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Special Instruction to Teachers

GRADE IV

13 to 16 Years of Age

The beginning of the "I" consciousness in children of this age calls for an entirely different approach on the part of the teacher. The one who would teach this group successfully must put aside the note of authority to become friend, guide, and counsellor. The presentation of Truth needs to be colorful and intense enough to capture their imagination so that life may be revealed to them as a great adventure in which each may play a noble part, regardless of the circumstance in which he finds himself.

Children of this age have reached a point in their development when they should clarify their relationship with their environment. They should know that what goes on in their minds and hearts determines the nature of the part they will play in the outer world. But to guard against the danger of self-centeredness it must also be impressed upon them by direct and indirect teaching that *right relationship* to others is the safest guaranty of self-development.

The new-born sense of individuality that comes with the maturing of the desire body calls for recognition and respect, and if this is wisely accorded by the teacher, her influence over her charges will be greatly broadened and strengthened.

The spirit of rebellion against any and all authority,

so common to children of this age, is but an expression of the innate thirst for liberty, stirred up by the newly released Life Force within them. And there is no more important point in the spiritual training of these children than to explain to them the true meaning and use of liberty, to make clear to them that the liberty they ask for themselves must be granted to every other human being. Many illustrations may be found, some, perhaps, by the children, in which liberty of action taken by one encroaches upon the rightful liberty of another. In such cases, it should be explained, it ceases to be liberty and become license, something that brings a bad reaction to the one who practices it. Little by little, it can be brought out that true liberty is bound up with the observance of the hidden laws of life, and that we can never be entirely free until we learn to understand and live by these laws. As this conception of liberty sinks into the consciousness, a sense of responsibility will be built up that will give interesting and constructive direction to errant impulses.

Class organization is helpful in this connection. Let the students choose a president and such other officers as may be decided upon, the president to appoint members of the class to attend to various duties, such as care of the books and charts, assembling of the chairs, giving such service as the teacher may need, etc.

Then let them decide what particular qualities they, as a group, want to express, such as promptness, attention during presentation of the lesson (with a view to getting a clear mental impression of the subject matter instead of a blurred one), and cooperation—with the teacher, with one another, and with other groups in the Sunday School.

The habit of self-analysis and self-correction should be developed during this period and the following method is suggested for arousing interest in the practice:

Let the teacher propose that they select seven qualities which they would like to build into their character, qualities that might be called foundation stones of any worthwhile character. These should include honesty, sincerity, consideration for others (the first step toward the building of harmonious relations with others), mental alertness, observation, orderliness, and promptness—promptness both in the keeping of appointments and in the accomplishment of such tasks as need to be done.

Give the students a week to think this over and ask each one to submit a list of seven qualities considered necessary to the forming of a good character—the teacher to submit her list also. From these lists let the class choose what they consider the best seven qualities to work on. Each one should have this selected list of words on a card, with space for checking the successes and failures at the end of the day.

To this list of fundamentals should be added the keywords of the current solar month, to be replaced by the keywords of each successive month. It should be explained that when we strive to express the qualities of the ruling planet of the month, we actually “tune in” to the cosmic influence and prepare ourselves to become servers in the Great Plan.

The record kept by each student should be entirely between himself and God. When some situation arises which he does not know how to judge or to handle properly, however, the question should be written down and dropped into a question box provided for that purpose.

The questions are to be seen by the teacher only, and should be signed so that she may gain an insight into the individual problems of the class members and be in a position to offer special advice and assistance when this is needed. The students must be given positive assurance that their confidence will never be violated, that

their questions will be discussed in general terms, and that no one will know who asked them. The teacher will take the questions home to be studied and transcribed into general terms. At stated intervals a part of the lesson session, or even a whole session, should be set aside for general discussion of the points that have been raised. The teacher herself should always put a question or two into the box to stimulate interest and bring out ideas that need emphasis.

These general discussions give the teacher a great opportunity to familiarize the students with the thought that the whole purpose of self-analysis and self-development is that they may fit themselves to play an ever more helpful and important part in the great work of evolution, and that the qualities they are trying to establish in their own natures can grow and develop only if *used* in their daily contacts with others.

Let the students themselves help to trace the results that flow from the regular practice of some good quality or combination of qualities, such as honesty and promptness. The one who habitually practices this good combination will establish a reputation for *reliability*, which causes him to be chosen for small services carrying some responsibility. And, as found to be true for these, others of greater importance will be given. Many things will happen to test the sincerity and strength of purpose, to be honest at all costs. Only when the student has been proven reliable in every instance can he be chosen for important positions of trust, either by men of affairs in the world, or by the Great Ones guiding humanity as a whole, whose standards are so much higher and purer than the standards of men.

The teacher of this grade is likely to find many inequalities in the development of her pupils, and in her approach and requirements should make a distinction be-

tween those in whom the emotional forces have been released and those who have not yet had this experience.

