Miss So-and-So will sing—"; "It is now time for prayer, let us—"; "At this point on the program—"; etc., etc., makes his chairmanship rather commonplace. Unconsciously he uses the same

phrases over and over to monotony. Think up new, original, and clever ways of stating a matter.

William Jennings Bryan gives an account of the "finest introduction" he ever had. Mr. Bryan was to speak to a great gathering of people in Pennsylvania. A good old German brother was to welcome the crowd and introduce the speaker. The gentleman arose, and said, "Friends, you are welcome. This is Mr. Bryan, and he will speak."

A fine way for the chairman to eliminate the necessity of too many announcements and introductions is to have printed or mimeographed programs which are given out at the door. If this proves to be too expensive in time and money, it might be done for very special occasions, as Easter or Christmas.

SAMPLE ORDER OF SERVICE

THEME—

Let the meeting have a definite aim, so that its parts may all produce a unit.

CALL TO WORSHIP—

Introduce the theme of the service and get the people into a frame of mind which turns well to the program. They may repeat something together, a few members may say together some bit of Scripture, it may be a special song, or anything which fits the need.

HYMN—

All hymns should have a common theme because they have a great part in gaining a spirit of worship, which we must have in order to lead people into the presence of God.

PRAYER—

If possible, ask someone to pray in time before the service for them to consider well the theme of the service and have it become a *burden* of prayer with them. Prayer

should not go in too many different directions. The burden of it should be both definite and earnest.

WORSHIP MEDITATION—

This may well be Scripture, but it can also be poetry or a story, depending upon the theme and purpose.

HYMN—

SERMON TALK, OR MAIN FEATURE—

This should vary in length, again, with the theme. It should add to, not destroy, your attempt at worship. Have the talk on a subject, within the interest of the group; the speaker should be one who is capable of handling the subject. The sermon should be boiled down to a definite length.

CLOSING HYMN—

BENEDICTION—

This may be prayer by one person, or a collective prayer repeated by all, but *it should not be long* in either case.

TYPES OF PROGRAM

THE DISCUSSION METHOD

The discussion method is perhaps the most popular procedure in current use. It provides wide participation, uses resources otherwise neglected, and gives young people an opportunity to discuss issues or personal problems in an objective fashion.

The subject or problem should be chosen democratically and decided upon at least a week before the discussion meeting. There should be a blackboard and a leader who has thoroughly informed himself on the subject in hand. The counselor should have all available facts on the subject, so as to be ready to give *facts* in case of a controversy over some question.

It is easy to talk a discussion meeting to death and arrive nowhere, so the leader must tabulate the progress made and keep the discussion from running out on a limb or bogging down somewhere. The problem having been decided the Sunday before, each participant is required to stay by the subject. Someone will have been appointed to take minutes of the meeting and to summarize the discussion.

Procedure—A restatement of the problem. What courses of action are possible? These should be given by the group and each course examined

- a) as to its effect on individuals
- b) as to its effect on the group
- c) as to its effect in the future
- d) as to its effect on the Church as a whole

When all the possible courses have been suggested and appraised, the question, "Which is the best, the most Christian solution offered?" should be voted by the group. Now *this* seems to be the best way out. What shall we do about it? A discussion follows, and some course of action may be decided upon; the group will then proceed to vote on a definite time for starting it. This discussion may continue over several Sundays, depending on the magnitude of the subject.

Possible subjects for discussion:

The dispensing of liquor in our neighborhood, and what it is doing to our youth.

What would be a Christian attitude if our country should engage in war?

What is our part in upholding the standards of the Church?

What should we do about the unchurched young people of our community?

Shall we affiliate with other agencies for the betterment of mankind?

SPECIAL DAYS

Programs built around special days or special events are very fruitful. For example, Thanksgiving Sunday (usually the Sunday preceding Thanksgiving Day is best; some of the enthusiasm seems to die out after the day has been celebrated).

Thorough preparation must be made in order to get the most out of the services. Consider the whole history of the first Thanksgiving in America. What motives prompted our forefathers to come to a new and untried country? Have we the same type of courage they had? Are there conditions today as intolerable as the conditions which confronted them? What can we do about them? Are there new frontiers, wildernesses, for us to conquer?

