

Our Children

By Mrs. W. B. Davis



Let's use the War as a life situation for teaching our children.

(From the International Journal of Religious Education)

We who are older can remember a day when war was not, when there were other outlooks and values. Many of our children cannot. To them today's world is all there is or has ever been; it is their reality and they are forming their personalities in relation to it. In America children have not had to run trembling to the air raid shelters, but they do see the war films, read magazines and comic papers, and are a part of the family farewell when brother leaves for the army. At school they are urged to buy war stamps regularly and join the Junior Red Cross. Even in the church, the service flag and the Christian religion have some how become one and the same issue to them.

Instead, however, of mentally ringing our hands over this fact, we must face it and use the war as a life situation for teaching our children. It may turn out to

be our opportunity rather than our Waterloo.

If left to themselves children will become intolerant. A child whom I know is constantly asking the question, "Are they on our side?" when he sees a picture of a group of people who are soldiers. There is no tolerance in this question as he asks it. Recently it was reported that a little boy presented himself at an enlistment post and wanted to enlist or "join up". When told he was too young he replied, "I can kill Japanese boys." American children are not at war with Japanese children. If they are made to feel they are, they will mature with a bias against the Japanese which will defeat the dream of a New Internationalism. By taking note of this danger, however, we can avert it. It is not difficult to help a child realize that it is not the children or common people of the nations who are responsible for the war; rather it is their lustful leaders: Such a word should be spoken whenever a child reveals an intolerant mood.

Dark Merit



by
**Kathrynne
Favors**

Negro Folk Songs

The slaves on the plantations sang when they worked, played, or worshipped. Some times their songs were happy ones. At the Christmas time they would sing such songs. They were called jubilee songs or songs of joy. Banjos and drums of their own making were played with their holiday songs. Like other folk songs,

some slave songs were sad. They were ways of telling of sorrow and unhappiness. They told of their dreams, their hopes, and their beliefs.

Singing by the slaves was encouraged by plantation owners and overseers. Perhaps they felt that a singing slave was a happy one. Some of the plantation music was very beautiful. Three questions are usually asked about it: How were the Negroes able to make such songs? How much of their music was due to African influence? How much of it was influenced by their life in America?

The slaves brought from Africa the habit of song. In Africa the natives had a different song for every occasion. They worshiped their gods by singing and dancing. They honored their chiefs and kings by writing songs for them. Singing was as much a part of their lives as eating, working and sleeping. When African

slaves were brought to America, they continued their habit of singing.

The most important thing that they brought from Africa was the sense of rhythm. The complicated African rhythms influenced music of other countries. The Negroes who came to America did not lose their ability to use interesting rhythms.

In America the slaves met a new life. For one thing, they were exposed to the Christian religion. The hardships of slavery made them readily accept the teachings of Christianity. The hymns that they heard and the stories from the Bible were used in songs of their own making. Other songs were about their every day life on the plantation. They used all of their experiences as material for songs.

When the slaves came to America, they developed two other musical abilities. They created the melodies of great beauty and an art of harmonizing. Songs were made up by groups and not by one person. Perhaps one person in the group would sing a line another person would add a line to it. This group would continue until a song was made. Often the verses were so numerous that they would not remember all of them. As the song was sung again and again, the words were changed. In this way the songs grew and developed. They were handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another.

The folk songs of the American Negro have been used all over the world in their compositions. When the famous composer, Dvorak, came to America, he used Negro melodies as a part of his **New World Symphony**. There are different kinds of Negro folk songs. There are work songs, lullabies, and spirituals.

More about Negro Folk Songs next week.

Material for this series taken from Supplementary Social Science Units of the Chicago Public Schools

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Reckless drivers remind us of the old mule. He went bumping into everything. No, he wasn't blind, nor so dumb; he just didn't care. Let's sing, "Do you wanna be a mule?"

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