This period of development is one of the most critical in the whole life and calls for patience, wisdom, and understanding on the part of the one who hopes to give a steadying hand to those who are passing through it. The supreme purpose of spiritual training at this time is to implant in the budding mind the ideals of the higher life, and to invest these ideals with such power and beauty that the newly awakened forces of the desire body may be strongly enrolled in the service of the Higher Self.

The Bible Work

Some teachers have reported difficulty in finding interpretations for the Old Testament stories that are in accord with the Rosicrucian philosophy and suited to the child consciousness.

Most of the Rosicrucian interpretations of the Old Testament are deeply esoteric and lie, therefore, entirely outside the life of the child. Yet it is important that he become acquainted with the outstanding characters, incidents, and general background of the Old Testament, and that he acquire the right attitude of mind toward it.

We suggest that the stories be told as vividly as possible with such details of the setting as will interest the children. Such portions of the story as would be incomprehensible to them should be left out, and passages which are within their capacity should be read directly from the Bible.

Many awkward questions can be settled with the general explanation that the Old Testament gives the history of our experiences from the beginning of the Fourth

Day of Creation—the one through which we are passing now—down to the coming of the Christ.

The children may be told that we were just learning how to use our minds and bodies in the very early Bible days, and that we did many things we would not do today because we did not know any better. They should also be told that every story in the Old Testament has many wonderful meanings hidden in it which we cannot see until we begin to understand the working of God's Plan and how to do our part in it.

The teachers, of course, will adapt these explanations to the age and capacity of the children who are being taught. Many opportunities will be found to point out simple relationships and contrasts to the truths they are learning in their cosmic lessons.

Lesson Suggestions for Capricorn

SPIRITUAL KEYWORD — SELF-SACRIFICE

GRADE IV — FIRST SUNDAY

KEYWORD—*Concentration*

With the entrance of the Sun into the sign Capricorn, we come to one of the four crucial points in the year. It is the point marking the completion of Christ's entrance into the Earth. His great love for mankind led Him to take upon Himself the burden of the Earth until poor, blind humanity should awaken to the realization of its glorious destiny through doing man's work in spiritualizing the planet Earth. This may be done only when man realizes that he is his brother's keeper and, as such, must love his fellowman enough to sacrifice the world's pleasures by living a life that is true, honest, and helpful in the fullest sense of the word. To accomplish this,

we look to the ruler of the sign Capricorn, Saturn, for his direction as to what we must do. His message is "Stop and Think!" When we do so, we shall find we can hear the still, small voice within (God speaking) helping us to choose the right course of action. Thus we make fewer mistakes, gradually growing into the person God wants us to be, and one day we may become helpers in doing what Christ now does continuously to keep the world afloat in its orbit.

We have studied *Thoughtfulness* in earlier lessons. The next step is *Concentration*, or focusing the thought on a single object, idea, or mental picture—like using the telescope to see a single planet or a particular portion of the heavens. When we look at Saturn, that is all we see, for we have pointed the telescope to it alone, even though the room may be full of people. Maintaining the single focus steadily on a thought permits the Higher Self to send light and power through the telescope of the mind into the thought picture to which it is pointed, filling that thought picture with energy and enabling it to fulfill the purpose we have put into it. Every time this is done, more life is poured into that thought, making it stronger.

The Higher Self of each person, which is a part of God, does its best work when we completely forget this outer self of ours. That is why, when concentrating in prayer, we sit with the physical body in a comfortable position, staying perfectly still, with spine erect, and muscles relaxed and at ease.

To illustrate what happens when nerves and muscles are tense, clench your first tightly for a few moments; note how the circulation of the blood is interfered with, and how the blood rushes into the hand again just as quickly as the muscles are relaxed. The Ego needs and uses the complex physical body in many wonderful and mysterious ways.

One of the important things we need to learn is how to give this higher part of ourselves free play in the physical body as well as in every other part of our being.

Concentration can be used in examining some object of interest, in working out a problem, or performing a task. One of the advantages of concentration is that it increases the speed and accuracy of accomplishment. If a lesson or task seems difficult or uninteresting, it can be *made* interesting and done so with surprising ease by practising concentration on it. After doing this a few times, we will discover that our Higher Self knows much more than the personality or lower self and stands ready to help whenever we give it a chance.

We use concentration in our services because concentration on some high and unselfish ideal is the highest form of prayer. When this high form of prayer is used, our Higher Self connects us directly with that great stream of life and light and love power flowing out from God. When we make ourselves a channel for the great love stream to flow through, we become, in a small way, Servers in the Plan, and link ourselves with the Elder Brothers who are guiding humanity.

We can do a truly beautiful and valuable work in our Sunday School concentration if we all put our best efforts into it. We prepare for the time of concentration from the beginning of the opening service by getting as quiet as possible inside, so that when the Emblem is exposed, we take our erect, relaxed position without loss of time and enter immediately into concentration on the thought which has been presented by the teacher. When healing is the object, as on Service Sunday, we reach out with all our hearts toward the white rose in the center of the cross, with a strong desire that the life of every human being in the world may be filled with light and love and health, with joy and courage. As we hold this thought, quietly and earnestly, a stream

of light will begin to flow through every one of us to the white rose on the Emblem, until it is filled with this glowing, radiant power of love. The Invisible Helpers, who are always present during the concentration, gather this radiance and use it to strengthen the weak and heal the sick, to inspire right action and to bless those who have called to God for help.

