

Your Child's First Year in School—Are YOU Prepared?

*Your child is ready for school. But are you?
How well have you prepared your youngster?*

By Selmer L. Hegvold

An enormous challenge faces you and your child as school begins! Many parents are not prepared. You should be.

Up until this time, while your child has been at home with you, “training him or her up” in the way he or she should go (Prov. 22:6) has been relatively simple. Your influence has been profound.

But now a schoolteacher will begin shaping your child's mind five days a week. The world you came out of will soon arouse conflict in your child's life.

Will school negate your parental influence? Can you preserve your youngster's training? Will the teacher appreciate your involvement? A delicate confrontation faces you.

Have you laid the groundwork for an effective relationship between you, the teacher and your child? If not, that relationship could become a nightmare for all concerned! And it could prevent your child from developing a right approach to education.

School should be a rewarding, inspiring, worthwhile adventure for your young family. But you must take the initiative — right steps taken now will promote future happiness and fulfillment for your child.

A real challenge

Why should school pose threats to families in God's Church? The

threats are unintentional. Church members stand alone in a society steeped in the false education of evolution, paganism and the way of *get*. Church members are actually escapees from a world whose practices God condemns.

Public schools use holidays such as Halloween, Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day and Easter as teaching tools to develop reading, writing, arithmetic, music, drama and other skills in young students.

These special, seasonal days capture the children's imagination. School staff members and teachers are unaware that your child has been taught that keeping them is wrong. Your duty is to ease the shock.

In addition, school personnel are not familiar with God's Holy Days and His requirements, such as taking several days off, away from classes, for the spring and fall festivals.

How well have you prepared to cope with this challenge?

Will you create a scene like one ill-prepared couple did? They bluntly informed the teacher that their child would not be allowed to remain in any classroom in which pagan holiday activities took place! After several uncomfortable minutes of talk, the incredulous teacher exploded:

“Sixty-two unruly, undisciplined students in this classroom, out for a frolic and not an education, and you expect me to alter my teaching methods for your one child? Impossible!”

The burden was too heavy for this

harassed teacher. The parents offered no compensating alternative. Don't make that mistake.

Some have erred. They and their children are still paying the price. Some have assumed a call to convert relatives, friends and school officials and teachers. They were mistaken.

Christ's revelation is clear, and should be remembered: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6:44). Only God the Father in heaven can call people and open their minds to His truth. Believe Him, and spare yourself embarrassment and grief.

You cannot convince school officials that worldly holidays are wrong. Don't try. There is a way, however, to deal with the situation.

Prepare your child

Jesus Christ prepares the way before His servants. He gives the faithful grace and favor. “I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind” (John 9:39). While instructors cannot see God, they will grant you favor for your purposes.

Prepare as soon as possible. Pray. The stakes are higher than you realize. Your child's attitude toward the process of learning in school will be heavily affected by the introduction — proper or improper — he or she receives during the first few weeks of school.

Help your child look forward to the opportunity to learn new skills.

Show him, well in advance, what a joyous experience school and its challenges should be. Fill his young heart with a desire to learn. Impress upon him that to learn he must be constantly attentive, obedient and zealous in doing his schoolwork.

Most of the threat from this world's schools to your child is erased if you have done *your* homework well.

Work with the teacher

How well do you represent Jesus Christ before others? Are you picky? Suspicious? Always on the defensive? Analyze yourself.

Before meeting your child's teacher, determine that you will be friendly and pleasant. Most teachers will be striving to make friends with you and your child. Realize how challenging a teacher's work really is. Be sympathetic. The instructor will appreciate your understanding. Your friendship will be treasured.

Except in the most extreme cases, teachers will willingly cooperate to resolve the difficulties that arise from your particular religious observances. The teacher will need your help, so be prepared to give it.

Halloween is the first major crisis of the school year. But after the first few weeks of school, the teacher and child should have developed rapport. Allow for this relationship to develop before broaching the differences that must be resolved. Then make your appointment.

Be frank in explaining your beliefs. Don't fall back on the Church. They're *your* beliefs! You have proved and accepted what God has revealed in the Bible. God's Word is your strength.

Your sincerity and cooperative attitude will prove unchallengeable. Once you have prayerfully explained your position, the next question with which all will concern themselves is *how* parents and teachers can cooperate amicably and successfully.

Propose workable alternatives to the classroom assignments that prove objectionable or contrary to the religious standards you believe in. As long as these alternatives are workable, most teachers will accept and cooperate with them.

Use your imagination. Put yourself in the teacher's place. Propose nothing

that would distract your child's classmates — the suggestions are for *your* child.

Alternatives to Halloween, with its ghosts, goblins, black cats and witches? The Halloween season provides children with abundant opportunities to use their imaginations for projects in artwork, decorations, music and drama. How can you provide equally challenging substitutes that enable the teacher to evaluate your youngster in those skills? That is the challenge for your imagination!

Is it wrong to draw, paint or decorate with real things in nature? What's wrong with working up a colorful fall arrangement of leaves, trees and ducks and geese swimming or flying, for example?

God is clearly seen, said the apostle Paul, in the things He has created (Rom. 1:19-20). Without disrupting

arming to the school staff, but will draw your family together in working out school projects.