Dealing with Thanksgiving in another way, it might be divided thus: Things for which we should be thankful:

1. Freedom of speech and press
2. Educational advantages
3. The great church leaders of the past and present
4. The open Bible
5. Religious freedom

Suggest others.

Still another way, and this was done by one group. Taking all the items in a traditional Thanksgiving dinner, the group analyzed and studied the processes required to produce the food included in the dinner, and the many,

many, *many* people who had a part in producing it. When this study was finished, the group thanked God for the workers instead of for the food.

Other days and occasions for special programs will suggest themselves. Christmas, Easter, Armistice, New Year, July 4, peace days, days of special prayer; Memorial Day, at which time we might pay tribute to bravery and courage (being careful not to glorify war or conflict), and to persons who have made lasting contributions to the good of mankind.

POETRY

"Poetry is thought sometimes philosophy, sometimes argument, but always *emotion*. The poet wants to tell us how he feels about his subject. It is an experience rather than a proposition. So poetry belongs to those realms of life where we feel most deeply. Love must be poetic. Heroism is poetic, and especially when we say what heroism means to us must we sing the song of the heroes. Sorrow is poetic—the dirge and the elegy. The fierce passions of war express themselves in battle songs. Not a little of the Old Testament poetry came from the book of the "wars of Jehovah." Especially is religion poetic. "Religious experience, the concepts and practices of religion are shot through with feelings of their values—reach out naturally to poetry as the most fitting vehicle

of expression."¹ This is a rather long definition, but it tells so truly what poetry is.

An occasional program of poetry, well chosen, will give religious truth newer and deeper meanings. These poems may be read or recited to accompaniment, if the music really fits the rhythm of the poem. If more than one poem is used, they should lend themselves to one theme. An oral interpretation of the poem, and sometimes a brief history of the poet, will enhance the value of the "poetry program."

Stereopticon slides of great religious masterpieces of art may be linked with poetry and music for a very effective service.² Many worth-while slides can be had for a small rental, and some are free.

MUSIC

An all-musical program is very effective and gives special place to those who have developed their musical talents. Persons not musical can have a part in some kinds of musical programs as, for example, when a study of our great hymns is made. Stories and anecdotes and history may be given by one unable to sing or to play an instrument.

What could be more appropriate in a service to the

¹Dr. Theodore G. Soares, in *Finding God through the Beautiful*

²Motion Picture Bureau of National Council, Y.M.C.A., New York or Chicago or National Headquarters, W.C.T.U., Evanston, Ill.

God of harmony and beauty and love than beautiful musical harmonies? Everything that hath breath hath music and sings, sings praise to the Creator.

Some unknown author has said of music: "Servant and master am I; servant of those dead and master of those living. Through me spirits immortal speak the message that makes the world weep and laugh, and wonder and worship.

"I tell the story of love and the story of hate; the story that saves and the story that damns. I am the incense upon which prayers float to heaven. I am the smoke which palls over the fields of battle where men lie dying with me on their lips.

"I am close to the marriage altar, and when the grave opens I stand near by. I call the wanderer home; I rescue the same from the depths; I open the lips of lovers, and through me the dead whisper to the living.

"One I serve as I serve all; and the king I make my slave as easily as I subject his slave. I speak through the birds of the air, the insects of the field, the crash of waters on rock-ribbed shores, the singing of wind in the trees, and I am even heard by the soul that knows me in the clatter of wheels on city streets.

"I know no brother, yet all men are my brothers; I am the father of the best that is in them, and they are fathers of the best that is in me; I am of them, and they are of me; for I am the instrument of God. *I am Music.*"

STORY-TELLING

Story-telling is particularly good if you have members in the group who are taking "speech" courses or "story-telling" courses in their school or college work. They will be able to find stories suitable for the occasion. A story poorly told is lost, so the story-teller should be encouraged to make thorough preparation.

Knowledge of the *facts* of the Bible will not make one religious. Many very sinful men who can quote reams of Scripture prove this.

