

## **How can a teacher discover his students' needs?**

How can teachers discover their students' needs? Usually, not by asking them! People are slow to recognize their spiritual needs, and even more reluctant to reveal them.

Even if there is good rapport between pupil and teacher, most students will not go to their teachers for help. Therefore, you must help your teachers learn how to uncover their pupils' needs.

First, insist that teachers get to know their pupils. Obviously this is much easier in a small class than in a large one, but every teacher should make a diligent attempt. Encourage your teachers to do this through class visitation.

Your teachers should also keep up with their students' activities through the newspaper. For a departmental meeting bring in clippings telling of pupils' activities and awards they have won. Encourage teachers to congratulate students when they receive special recognition. Through the newspaper your teachers can also stay informed of hospitalizations, accidents, or deaths in their students' families.

Your teachers can also keep up with their pupils' needs by attending open houses at the public schools. If they tell the teachers who they are and why they are there, most will be glad to show them the room, and many will explain what the students have been studying. Help your teachers see how this can help them understand their pupils and plan lessons that meet real pupil needs.

Find out when local open houses will be held this fall and announce them in advance to teachers. Go yourself and get to know the pupils in your department better!

Another way to help your teachers get to know students is to provide books on age-level characteristics. Lend them out, and at a departmental meeting discuss ways you can use these characteristics to teach more effectively.

Another way of finding pupil needs is by using an occasional department-wide questionnaire. The students should not sign their names, so they should feel free to express their doubts and shortcomings.

Ask personal questions such as, "How often do you read your Bible? What magazines and books do you like? Do you believe that your prayers are answered?" Also leave a space for pupils to write in any questions they'd like Sunday school lessons to answer.

Tabulate the results yourself, perhaps classes, and share this information with your teachers. You can also discuss how teachers can answer their pupils' questions in upcoming lessons.

The example you as a leader set in showing interest in pupils will set the tone for your entire church. Use time before and after Sunday school to visit with pupils, to get to

know them, and to express genuine interest in their lives. Also visit in their homes and schools.

By teaching, training and example, you can built a department of teachers who care deeply about their students and who make that care known. You can develop a Sunday school department that meets real pupil needs, and does not merely answer academic questions that no one is asking.

A little boy was once asked why he went clear across Chicago to Mr. Moody's Sunday school, passing many churches on the way. The boy replied, "Because they love a fellow over there." People will be attracted to your department when you love them and show it.