

What if you are only a Helper ?

So Jehosaphat sent Bible teachers through the land to.....” I stopped short in my lesson my Sunday school secretary was standing at the door. My helper was not here today, I had remembered to take attendance, but forgot to mark it down on the secretary’s master copy. Now I had to do it in the middle of class. “It was certainly difficult to teach without you.” I told my helper the next week.

Called of God

Helpers in the church are sometimes not appreciated as much as they should be, even though they do a very important job. Helping is listed by Paul as a special ministry, a special gift given by the Holy Spirit: “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:28)

Since I taught a large class for many years, I know what a difference a good assistant can make. The teacher of a large class is in a dilemma when they have to teach records of numbers of people, yet need to devote every moment to teaching. To keep everyone’s attention a teacher can’t take time to make a long roll call. Also they have more students, visitors, and prospects than anyone can hope to call on, and they want every pupil to feel known, wanted, and loved.

The teacher of a large class is busy with preparation and making large visuals for everyone to see. They also may be involved in several other ministries, all of these things can be considerably lightened by a good assistant.

As I think back over the several assistants I have had I believe I have been in error in not letting them know regularly what I expected of them. I was so busy I always intended to clarify their duties, but often forgot. Later I’d wished that they had come to me and asked, though the responsibility was really mine.

Remind Me

A teacher really appreciates it when the assistant calls and reminds “I don’t know what the memory verse is for next week.” Or asks “Can I help you with the party you are planning?”

I know that I should make your responsibilities clear, dear helper. I know I should keep you informed without you having to ask but teachers are terribly busy people, terribly human, too. I will try but if on occasion I forget will you remind me?

Be On Time

I appreciate an assistant who does the things I ask- on time. I once had an assistant who I had asked to visualize a memory verse. She told me at the last minute on Sunday morning, “Sorry I didn’t get that memory verse done, last night my husband took me out

to dinner.” I stifled the reaction I felt rising within and said “Wow, don’t ever leave things to the night before, to many things can come and rob you of your time.”

Be Creative

I appreciate an assistant who goes the extra mile, instead of squeezing by on the barest stint of service. I can tell when an assistant writes down a memory verse in the car on the way to church, or when they really put time, and preparation into something.

Helpers should never think of themselves as low on the totem pole, or unimportant because they are not in an authoritative position. A good helper is a real boon to a teacher. But such teamwork can also help the assistant if they allow it. Most churches place really good helpers in classes of their own after they have had time to learn and to prove themselves. Helping someone else is excellent training ground.

After my first year in Bible College I spent a summer as a vacation Bible missionary with Rural Bible Crusade in Wisconsin. I was paired off with an older more experienced teacher. I learned so much from her, I copied her stories, learned her teaching techniques, and watched everything she did. In two weeks the mission sent me out with a teacher as inexperienced as I. For the rest of the summer I thanked God that I was able to learn from an experienced teacher.

Do Your Best

Be determined to be the very best assistant you can be. Call faithfully on the students your teacher assigns you. Prepare thoroughly for any part of the lesson entrusted to you. Take attendance accurately. Keep complete records. Learn to know the children well. Watch your teacher for storytelling, discipline, and song leading techniques. How does the teacher present a memory verse? Lead a student to Christ? Use visuals and projects? Keep you eyes, ears, and mind open, you may soon be a teacher, and you will thank God for letting you learn as an assistant. Until then remember we teachers couldn’t do our jobs nearly as effectively without you!