The same approach works for every other seasonal activity in the school schedule. Teachers will usually end up admiring you and your family for your energetic endeavors. Your child will have no reason for getting bad grades, nor will he or she feel ostracized because of family religious beliefs! The contrary, in fact, should prove true.

What about the Holy Days?

There are positive ways to encourage school acceptance of the number of days your child will be absent to enjoy God's Holy Days.

First and most important is that you should teach your child the plan of God! It is never too early to explain how God wants him in His divine Family.



the rest of the class, you can inspire and help your child to bring the true God and His created marvels into the classroom.

Your enthusiastic and obviously deeply concerned help, advice and suggestions will not only prove dis-

Point out the meaning of each Holy Day and festival and help him develop enthusiasm. Ask him to explain back to you, for it is certain the teacher will ask him, if only out of curiosity. Your child should be able
(Continued on page 25)

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 2)

That is the deadliest mental and spiritual POISON. We must LOVE even our enemies who perpetrate the greatest outrages — though we do not condone their evils.

If you ever think *I'M* wrong about anything, *don't get sour or bitter about it* — let GOD correct and punish me — vengeance is HIS, you know.

Resentment against me won't either punish me or benefit you, but it could consign YOU to *eternal* punishment!

Whether YOU believe it or not, I have come, by years of experience learning the HARD WAY, to have supreme faith that GOD will never neglect to correct or punish *me* wherever I deserve it! You may TRUST HIM to do it!

Remember what a GLORIOUS GOAL we have before us!

How GRATEFUL we ought to be! How our hearts ought to be FLOODED with love and gratitude to the great God for His matchless LOVE toward us.

I'm sure we don't grasp what a supreme price He paid to make it possible. He wants us to be CHANGED — to overcome and root out this debasing, rotten carnality we all have in us — and to GROW into His righteousness, that we may SHARE His GLORY.

And, you know, I believe God wants and *longs* to share the supreme GLORY that He has with YOU! Make it your supreme overall life VOCATION, and WORK HARD AT IT!

The Japanese spy who stealthily and secretly obtained all the information the Japanese needed to bomb Pearl Harbor said that he was not a very brilliant man, and learning came hard to him, BUT HE WORKED HARD AT IT, relentlessly, with zeal, and with purpose, and with diligence. He SUCCEEDED — in terrible DESTRUCTION — in plunging the United States into World War II — and, finally, in the ignominious defeat of his own nation.

Let us *work hard at our calling and mission* of being real Christians. We shall succeed, with God's help — in final and eternal GLORY! □

Gray Areas

(Continued from page 13)

you read without becoming disenchanted? Remember, it is designed to worry you, so you will have questions.

How long can you read pornographic magazines, watch violent movies, neglect your marriage, eat wrong foods? How long can you remain a "free thinker," less than totally committed to God and His Church?

How many Sabbath services is it "OK" to miss? Just how dark does Friday evening have to get before it is sundown for you?

In all these instances and in many others we could mention, there is perhaps a gray area. It may not be fatal at first. But it's only a matter of time before "longer" becomes "too long," "occasionally" becomes "often" and a "bit more" becomes "too much." Then, "seldom" becomes "never."

The gray areas are like the Mekong.

Maybe — just maybe — some of the river close to the Thai border is safe. But the farther you get out toward the middle, the stronger the current becomes. Suddenly, there is a point when you are no longer in control, although you may not realize it. But the communist soldiers know.

They are watching and waiting. They have you clearly fixed in the sights of their high-powered rifles, and their fingers are curling around the triggers.

Safe, sure ground

Not every gray area is as well-defined as the mighty Mekong. But all are potentially dangerous.

So Christ, through His servants, shows us how to be sure we stay on the safe and sure ground. It's the terra firma of sound doctrine, loyal support, unswerving commitment, humility, obedience and faith. We aren't perfect yet, and we all have our lapses — but don't let yourself stray too far.

If things start looking gray, take steps to get back *quickly*. Because out there somewhere, where the gray starts getting black, lurk Satan and his demons, waiting for you to take that one fateful step too far. □

First Year

(Continued from page 15)

to give a commendable explanation. Perhaps he will be given the opportunity to explain each Holy Day, in this season, to the class.

Next, explain to the teacher why your offspring will be going away with the family for a couple of weeks early in the fall semester. Explain your religious observances enough so their importance to you registers with the teacher.

Then, offer to bring back from the Feast site mementos that would be interesting for the entire class.

Finally, well in advance of your departure for the Feast of Tabernacles, ask for advance homework for your child. You want to keep your child current with his class during the trip.

Promote your child's education

The school staff — particularly your child's teacher — desires the approval of both you and your child. Genuinely praise those teaching methods that are right and sound. Show your appreciation for the teacher's efforts on behalf of your child — put the teacher at ease (Prov. 18:24)

By the time the fall festivals arrive, you, your child and the teacher should be friends. Your son or daughter will be launched in a positive direction into education.

If you have tackled the school challenge properly, you need never fear that your child will be swept off into false beliefs. Your genuine concern, imaginative alternatives and proper training will pay enormous dividends.

Your child will successfully rise to the challenge of each day's class assignments. He will develop confidence and be better able to cope with life's challenges as well!

Further, he will never lack a warm circle of admiring classroom friends. And who knows? Perhaps the greatest joy in the end will be that a teacher, a classmate or another parent might tune in to the *World Tomorrow* broadcast. All because you correctly introduced your child to his first year in school! □