

MORE EFFECTIVE PICTURE FILES

Topic: Building more effective files of pictures to enhance Christian education

By Lorella Rouster

Are you starting a file of visuals or are you interested in making an existing collection more useful and accessible? Try these three ideas. I think they might increase your file's effectiveness as they have mine.

First, I have found it helpful to incorporate concepts as well as objects into the divisions. Not just objects like "trees" and "sunsets," but abstract concepts like "death," "anger," "poverty," "peacemaking," "friendship," and "strength" make for a usable file.

Second, I include specific pictures or concepts I find I need frequently. I have found it helpful to keep a list of pictures for which I need to search. When the same need appears twice, I make a file section for it. Some subjects I have added in this way are "tears," "sheep," "hands," "eyes," "reading," "soldiers," "money," "occult," "children fighting," and "showing love." Often I find that these become my most-used sections. In this way also I seek material to hit problem areas I need to cover in my teaching. In Zaire cursing other people is a great problem. Not only is it frequently practiced, it is also taken very seriously by both the curser and the cursee. I collected pictures of mouths to illustrate lessons on this subject.

Since I am teaching Bible, I have four files for visuals relating to Bible: one for maps, two for pictures arranged in order of biblical stories and one for memory verse visuals. Of course, many topics in my topical picture file also relate to the Bible. Other teachers may have entirely different divisions. The principle is that each teacher should search specifically for the material needed to enhance his or her particular ministry.

The third principle is that I have learned to subdivide adequately, yet only as needed. A fat folder full of hundreds of different kinds of pictures is of far less value than the same pictures subdivided so that each may be easily located. For example, a file on "Animals," after has grown very fat, ceases to be of great value because it becomes more and more difficult and time consuming to find the exact picture needed. At this point, I sort out frequently used subdivisions: "Sheep," "Insects," "Fish," "Camels." Secondly, I separate pictures which are more abundant than I really need: "Dogs," "Cats," "Horses," etc. These can be used on hand- work. With smaller subdivisions, I have ready access to all of my pictures.