Every time this thought is held in concentration the Higher Self in each one is able to pour more power into it because the groove, made by the thought in the brain, is a little deeper. Of course, the higher and better the thoughts of each one have been during the week, the better he will be able to do his part in this beautiful service to humanity.

GRADE IV — FIRST SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Luke 2:1-18

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Golden Text—Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.—*Luke 2:10-11.*

In the past year we have learned about many great men chosen by God to teach people of their day about His laws. The people obeyed God's laws for a short time, but gradually fell back into their old disobedience. This was repeated over and over again down through the ages. A very small number remained steadfast and true. The time finally came when God's messengers, called prophets, foretold the coming of a Saviour who would establish a kingdom of peace, love, and joy.

Not long before the birth of Jesus, the Angel Gabriel appeared before Mary, telling her that she had been cho-

sen to be his mother. Mary was a virgin of highest human purity, a most beautiful person, descended from a long line of people who were followers of God's laws. Joseph, chosen to be Jesus' father, also was one of those who served God as best they could. Together, as parents of Jesus, they would care for him, not only in the home but otherwise, with the help of a dedicated group of people called Essenes, who stayed largely in their own community where they had schools of their own. It was among them that Jesus was to receive his early training, permitting his mind to unfold in an atmosphere of peace and love.

At the time of Jesus' birth, Wise Men of the far East noticed a new star moving across the heavens which they believed to be an indication of the coming of the long awaited Messiah. They decided to follow it and came to Bethlehem, where they found Jesus in a lowly stable, lying in a manger. They fell down and worshipped him, presenting their gifts of myrrh, frankincense and gold (which may be thought of as will-power, holiness, and wisdom).

Meanwhile, outside of Bethlehem, were shepherds watching their sheep by night. To them appeared an Angel telling of the birth of Jesus. She was followed by an angel choir singing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men." The shepherds also went to Bethlehem to find the baby Jesus and worship him, wondering about all that happened that night.

The humble birth of Jesus into his earthly life marked the beginning of an influence extending to this very day. He was a very pure and spiritually evolved Ego, born to parents of a similar nature.

At the age of six he went to the day school in the auditorium of the town's synagogue. He studied the chief textbook of the Jews, the Old Testament, along with the rabbi's comments upon them. In addition to the Aramaic language, he learned classic Hebrew and Greek. He pro-

cured important ancient manuscripts, which he studied with deep spiritual insight, his vast fund of knowledge being a constant source of wonder to his teachers. (Read Luke 2:40-47. Hoffman's painting of "Christ at Twelve" illustrates this incident.)

Legends tell us that the child Jesus formed images of birds in clay, and breathed upon them, whereupon they took life and flew away. This may be thought of as symbolic of the fact that he had power to heal and that his healing powers extended to birds and beasts as well as to human beings.

Another legend states that one day as he was carrying a bucket of water for his mother, he dropped it, but at once gathered up the spilled water in his mantle. This indicates that he was spiritually evolved enough to control the elements.

Thus we can see that Jesus was a very remarkable person, probably the most spiritually evolved human being on Earth at that time.

GRADE IV — SECOND SUNDAY

KEYWORD—*Consecration*

Today we change the keyword from *Faithfulness*, as used earlier, to *Consecration*. Faithfulness in following the urges and warnings of the Higher Self is the first step toward Consecration, and comes when the desire to follow the call of our True Self is stronger than any desire of the personality.

How often we've heard the words ". . . loving, self-forgetting service to others is the shortest, the safest, and the most joyful road to God." There is a deep, hidden meaning in this statement. As we come into a better understanding of God's Plan for the progress of all mankind, we

are eager to learn all possible, and speedily at that. However, as bits of truth slowly unfold, we realize that there is a great deal more to life than we ever dreamed. For example, what may seem unfair and unjust in life isn't so at all.

There is considerably more to life than our present life-time, which may be likened to a day in the School of Life, as there are many grades in our educational system. Some make their grades with ease, others struggle and barely pass on to a higher level, while still others don't make the grade at all. So it is in Life's School. The knowledge that we have lived many lives before this one, and will live many more before we reach the perfection God's Plan includes for all of us, makes us more tolerant of others' shortcomings (and we all have them, although not exactly the same ones). This makes us more willing to be helpful to others, while showing kindness and love in doing so. Eventually we send a joyous outpouring of goodwill to all people, who really are our brothers and sisters, for God is the spiritual Father of us all. True, we don't always get along with brothers and sisters in our families, but we must learn to do so; that is why we've been brought together in the family relationship. This is one of the things Christ Jesus came to teach us.

