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Box 06, Folder 14 - "The Essentials of ... Good Teaching Materials" (E.M.S.)

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THE ESSENTIALS OF A GOOD TEACHING MATERIALS

A Better phrase perhaps would be not Teaching materials but
Materials to assist Development

Look at the Church and its "Teaching materials"

The Crib ,
The Rosary
The Stations ,
Processions
Lighting candles .
The Crucifix -kissing it on Good Friday

All "Activities in a Prepared Environment"

We are soul-and-body ; and the Church never forgets it .

The Sacraments are Material as well as spiritual

It is the principle of the Incarnation itself

In Education the Teaching Materials must cater for
mind-plus-body not mind alone or body alone .

not just blind worship of Activity as such - but an
activity which is directed by the mind to a reasonable
purpose .

Take an example EG the cylinders

Demonstrate it - explain its purpose

its fascination

it 1) perfects something in the child (sense of dimension
and movement)

2) It lends itself to repetition - and therefore
self-perfection mentioned .

3) Control of error - in an impersonal thing
and not a person criticising .

4) Suited to a particular stage and sensitive period .

5) Indirect preparation for writing and arithmetic
for number is based on graded quantities .

- 6) it connects the child's intelligence with an external reality -- (not a make-belief)
- 7) It brings concentration and with it a strengthening of its character .

Example 2 Divide 4,634 by 3 with the Golden Beads

Here again we see an activity which combines hand and brain .

Perfects the child's understanding .

Connects the understanding with a reality outside him through this "bridge " of an activity with a material .

is an activity repeated gain and a/gain with joy

It is a form of mental digestion or maturation of what has been taught it before by demonstration (the "presentation of the material given by the Directress)

In carrying out the work the child has to follow a definite procedure (he is not allowed just to play with the beads) and is subject to the discipline of an external reality to which he must submit . He is not - like the German Froebeliens - encouraged to " make anything out of anything " .

He is not merely " expressing " himself : something is coming from "without into his mind , his intelligence " and with this knowledge he is constructing himself & not simply a raffia mat !)

The child constructs himself - through this two-fold activity of brain and hand - by taking in knowledge from the Prepared Environment . These "motives of activity " must be prepared by us and placed within his environment and he must be instructed in their use and purpose .

What we give must always be in the form of an activity

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WE MUST NOT GIVE TO THE EYE MORE THAN WE GIVE TO THE HAND

It is just this activity which attracts the child
holds his attention

and stimulates a prolonged and often repeated activity

Can we apply these principles to something in religious
teaching - e.g. the Stations of the Cross .

(in the church it is an activity ; but primarily a
devotional one :we are thinking now more from the point of
view of teaching .) Can we "activise " this subject , i.e.
turning it into an activity which has the characteristics
above mentioned :

It must help the child to perfect his knowledge.

It must provide an activity .

It must have - if possible - a control of error which
enables the child to work and correct his work independently
of the teacher .

The work out - by the help of the audience - a material
suitable : ditto for the Mysteries of the Rosary .

.....

Then provide materials and they can make their own .