Linking the facts with *life*, with personal situations, with the emotions of an individual, will give them meaning. Stories "mirror the feelings and emotions, the passions and purposes, the loves and hatreds, the justices and injustices, the defeats and victories of mankind. It is a molder of hearts and of motives, especially when thought of as an art and when skill is displayed by the story-teller."¹ Jesus was a great story-teller. It is hoped that many from our youth groups will study His method and technique, as well as that of other great story-tellers, and will devote a long period of study and effort to the art. We once thought stories were for teaching children, but we now know that story-telling is a method of making truth live and making it suitable for any age.

¹Cynthia Pearl Maus in *Christ and the Fine Arts*

ART

Forsyth said, "The principle of art is the incarnation of God's eternal beauty; the principle of religion is the incarnation of God's eternal human heart." The two are complementary.

Great religious art as an educational aid to the study of religion was never more recognized than now. Partly because *time* is so valuable, and pictures give facts through the eye much more quickly than they could be derived by way of the ear.

Psychologists tell us that sense impressions received through any other sense are lower than those received through sight.

An excellent project would be a study of art and religion before the Reformation, why its use was discounted and what is again bringing it to the fore. Study the statement, "In Greece art killed religion; in Christian Europe religion killed art."

For cultural, aesthetic, refining influence nothing will be more helpful than a study of religious art.

One picture at a time with the history of the artist, a copy of the picture, and several of the group finding out about it will serve as a start. The artist is giving us an *idea*, and its *expression* based on one or many Scripture texts. These texts will be studied in the various translations available. Try to see in the texts what the artist has

put on canvas. The artist is a real interpreter, showing us things which neither the camera nor our eyes can see.

THE ADDRESS

In this kind of service a worship period consuming about half of the hour is conducted, after which a lecture, speech, sermon, or talk is given. The pastor is occasionally asked to give this address—sometimes the church-school superintendent, a teacher, a parent, a specialist of some sort, or the high-school principal, if he is an active Christian. Your own community situation will determine your choice of speakers.

Be careful that you do not use the address meeting as a "lazy man's way," waiting till the last minute and hurriedly selecting a speaker. It is wise to give the speaker a subject in keeping with the general theme, and time enough for thorough preparation, unless the speaker is a specialist. For example, if you have someone fresh from the Orient or some other mission field, you would expect him to give you his observations and impressions of conditions there.

THE FORUM

The forum is very widely used in large group gatherings. A speaker (usually a specialist in the field under discussion, as for example, if some phase of health were the topic you might wish to invite a Christian doctor to

be the leader of your forum), introduces the subject by some factual discussion or by laying a premise, and then opens the meeting for questions and suggestions from the floor.

QUESTION BOX

This procedure is similar to a forum except that the questions are written, unsigned, and placed in a box in advance. The leader is given time to read and classify them, then proceeds to discuss the questions with the group. The forum proper usually deals with one subject, while the question box ranges from "Should a Christian wear red finger-nail polish?" to the great universal questions of life, death, God, and immortality.

PANEL

Debates are hardly to be recommended, but a panel discussion has all the good qualities of the debate with none of the objectionable features. There is the giving of information as in the debate, but the panel is cooperative rather than competitive, and admits of a switch in the point of view of the participants. In a debate you must defend your side, right or wrong. If the participants should change their position, it would no longer be a debate. Advance assignments are given to four, six, or eight young people who sit around a table on the plat-

form or in front of the group. The panel chairman usually opens the subject, and an informal discussion ensues.

DRAMA

A dramatic presentation of a truth impresses it more deeply on the hearers. We *see*, *feel*, and *hear* the thing that is presented; therefore, we have three chances to one of remembering it.

Dramatizations have many values in that talents are discovered and developed; purposeful recreation is provided; self-expression, very necessary to personality development, is given; an audience is provided for talented young people, which helps very materially in overcoming self-consciousness and timidity in public. Fair play is stressed in the giving of parts; cooperation, so necessary to useful life-adjustments, is practiced; and brotherhood, a fundamental principle of the Christian religion, is allowed to function.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The sponsor of a dramatic presentation should be a person who is trained, or one who is willing to study the subject.
2. Choose characters who may themselves be helped by the part they present, as well as persons who are competent and more mature.
3. No church is too poor nor too small for simple

drama. One-act plays may be put on effectively without elaborate sets, without lighting effect, or a fine stage.