Mankind's progress has been slower than it should have been, so we must grow in love and service to others, beginning with our family, and spreading out into the community, into the city, and later the state, the nation, and on into the world. Only in this way shall we progress and have peace on Earth with goodwill to men. As more and more people learn to do this, wars will be no more.

GRADE IV — SECOND SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Matt. 2: 1-11

THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

Golden Text—Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him.—*Matt 2:2.*

In those days travel was far slower than now; camels were used, especially for long distances. It probably took those Wise Men about six weeks to make the journey from Babylon, where they had seen the star, to Jerusalem.

Just imagine what great surprise there would be in Jerusalem when word got around that these Wise Men were asking for the "King of the Jews." King Herod was especially anxious to meet them. First, he got together with the Jewish chief priests to learn from them about this "King of the Jews," for to his way of thinking, his throne was in danger. The priests told him the "King" would be born "In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it was written by the prophet." Herod then talked with the Wise Men, asking where they had seen the star. Sending them to Bethlehem, he said, "Go, search diligently for the young child; and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I may go and worship Him also."

As the Wise Men set out for Bethlehem, it seemed the star went before them, as though leading the way. They found Mary with baby Jesus cradled in a lowly manger in a stable. That didn't prevent their worship of him, showing them to be truly Wise Men as they presented their gifts.

One of them, named Caspar, was very aged, with a long white beard. He was king in Tarsus, land of merchants; his gift was gold. Melchior was middle-aged, a king of Arabia; his gift was frankincense. Balthazar, the dark

king, was very young; he came from Sheba, land of spices; his gift was myrrh. Caspar is spoken of as the White Lord with the Diamond; Melchior the Bright Lord with the Diamond; while Balthazar is referred to as the Treasure Lord with the Ruby. Both the diamond and ruby represent true light of the Spirit.

Frankincense represents our body, which we use to walk in Christ Jesus' steps; myrrh stands for the soul we develop by being good to others; and gold stands for Spirit, our real and true self. These are the gifts we can present to Christ through our lives of service to others, by doing what we can do for them in a spirit of kindness, helpfulness, and love.

Surely we can find many ways of presenting our gifts of service to the King of Kings and Lords of Lords, the Christ.

GRADE IV — THIRD SUNDAY

PHYSICAL EXPRESSION—Skeleton and Knees

The planet Saturn has rulership over the bony structure of our body including the knees, which are governed by the sign Capricorn. The skeleton, from the standpoint of its structure, is the most amazing example known of a supporting frame, combining the greatest strength with the least bulk and weight.

From the beginning of the Saturn Period, the Ego (Spirit) in each one of us has, under the guidance of the Great Ones, been learning to build bodies to use in the unfolding of its latent powers. The physical body, the first one started, is the most perfect of our vehicles (bodies) but, wonderful as it is, it still has far to go before becoming the accurate, sensitive instrument which can be depended upon to respond to every demand and carry out every order of the Divine Spark within.

It is only as the knee is bent in humility and prayer for guidance that we gain understanding of how to cope with the many problems found in daily living. We seek to do so in keeping with the guidelines provided through the Rosicrucian Teachings as we learn more about them in our discussions together from week to week.

Let us, each one, make a short statement to be memorized, which will remind us that when we say "I" we mean the One who uses the physical (dense) body, the vital body, the desire body, and the mind to express its power to act, to live, to feel, and to think. The statements will be presented next Sunday and the best one chosen by vote.

GRADE IV — THIRD SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Matt. 2:13-16, 19-23

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Golden Text—Arise, take the young child and His Mother, and flee into Egypt, and be there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him.—*Matt.* 2:13.

King Herod waited about two years for the return of the Wise Men, who had been warned by God in a dream not to return to the king. They departed home by another way.

Joseph also was warned by God in a dream to go out of Bethlehem into the land of Egypt. That was a long, hard journey—about 300 miles—with the young baby Jesus. However, there were many people of a group called the Essenes along their travel route, who were friendly and helped by allowing them to make frequent rest stops. Also, they were helped by Angel hosts, for Jesus had a special work to do for us, and his life was to be spared for that purpose.

King Herod didn't live long after this, and was succeeded to the throne by his son, Archelaus. After Herod's death, an Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young child and his Mother; and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead who sought the child's life." Joseph, Mary, and Jesus went to Israel. Again Joseph was warned in a dream, and he turned aside into Galilee. They came to a place called Nazareth and that is where Jesus and his parents spent his childhood years.

The village lay amid orchards of figs, olives, and pomegranates; in the fields were barley and wheat; there were also vineyards, and an abundance of flowers. The people of Nazareth were vegetarians, living a quiet, peaceful life, carrying out God's commandments, keeping mostly to themselves, but performing many healing miracles.

As a young child, Jesus would go out and talk with travelers along the nearby caravan route from the East; thus he learned about the Mysteries of the East.

All the while that Herod and his son were kings they promoted much bloodshed by cruelly killing off hundreds of people, but Jesus and his family were protected during those early years of his life.

