

## TEEN HELPERS!

### --Teachers or Babysitters?

by Sara D.

Now that our children are growing older & more responsible, we're so very thankful for the wonderful help they have been to us in taking care of the younger children in our Home. We've also had the blessing of having a couple of very willing helpful teens in our Home who enjoy very much caring for toddlers almost full-time, GB'm!

We have learned that, as many childcare books testify, babies & toddlers are especially attracted to teen enthusiasm & "spl-zerinkum". Their newness & energetic zeal help to inspire others & certainly give the mommy & helpers a welcome relief at times! Whether they're available to help part or full-time, we've tried to train our teens & older kids to be teachers & not just "baby-sitters".

Anyone can sit & "watch" a child play or sleep or eat. But it takes a certain vision & initiative & talent & goal to teach the children all the time, & teens have this natural ability because of their enthusiasm & desire to really want to please & be of help. In fact, teens are sometimes more valuable as childcare workers than they are as laundry maids or kitchen helpers, which the adult Family women can do just as well. But it's not everyone who can really challenge & inspire a child with fun learning experiences & play right along with them in their daily routine!

All the "teacher-teens" really need is a concrete plan or goal, if not a "school schedule" for the week, or for the allotted time they have the children each week. They seem to thrive on a set goal at least for that day. By sharing a school plan notebook, we've found we can plan together with the teens exactly what they would like to accomplish in the children's schooling & activities on a day-to-day basis, or they can at least follow an outline of suggested activities for the day. Use'm—don't let their golden-opportunity-help pass by without giving them a goal while with the toddlers!

The teens don't have to be "led around by the nose" by the toddlers & small children, but they can actually teach & train the kids in learning a number of activities daily, even in a short time.

For example, they may start off the day by having breakfast with the toddlers or cleaning their room with the toddlers, accompanied by a happy children's song tape. Next, following your teacher's-school-plan,

quickly set up your Bible flannelgraph or KK story. Sometimes they may like having school out in the yard, or in a different bedroom, but most toddlers seem to like a "standard routine" & really enjoy familiar surroundings. Don't let any one activity last too long, but keep things hoppin' & make it fun!

Teens should especially remember to pray before every activity with the children & keep an eye out for safety & potty runs, cleanliness & handwashing, etc. as well. In a well-organised room with all of your equipment & materials easily accessible & right at hand, things run so much smoother! Thank the Lord for organisation! Toddlers seem to appreciate it!

Teen teachers especially enjoy teaching what they are specially gifted in too, i.e. arts & crafts, or singing & dancing or simple kitchen & cooking activities!

And as usually happens, there is hand-wash-laundry to be done, plus dishes to be washed, or toys to be washed, disinfected & organised into boxes according to sets, or other simple, mandatory house duties which a responsible teen & at least one toddler may be very zealous to accomplish for you if challenged to be a Happy Helper!

Many times these practical life duties are very self-satisfying for little ones, as they see the fruits of their labours accomplished in such a short amount of time. PTL!—Especially if you praise them & thank them for the wonderful help they've been to you!

Adults should definitely teach & train teens to be very prayerful & safety-conscious before they are allowed to care for a youngster on their own. This goal in itself can be a challenge to the teen, & we adults can train "top-notch" teachers if we pour the vision & goals & Word into them! Especially if an older child has a burden for childcare, train'm to teach the tots, & what big blessings they can be!

"If we don't start training the teenagers now, who are going to be the teenage leaders of tomorrow? These are our teens, our own responsibility & we need to train them! They're going to be the salvation of this outfit, & they already are!

"It's a new Revolution! The old has to give way to the new so that we can grow up strong new leaders for the coming times to learn to love & be loyal & faithful & obey & die, those who will die for me & the Lord. I believe they'll do it!

"You women have to train these teens to take your place or to help you in your place". (NO.2056:6)