4. Plays in any church should uphold the ideals and standards of that church.

5. In the case of a large church, a dramatic club may be organized as a wing of the young people's organization. This group may specialize in religious drama, and thus make a fine contribution to the entire church program.

Dramatizing (not propagandizing) missions, tithing, leadership training, children's work, the healing work of the Church, as well as great Bible stories will tend to unify the many interests of the Church, mutually instructing, mutually developing the listeners and the performers.

BOOK REVIEW SERVICE

Some fine religious book may be read and summarized by one member of the group or, should the book lend itself to division, three or more persons might each review a section of it. Good book reviewers are scarce, and this type of program would become monotonous and tiring unless the reviewer is fluent and speaks with rapid movement, making the book live, as it were. Book reviewing is a talent which should be carefully cultivated.

BIOGRAPHY

The biographical type of service could be handled much as the book review, or by dialogue. Take, for example,

Dr. Albert Schweitzer. Let some young man impersonate him. This would call for such detailed study of the life of a great and good man that the person taking the part would live his experiences. One other person, or a group of persons, could occupy the platform, and in conversation let the one who is impersonating Doctor Schweitzer bring out the points in his life previously decided upon.

PRACTICAL PROJECTS

The following program and project suggestions have been tried, and used successfully by various groups. They were collated in a recent meeting of a group of youth leaders.

SENIOR FORUM

The Senior Forum is a young people's society which meets every week, either morning or evening, and is over before church time. Outstanding leaders from near-by large cities lead for three weeks at a time. The fourth Sunday is Young People's Day in the church, with young people assisting in the worship service, ushering, etc. Youth leaders plan the forum with their adviser. It consists of addresses by guest speakers, followed by questions and discussions.

Interest is keen. High-school groups and young people like the forum. One such group increased its attendance from 38 to 165 in one year. The forum was financed the first year by tuition and gifts, and later by the church budget.

HOMEMADE CURRICULA

One church built its own young people's curricula, through a youth committee and its adviser, using three tests:

1. What the group wants
2. What the adviser thinks the group needs
3. The leadership available

Results were as follows:

"Early Days of Christianity." Why was it harder to be a Christian in the earlier days than now? Peter, James, and other disciples lived and worked after the death of Jesus. Stephen was stoned; Paul was persecuted, and yet he traveled and organized churches throughout the Roman Empire. Death was the penalty for being a Christian in those years, yet Christianity spread over all the world. Learn the story.

"Young People Who Made Good." This course contains stories of young people who by ambition, determination, and common sense worked from obscurity to places of great importance and usefulness.

"Let's Talk It Over." Have you a question that bothers you? one that leaves question-mark footprints in your mind? Will the Church help me to know God? Why should I go to church? Shall I do things the crowd does, if those things are against my principles?

"Protestant Denominations." Many kinds, yet all different. Why and where do they differ, and what have they in common?

"India and Our Own Church." Beautiful Taj Mahal. . . . caste system Buddha Hindu . . . , sacred cows untouchables. . . . What has Christianity meant to India? Should we help India now? How?

ART BOOKS

One group studied the life of Christ through pictures. *The Gospel in Art*, by Bailey, was made the basis for the course. Large pictures were secured from the library and from the church's own art collection. Members made memory books with small copies of the pictures, such as "Christ among the Lowly," by Lhermitte; "Holy Night," by LeRolle; "The Nazarene," by Todd. Interesting discussions came into the course as the pictures were studied. Modern translations of the Bible (Moffatt and Goodspeed) were studied along with the *King James Version*. Early in the course, in connection with the study, "Christ among the Doctors," by Hofmann, the question was asked, "How did the teaching of Jesus differ from that of the scribes and Pharisees?" Several parables were recalled, and an interesting discussion followed the story of the Good Samaritan, and what it means in terms of living today.