GRADE IV — FOURTH SUNDAY

KEYWORD—*Self-Sacrifice*

Our keyword today is the natural expression of consecration. It simply means giving up something that appears valuable to the lower self, for something the real Self knows to be of greater value. When a person consents to have an arm or foot amputated to save his body from blood poisoning and possible death, he sacrifices a valuable part of his body for the good of the whole.

Sometimes, in playing a game, a single player will sacrifice his chance to make a brilliant play in order to help a fellow player gain some point making a higher score for the team.

The one who chooses to sacrifice the desires or the comfort of the personality (desire body) to the will of the Higher Self strengthens the cause of Good in the world and helps not only himself but everyone else, too.

It is important that we make wise decisions in our work and our play. To do so, let us always remember to ask, in prayer, for guidance and help in making the right choices. That prayer may be only a few simple words spoken in a real, heartfelt wish for God's help. You can all think of many ways we can show self-sacrifice, the better to bring love, peace, and joy into the lives of those around us. This coming week let us be looking and thinking of what we can do along this line, bringing to class next Sunday what we have discovered, that we may all benefit from the findings of each one.

NOTE—These Capricorn lessons may need to be rearranged or condensed when the solar month has just four Sundays.

GRADE IV — FOURTH SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — James 3:13-18

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

Golden Text—Thou shalt not covet.—*Exodus* 20:17.

The word covet has many meanings: greed, ill-will toward others, and jealousy of another's good fortune. Let us consider them, along with some others.

When we covet, we seek that belonging to someone else, to which we aren't entitled. That leads to wrong action, ending in sorrow and trouble for everyone concerned in

any way. If we covet, we could very well destroy every single friendly relationship with our family, companions, acquaintances, and neighbors.

Ill-will is just the opposite of what we hear so often at this time of year—"good-will to men", the words originally spoken by the Angels to the shepherds near Bethlehem on the night of Jesus' birth. Those words led the shepherds to seek the baby Jesus that they also might worship him.

Very often we hear the expression "let each one have and do his own thing." That succeeds only when it is in line with one's share in God's Divine Plan. Each one of us has a particular purpose to carry out in this life; when we work in harmony with that purpose, endeavoring to do our best, we will succeed. Our lives will reflect this in contentment with all our activities—physically, mentally, and spiritually. That purpose influences what we are fitted to do—our talent, aptitude, ability—and is just a bit different from anyone else's "thing."

Perhaps you've never thought about it, but "thoughts become things" and we must be very careful about what thoughts we permit to remain in our minds, chasing away everything not desirable for development into future action. That means we must refuse to keep or hold onto thoughts like jealousy, ill-will, and hatred, putting in their place kindness, good-will, generosity, unselfishness, and love to all. In this way, we shall not only be helping others but also ourselves, finding our lives happier because we are strengthening God's blessing, given by the Angels, of "good-will to men." FOURTH SUNDAY is also SERVICE SUNDAY for discussions on the Capricorn keywords of *self-sacrifice*, *concentration*, and *consecration* in relation to the SERVICE we were able to give during the past month.

GRADE IV — FIFTH SUNDAY

REVIEW

Lesson Suggestions for Aquarius

SPIRITUAL KEYWORD—ALTRUISM

GRADE IV — FIRST SUNDAY

KEYWORD—*Individuality*

We discuss qualities belonging to the zodiacal sign of the month to help each student, as well as the class as a whole, to “tune in” on the cosmic forces of the Universe centered upon us from month to month by the Sun as the Earth moves in its orbit.

We may speak of this portion of our Sunday School lessons, together with our Bible work, as our “living lessons”, because all the growth and progress we make depends upon how well we succeed in awakening these different qualities in ourselves and using them in our daily thinking and living.

Those forces which flow to us from the sign Aquarius tend to build in us (if we “tune in” to them) a scientific and altruistic outlook toward life. The great planetary Spirit, Uranus, ruler of Aquarius, teaches us to grasp at new ideas or facts when they are presented to us, and then to turn the telescope of our minds upon them to find out if there is anything in them of value to us. Saturn, who rules with Uranus in Aquarius, helps us to decide whether or not these new ideas or facts fit in with bits of truth we have already puzzled out for ourselves.

The one who thinks things out for himself, and then tests his findings against other things he knows, gradually builds a strong individuality—a character that stands out. Such a person becomes a natural leader in whatever field of activity he chooses for his life work. However, if he uses his powers to gain the upper hand or to injure

others, he becomes a destructive force in his environment. That is why Uranus, who helps us to build up a character that stands out, calls us also strongly toward *altruism*, that quality which leads us at all times to consider the welfare of others.

GRADE IV— FIRST SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Mark 1:9-11

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Golden Text—And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.—*Mark* 1:11.