PUPIL LEADERSHIP

One leader divided a group of eighteen into teams of three each, putting an active and dependable person as leader of each group, and putting those who were less active and more irregular in their attendance to fill out the team. The six leaders met with the teacher and outlined the course. Then each leader in turn contacted the other two on his team and planned the lesson presentation with them. Each group was in charge of their service on a designated Sunday, with the teacher as a resource leader in the background. Results reported were: a high percentage of attendance, increased interest, absentees returned, lessons were studied, the discussion was on a higher plane because the group was more informed, problems which were uncovered resulted in activity. Example: the course on worship led to a request by the group that they be permitted to lead the worship service. They also made suggestions about beautifying the chancel in the church which led to this group being assigned the responsibility for the youth service on a special Sunday evening; a study of social conditions led to "adopting" a family and investigating their needs and doing something about them.

GROUP METHOD

When the group method is used, the leader presents the lesson on one Sunday, introduces the things that have

bearing upon it, and gives out questions to the group. The next Sunday the members of the group give their own viewpoint. Once a month they meet in a "social group." At this meeting unsigned questions are put into a box, some of which are discussed by the group and others are answered by the leader. Vital perplexities are uncovered, and a Christian interpretation to them is given.

UNIVERSITY OF LIFE AND EVENTIDE FELLOWSHIP

The University of Life and Eventide Fellowship, with variations in title and minor details, are the two forms of Sunday evening programs fast being adopted and adapted in many churches. The outstanding similarity of both programs is that they are created locally by the young people under adult guidance to meet the needs and interests of youth. Both have a threefold program—worship, instruction, and fellowship. The University of Life usually begins with a supper, served for all, followed by a worship service for all, and then concludes with graded, simultaneous, elective discussion groups. These are sometimes called interest or commission groups.

The Eventide Fellowship program begins with a brief worship service in the sanctuary, carefully planned and beautifully carried out by young people and their leaders. Ritual, litany, poetry, special lighting, etc., make this outstanding. A short message on the theme is usually given by the pastor, or other adult or older young person. Simul-

taneous, graded discussion groups follow, registered for in advance and led by selected adults, with a youth chairman and a married couple sponsor for each group. The topics continue over a period of time, and are planned by the youth committees and adult adviser to meet the needs and interests of the groups. The high-school and young people's groups meet separately; some churches have groups for intermediates.

A carefully planned fellowship period for all groups, with the serving of simple but very nice refreshments from an attractive tea table, by two mother hostesses, is an important feature. Chairs are arranged in advance in informal clusters, floor lamps are used, the room is made as homy in atmosphere as possible. A selected musician is "planted" at the piano to play for the group singing to keep it on a high plane. The forming of a friendship circle, with the dimming of lights, the singing of a hymn and taps, a closing prayer and a parting sentence from the youth president closes the evening.

One church reports a distinctive membership feature. Each person joining the Eventide Fellowship is given a fagot with his name written on it. Once a month, when new members are given an opportunity to join, they present themselves at the altar during the worship service and each fagot is bound, with others, to a beautiful hand-carved cross, with four colors of ribbon. Blue stands for

loyalty, white for humility, red for sacrifice, gold for service. They repeat this pledge:

"This fagot is myself. To the cross of Christ I bind myself. With these others present I pledge myself to hold aloft His cross. In loyalty to Him, in humility of spirit, in everyday service to His cause, and in loving sacrifice of all my selfish desires, I will seek to be His disciple. Thy will be done. In Jesus' name I make my vow."

Both the University of Life and the Eventide Fellowship programs are planned in semesters, usually three, covering the months from October through May. Outdoor vesper services at homes of the families in the congregation, during the summer months, with short-term summer officers, keep the group intact.

EXPLORATION TOURS

A county youth conference selected the theme, "Rise Up and Build," around which to build its program. After the registration and opening assembly for young people on Saturday afternoon, the conference was divided into Exploration Tours, five for the high-school group, five for the young people, and one for both combined. All were under the leadership of a chairman from within the group and an adult leader. Places visited were a Playground Settlement, two Housing Projects, a Christian Community Center, Good Will Industries, and a Cooperative Gas Station, a Catholic Church, and a Jewish Temple, an N.Y.A.

Ceramics Projects, a University Settlement, the Y.W.C.A., and an International Institute and Foreign Affairs Council. These all came under the main divisions of Racial Brotherhood, Home and Family Life, Christian Economic Order, Interfaith Comradship, Creative Leisure, Crime Prevention, and World-Peace.