When the boy Jesus grew to be a man, something very wonderful happened to him. Remember we said that long before he was born men had been talking about how some day a very great Being, who would be called the Saviour, would come to Earth to help everybody learn to love one another and be kind to one another? Well, that Saviour was really a wonderful great Being called the Christ, who had watched the people living on our Earth for years and years, and loved them very much, so much so that He wanted to come and help them. The Christ was—and is—so kind and good and wise that He did not have to live in a body made of flesh and bones to learn lessons the way we do. His body is so pure and bright and shining with light that only people who are very good can see it. Because of this, very, very few people on Earth could have seen the Christ if He had come to Earth in His own body. So He decided the best way He could help the people on Earth was to use one of their bodies; then everyone could see Him and He could talk to them.

But He had to wait until a person came to live on Earth

who was so pure that He could borrow that person's body. He couldn't borrow just anyone's body, because most people had so many selfish and ugly thoughts and did so many bad and ugly things that their bodies were not clean enough for the Christ to use. But when Jesus was born, the Christ knew that his body was going to be good and clean; Jesus was the best man who had ever lived on Earth and he had the best flesh and bones body.

That is why this wonderful thing that I am going to tell you about happened to Jesus. One day when he had grown up to be a man, Jesus went to a river called the River Jordan. There he was baptized by a holy man named John the Baptist.

Now, when one is baptized, either sprinkled with water or immersed in the water, it is generally understood to mean that the person is being dedicated to the spiritual life, whether he is old enough at the time to realize the meaning fully or not. We may think of it as a promise by the person (or by the people responsible for him if he is not yet old enough to understand fully the significance of the event) to live according to the direction of the Christ within him.

In the case of Jesus, however, the baptism was different, although it symbolizes a part of the spiritual life for all Christians. The baptism of Jesus was unique, not like any other baptism. That is, he, the real Jesus, the Spirit, departed from his body and the Christ Spirit entered into it. The Christ, the Son of God, we say, then lived in the body of Jesus for three and one-half years and taught the people many wonderful truths to live by.

That was the way that God's Son, the Christ, was able to come to Earth and talk to people and let them see Him. From that time on until the Crucifixion He was called Christ Jesus.

GRADE IV — SECOND SUNDAY

Keyword—*Friendship*

Our "living lesson" today shows that friendship is continually being poured out through love-power, on all higher planes of Nature, to all living beings. It is freely given whether or not those living beings recognize, receive, or return that love-power. We, in our small way, can express friendship (one part of love) by being friendly. You may well ask—how? Here are some suggestions:

1. At times we meet people who like some of the things we do, and that may provide the beginning of a friendship.

2. Others like to talk about their ideas and thoughts, to which we may listen and give consideration later on, while at the same time having respect for what they have to say.

3. It isn't necessary to be together with the same friend continuously; we should feel free to do things with others at times. Then we can again come together with our friend, presenting a new slant on thoughts, ideas, etc.

4. Be happy when a friend has found something better than we enjoy.

5. Rejoice with a friend who is improving himself in a beneficial way.

6. Be honest at all times and never put a friend in the position where he feels it necessary to be dishonest because of your friendship.

7. Tolerance for and about others; that means recognizing and looking for goodness expressed in various ways.

In using the above suggestions, we shall very likely find ourselves enjoying a better relationship throughout life with those we meet because we have developed a greater understanding of people. Then we shall really know the meaning of the quotation: "Let me live in my house by

the side of the road, and be a friend of man."—S. W. Foss.

This would be a good time to make a drawing of the solar system showing the signs of the zodiac surrounding it, with the Sun in the center and the planets in their places, a line extending from each, around the Sun, to show the orbit of each planet. Then, each month, we can move the symbols of the Earth and Moon to show their position for each Solar Month.

GRADE IV — SECOND SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — John 15:12-16

BEING FRIENDS

Golden Text—Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.—*John* 15:14.

There are many ways of being a friend. We've already talked about some of them; here are some other ways to show we want to be friends.

Kindness—Being gentle and sympathetic to people. Christ Jesus spent most of His time doing kind things for people—the sick, the poor, the blind, the lame, the lepers, etc. There are many ways in which we, too, may show kindness to others.

Generosity—Showing good-will to others. Often we may find friends doing the same things as we do and perhaps better; be happy for them. Share with others what we have.

Unselfishness—Considering other people first. Christ's teachings show that the only real happiness is found in helping and serving others. That may mean giving up, at times, what we had planned, perhaps reading, watching TV, a ball game, etc.

Good humor—Being pleasant, agreeable, and interested

in others. Do we look on the bright side of things happening to us and others, believing that all works out for the best?

Humility—Acting modestly, with no self-importance. There should be no boasting about what we may have done in kindness or helpfulness to others, nor bragging about how we can do some things better than others.

Patience—Slowness in being annoyed. We should try never to be in a hurry, but ready to act at the right time. That isn't easy, but as we keep working at it, we will notice how much better things go when we're not in a great rush.