"Rise Up and Build Peace" was the theme of the international banquet which followed. Youth from the Hungarian, Swedish, Negro, Ukranian, and Roumanian groups served as hosts and hostesses, and the speakers were from the Spanish Child-Feeding Mission, and from China and Japan. A dramatization of the conference theme made the closing service vital and challenging, so much so that a city-wide young people's interracial fellowship was started and functioned all year.

EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY

Experimental laboratories. The conference put its emphasis on laboratory experiments. The twelve elective groups each had a youth chairman and an adult leader.

1. Creative Leisure Workshop
 - a) Making games
 - b) Folk songs
 - c) Folk games
 - d) Making simulated stained glass windows
 - e) Creative drama

2. World-Peace Conference
 - a) The Far East
 - b) Palestine
 - c) Post-Munich Europe
 - d) Spain
3. Helping Others to Be Christian through
 - a) Interracial understanding
 - b) Cooperation in the home
 - c) Economic justice

International banquet.—Theme: "We Build with Thee World-Fellowship"

Fun and fellowship

Skit: Ferdinand decides it is "peace or pieces"

Speaker's subject: "Personalities I Met around the World"

Folk games of different countries

Friendship circle

STAY-AT-HOME CONFERENCE

A Stay-at-Home Conference was planned by the Christian Youth Council and its advisers for the youth of all the churches in a certain city. The conference met for one week, five evenings from six to nine o'clock. After recreation on the church lawn, a picnic supper was served by the women of the twelve cooperating organizations. A study of hymns, with hymn singing, preceded the worship, with a special feature each evening. Then the con-

ference met in small interest groups to discuss vital problems. Examples: a discussion of creative Christian living resulted in a vote to conduct a program in the high-school assembly, stating why they wanted more reverent and more meaningful school devotions. A sunrise program for peace held on Armistice Day and a New Year's Eve service were the result of this study.

The interest group on law enforcement caused one Sunday in October to be set aside by all the churches as Law and Order Day, when youth representatives participated in the morning church services. These young people gave ten-minute talks, stating statistics and reasons why church people should use their influence in the community to better existing conditions. The pastors followed these talks with sermons on the same subject in order further to carry out the Law and Order Day which climaxed a series of newspaper articles concerning various phases of law enforcement in the community. The committee also was responsible for composing and sending a letter to the mayor, the chief of police, the sheriff of the county, and the governor of the state. The response of these men clearly showed that they were pleased with the interest and cooperation shown by the young people and their desire to promote more efficient law enforcement.

Racial relationship was considered by another interest group. This had more direct results and far-reaching effects. At the end of the Stay-at-Home Conference the

Council was faced with the work of developing the immediate projects outlined—facilities for library, housing, and amusements for Negroes. The first step was investigation, and the committee surveyed, interviewed, and probed until they felt they had an adequate background for future work. As a result of this research, the Library Board has established a library for Negroes, housed in their own school and conducted by Negro students. Out of the investigation of housing, the need of a day nursery for children below school age whose parents are working, and whose brothers or sisters attend school, became apparent. After several months a day nursery was officially opened.

The subject of questionable amusements, faced by a fourth interest group, immediately turned into a discussion of constructive recreation. Two activities grew out of this: (1) a monthly get-together of the entire youth conference, with an evening of wholesome recreation; (2) a leisure-time conference, conducted during four Sunday afternoons in February, when such subjects as art, music, choir, dramatics, Bible study, citizenship, photography, story-telling, game leadership, public speaking, and others are open to the young people.

INTERCHURCH CONFERENCE

Four churches in a community asked, "What can we do to create more interest between our various groups

of young people?" A picnic was planned with tennis, croquet, and games of all sorts. A bountiful supper followed. Here plans were made for an interchurch conference which was to meet every three months, with the host church in charge of the program. The nature of the conference is an exchange of ideas and suggestions so that all groups may be improved.