Sincerity—Freedom from deceit or hypocrisy. We should accept only what is real, looking for facts about matters and searching for truth with an open mind. This makes for happiness. Perhaps we hear someone say what may *seem* possible about someone else, but we need to be very careful before we believe it. Truth is such an important part of our thoughts and actions. Let us search for truth in all things.

Perhaps some of the things we've talked about today may be worked on during the coming week. Next Sunday we can talk more about them.

GRADE IV — THIRD SUNDAY

KEYWORD—*Cooperation*

Cooperation means operating or working together. Cooperation can be fun, for working *with* someone is certainly more fun than working alone. Actually, no one is really alone. Everyone, regardless of size, shape, or color, has an invisible tie with everyone else, and this tie makes us closer than fingers on a hand. It makes all of us more closely related than natural brothers and sisters in a family. We have earthly families to remind us of

the larger family which encloses everybody everywhere in a much closer bond than the temporary earthly family. In fact, we are so much a part of each other that what helps one helps the others. We cannot see the invisible ties which bind all humanity into one glorious family, but sometimes we can feel them inside of us when we're enjoying good fellowship such as at a songfest or an outing. It is easiest to feel this beautiful closeness when everybody is happy and having a good time, for then all are working together. We can think of cooperation in another way. Let us picture a large group of people with strong cords connecting each one with all the others. Now suppose they wanted to go on a trip up the road, then arranged themselves in a circle and all pulled away in a different direction. The group as a whole wouldn't be able to move; they couldn't go anywhere, not even the ones who were headed in the right direction. Can you see how their efforts would be opposing each other? But now suppose they employ cooperation. Then they will all pull together and they will all move up the road on their journey.

We can all recognize selfishness in another person. The person who is acting selfishly is not aware of the ties he has with every one else. He does not realize that if he really wants to benefit himself he must take the whole group with him. Then he finds he can't pull the whole group alone. Everyone in the group must pull in the same direction at the same time; they must work together, or cooperate.

Cooperation smooths relations anywhere and everywhere; without cooperation little gets accomplished. When people cooperate, things get done. When there is cooperation with Nature's Laws much creative work is possible. So often, people wait for the other fellow to cooperate first. They somehow think that cooperation is the right thing for the other fellow, but it is not for them. Cooperation usually

means giving up something, but more often than not, that something turns out not to have been so important after all, at least, not so important as working with someone instead of against him, or working with a law of Nature instead of against it.

The ankles are ruled by Aquarius, but we don't think much about them because they so faithfully do our bidding—by adjustment through movement. Very likely you've never thought of it that way before, but isn't that what life is all about—a constant adjustment to conditions in our environment? Those who do it readily are happier by taking life in stride, as do our ankles. Whenever we resist progress or change, we're in trouble. Some changes we aren't ready or willing to accept when they're not in line with what we know to be right. Then it is up to us find another way of meeting the challenge. There is always a right way and a wrong way of adjusting to challenge.

Of course it is necessary to eat the right foods and drink healthful juices, all the while getting plenty of exercise, to keep our bodies in good health to meet daily demands. That is very important!

GRADE IV — THIRD SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Matt. 25:34-40

WHERE LOVE IS, THERE IS GOD ALSO

Golden Text—Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.—*Matt. 25:40.*

Martin, the shoemaker, had been reading the words of our lesson in his Bible. After closing it, he thought long and hard about what he had read. Perhaps, he thought, he should be more concerned with others and share what he had with them. What would he do if

Christ should visit him—how would he entertain Him?

Did you ever stop to wonder: How are we prepared to meet our Lord? Do we think of our own comfort, looking for things for ourselves before thinking of the comfort and welfare of others? Are we ready to serve our brother in need before we serve ourselves? Most often we want the best room, the largest helping of food, the best clothing, with no regard for the homeless, the hungry, and sick people. Our little shoemaker thought over such things until he fell asleep.

All of a sudden he heard his name spoken, as though it was breathed in his ear. "Who is there?" he asked. Then he heard the words, "Martin, Martin, look in the street tomorrow, for I am coming to visit you." He was greatly puzzled about the meaning of the words before he again fell asleep. Next morning, he arose, said his prayers, and went to work. All during the day he kept looking out the basement window of his shop as he watched the feet of the passers-by. He was expecting, awaiting, the unknown visitor.

The day was cold and snow fell heavily. An old soldier worked hard at shoveling snow from doorsteps of different shops. After some thought, Martin asked the soldier in for a cup of tea while he warmed himself near the stove. As he continued looking out, the soldier asked, "Are you expecting someone?" Martin told him about the voice he had heard the evening before. After a pleasant visit, during which they talked about the message of Christ Jesus, the soldier thanked Martin for his kindness and left.

Still Martin continued to watch the door. About noon a poorly dressed woman, with a baby in her arms, stopped at the window. She seemed in distress while trying to shield the baby from the wind. Martin asked her in and gave her some cherished garments saved from his

wife's belongings; then he gave her a bit of money before she left, blessing him.

So it went throughout the afternoon; he helped different people in various ways. When closing time came, he had accomplished little work, but had helped many who were in need.