RETREAT

The retreat is an annual event, over a week-end, from Friday evening to Sunday evening. The high-school group and the young people and their leaders go to a Y.M.C.A. or other camp where they live, play, plan, work, and worship together for three days each spring. Each person pays half of his expenses and the church budget provides the balance. Every detail is carefully planned, from the serving of the meals (mothers prepare them) to the good-night taps. Each person has a responsibility. It may be planning a worship service, arranging a party or hike, setting the tables; being a member of a committee, preparing the campfire, etc. Leisure time should be allowed for hiking, resting, visiting with friends, meditating under the trees alone. The most important item in the program is the analysis period, when the retreat is divided into two groups, and the high-school boys and girls in one section and the young people in another scrutinize the

young people's program in the church for the past year. A carefully prepared questionnaire is used as a guide for this study, so the comments will be constructive and will not result in faultfinding. On the basis of these findings plans are made for the coming year.

RECREATION

Bar None. One group reports a "Bar None" feature, so named because no young person is barred and there is no bar. It was discovered that with the best of intentions in the world, and just for the sake of securing a normal amount of natural recreation, some high-school and young people's groups from the church had begun to frequent taverns, roadhouses, etc. The church decided to re-think its youth program. They rebuilt it. As a high spot in this substitute plan of recreation the youth themselves planned this social undertaking. The entertainment is on a high, intelligent, and wholesome level.

Folk Games. The popular emphasis on folk games is finding expression in many church, community, and school groups. A man who became interested in folk games, because of a brief recreational leadership course he took, has been instrumental in introducing them in the high school where he teaches and to the various groups in the church he attends. The result is that the whole town has become folk-game conscious.

USING NATURAL LEADERS

A leader of youth groups has discovered that a good way to work successfully with adolescents is to find the leaders of groups within the group, and by making a united interest for these natural leaders a united group results. He gathers together the elected and appointed officers of a group—these are the natural leaders or they would not be so honored by their friends. He calls them "key leaders," and puts each over a group of ten, usually their own group. He gives them regular jobs to do. If attendance lags, they round up their groups; from them he gets ideas for discussion topics; he uses them to promote friendships among the different groups and to build a greater loyalty to the whole group.

SERVICE PROJECTS

1. *A Special Room.* A group wanted a room that would make possible a more varied program. They have it. In between the desire and the achievement is an interesting story of a request to the trustees for a room, which was granted. The room was remodeled to provide a chapel with a memorial altar and other rooms to take care of the various needs of the group. The young people themselves financed the project. They chose the colors used in decoration with a pleasing result. The program conducted in these rooms is varied. Worship centers around the altar.

The social hours are creating a real feeling of fellowship. Drama and other activities enlist participation of members of the group.

2. *The Win-One-Band*. This group each pledged themselves to win one person to Christ during the year, and by actual count the society was doubled in numbers within the year. Some of the new members came from another community, but the majority came as a direct result of the personal interest and invitation.

3. *Board of Junior Officials*. Six junior officials are chosen annually from among the young people who are Christian. They are selected by the senior officials and the retiring president of the junior officials, with the approval of the minister. Each junior official has a close relation with a corresponding senior officer, and on occasion assumes his duties or assists him in ushering, serving communion, or other church service. All their activities are voluntary. Each is expected to do well the work he accepts.

4. *Negro Community Center*. In a discussion course on "Other Races We Meet," two intelligent Negroes related to the group some of the problems of their race. Federal funds are available for a Community Center, but for some reason the City Council has vetoed the project. Why? No one knows. So the Negroes continue to have no swimming pool, no assembly hall for clubs or meetings, no gymnasium, no place to spend their increased leisure.

The group became very much interested. They approached their leader and the church staff to "do something about it." The pastor suggested that the committee on young people's work be interviewed for guidance and approval. Two aldermen in the community have already been interviewed. Something is beginning to happen. A sympathy for the underprivileged has been aroused, and it looks as if the City Council will have to reconsider or tell the reason why they have not approved the project.

5. *Advertising*. Many youth groups assume responsibility for distributing advertising for revivals or other special services in the church. Some groups volunteer to be present in a body each night of the special campaign. They sing, usher, or do any job assigned to them by the pastor.

6. *Radio Broadcast*. Through the cooperation of a Forensic Forum a youth group was permitted to present two broadcasts on the question, "What Shall We Do about War?" The first was a peace play called, "Gas," and the second a program on "What the Church Says about War."

7. *Circulating Library*. Florida's slogan one year was "Florida—A Reading State." The high-school and the young people's groups have a circulating library which is available to the churches for the asking. They also sponsor a "Book-a-Month Club," each member undertaking to read one good book a month. They believe that

"books are windows through which we can look at the world."

8. *Church-School Boosters.* One young people's group termed themselves "Church-School Boosters," and offered themselves to the general church-school superintendent for any service they might render. Teams made up of "boosters" visited sick and absentee members, made a community survey, participated in a leadership training class, and took turns taking care of the babies in the nursery while mothers worshiped.

9. *A Party for Maids.* An intensive study of racial conditions in their community by one group resulted in the discovery that there were not many Negroes, but that the fifty or so maids who worked in the homes of the town had very little social life. A youth group made it possible for these girls to have a party.

WHERE TO GET MATERIALS

A wealth of program material is available for use in your society, but we do not always know where to find it. The following suggestions may be helpful.

1. Write to your Church headquarters for catalogues, free leaflets, and materials.
2. Get free materials from the missionary and stewardship organizations of the Church.
3. The United States Government sends out free much valuable educational material on health, child welfare, historical material, etc., etc.
4. National Council for Prevention of War, 532—17th St., N.W., Washington, D.C.
5. National Health Association, New York, N.Y., have much valuable material on social diseases and their prevention, preparation for marriage, home building, etc., and much of this is free.
6. If you have access to a public, church, or school library, do not hesitate to make full use of it; it was established for you.
7. Use the creativity of your own group for *many* programs. You may have a poet or a story-writer in your

midst. You may have an excellent musician in the making. You may even have a composer. You may have an artist who would love to arrange your room more beautifully.

8. Build your own supply of materials by making a society scrapbook or filing case where collected materials may be classified and kept. Clip or copy poems, articles, and rich thoughts from your reading—from newspapers, magazines, and books—file them away by subjects, with an index which will enable you to find them quickly.

CRITERIA OF SUCCESS

The following suggestions can be used to measure the success of your work.

1. A growing understanding and appreciation of the life and teachings of Jesus
2. Evidence of more Bible reading and prayer in the individual lives of the members
3. The group building its own program
4. Minimum of inactivity among members
5. Widening interests in the church, the community, the underprivileged, the foreign, and others in need
6. Sustained attendance
7. Improvements in physical equipment, pictures purchased for the room, re-decoration, drapes, better seats, better lighting fixtures
8. A workable financial system adopted
9. New young people brought to Christ and into the fellowship of the Church
10. Renewed interest in missions
11. Members of the group participating in cottage prayer meetings, revival efforts, Sunday-school promotion, visitation and other spiritual and humanitarian work

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- Donnelly, H. I. *Administering the Senior Department of the Church School*. Westminster, 1931; 195 pp. 85 cents
- Gates, S. *Youth at Worship*. Christian Quest Pamphlet No. 6. International Council, 1928; 49 pp. 15 cents
- Hayward, P. R., and Burkhart, R. A. *Young People's Method in the Church*. Abingdon, 1933; 353 pp. \$1.50
- Miller, C. A. *Leading Youth to Abundant Life*. Heidelberg, 1934; 236 pp. \$1.50
- Olt, Russell. *The Efficient Young People's Society*. Gospel Trumpet Company; 131 pp. \$1.00
- Phillips, Amy C. *Topics for the Young People's Society*. Gospel Trumpet Company; 96 pp. 50 cents
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- Shaver, E. L. *The Science of Leadership*. Pupil's Work Book. Pilgrim, 1931; 176 pp. \$1.00
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- Smith, C. D. *Administering the Young People's Department of the Local Church*. Pilgrim, 1934; 219 pp. 85 cents
- Stewart, F. W. *A Study of Adolescent Development*. Judson, 1929; 194 pp. 85 cents
- Stock, H. T. *A Life and a Living*. Leader's Manual. Abingdon, 1936; 136 pp. \$1.00
- Stock, H. T. *Young People and Their Leaders*. Pilgrim, 1933; 167 pp. 75 cents
- Swearingen, T. T. *Planning for the Young People in the Local Church*. Bethany, 1933; 96 pp. 30 cents