Again that evening Martin opened his Bible where he had left off reading the last time. A voice spoke to him as before. Turning to a dark corner, he saw some dim figures standing there, and a voice said, "Martin, Martin, don't you know me?" "Who are you?" he asked. "It is I," and out of the corner stepped the snow shoveler and the woman with the baby. Each kind deed he had done during the day brought its voice and shadow until all had shown themselves to him in the name of Christ.

Putting on his glasses, Martin allowed the Bible to fall open where it would of its own accord. He read: "For I was hungry and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger and you took me in."—*Matt.* 25:35.

We badly need this lesson of Martin's to remind us that we may be entertaining the Christ unawares, when we let love and compassion be our purpose in helping others. When we meet people, we can't always tell whether they're God's helpers, so let's greet everyone with friendly words.

GRADE IV — FOURTH SUNDAY

Bible Lesson — Mark 12:28-30

THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Golden Text—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.—*Mark* 12:30.

This first commandment of the *New Testament* was given by Christ Jesus. It contains all the requirements of those who wish to be His helpers.

To fulfill that commandment, we need to have our hearts full of love, faith, humility, and forgiveness. It takes our greatest effort, with God's help, to accomplish that. We shall then look upon all people as our brothers and sisters regardless of appearance, realizing that within *every* person there is that *Divine Spark* which makes us all children of our Heavenly Father.

In these days of turmoil and strife among peoples of the world, we notice that many are not sharing with others. They must learn to do so before we can have peace on Earth. As more and more people do that, there will arise opportunities to provide help for the hungry, sick, and sorrowful in the world. There is plenty to be had in the way of food, clothing, etc.; it is just the manner of distribution which has been faulty because there are those who strive for power over others. When enough people think of the needs of others, ways will be found to overcome the shortages causing suffering. Nature is most lavish with her gifts, intended for the use of all mankind.

We, in our own small way, have the opportunity to do our part in hastening the day when the brotherhood of man will become the way of life for all peoples. It may be holding kind thoughts toward all we meet, praying for those we know to be suffering here at home and elsewhere. At the same time, as we go along our way day by day, kind words and smiles do help; so does sharing what we have with others in need.

Surely everyone of us will notice other ways of doing our bit at school, at play, at work, or wherever we may be. Let us be on the lookout for them!

FOURTH SUNDAY is also SERVICE SUNDAY for discussion on the Aquarian keywords of *altruism*, *individuality*,

friendship, and cooperation in relation to the service we were able to give during the past month.

Lesson Suggestions for Pisces

SPIRITUAL KEYWORD—UNITY

GRADE IV —FIRST SUNDAY

We now enter the sign Pisces, whose planetary rulers are Neptune and Jupiter. Neptune's work is to awaken us to the truth that the spark of God in us is one in essence with the spark in every other creature, and one with God, since all are a part of the one Light and one Life which is God. Neptune, therefore, offers us the first key by calling us continually to be still and listen to the voice of our Divine Self. Knowing this isn't enough, for God is also Love. So the love-power of the heart must be developed until it reaches out in kindness and understanding to every living thing. That is why Jupiter calls upon us to "be kind."

KEYWORD—*Understanding*

Understanding is sought after by many people, but few really possess much. Wisdom is closely related to understanding. Wisdom is knowledge wedded to love. The trait of understanding blends knowledge with feeling. It encompasses sympathy and empathy.

Knowledge includes more than human relations; it includes the principles of life and the Laws of Nature. Memorized knowledge is helpful in certain specific instances, but with understanding a person can apply that knowledge to other situations. In a sense, the person who possesses understanding becomes as a skilled craftsman

using his tool, knowledge, with grace and facility. A person need not be a genius to possess understanding, but he does need to apply himself seriously to grasping a situation or a principle in Nature. The person who has been observant during his experiences is the most likely to gain understanding.

Understanding begins as a small light in the darkness and grows to a brilliant radiance when a person sticks with a problem, uses his memory, and applies his reason. Reason, when exercised, and with the help of love, produces understanding. When reason is not sufficiently exercised it withers, and limited thinking takes its place. Love alone cannot produce understanding any more than can knowledge alone.

Man has been given a mind so that he can become god-like. Mind, fully matured, is capable of reason—connecting causes to effects and relating future effects to present causes. Without mind, knowledge is impossible, but mind alone cannot provide understanding. A person achieves understanding only if he pursues his study of a subject with constancy, sympathy, and courage, and ultimately comes to feel himself almost a part of that subject.

When we open the doors of our minds to eliminate old, crystallized ideas, we open the avenue to understanding. Understanding cannot exist in the presence of crystallized, negative, prejudiced thought.

Understanding leads to contentment. It eliminates useless cares and worries and gives a new lift to the business of life.

Understanding is based on observation and experience. We should do our utmost to observe everything going on and apply our powers of reason to it. Then, too, we must learn to react sympathetically and with love. In this way, we will gain understanding.

“With all thy getting, get understanding.”