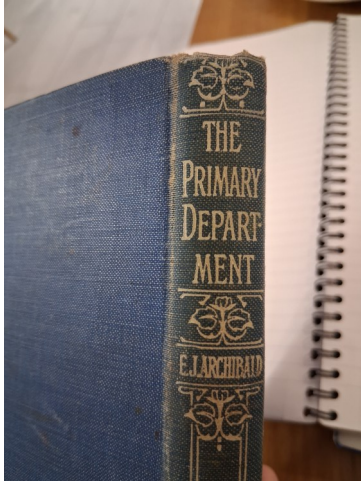


# THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

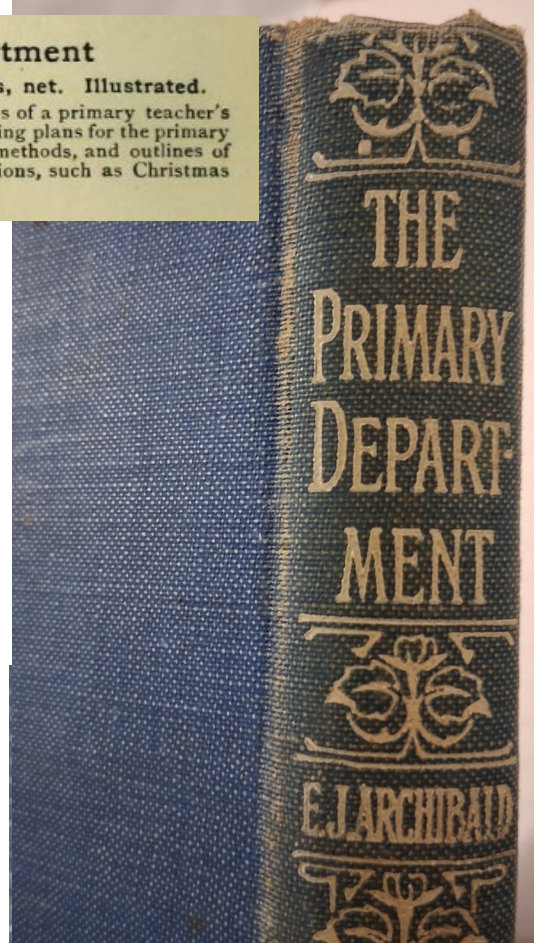


## No. 4. The Primary Department

BY ETHEL J. ARCHIBALD. 50 cents, net. Illustrated.

This is a presentation of the necessary phases of a primary teacher's problems and work, together with practical working plans for the primary school. It contains suggestions as to teaching methods, and outlines of programs for various exercises and special occasions, such as Christmas and Easter. Five illustrations.

The methods and content of this immersive workshop were inspired by this book from the Union Chapel archives. Influences include...



future reference. Again, each teacher might buy two or three of the cheapest editions of the Gospels and as the study proceeds, cut them up and paste parallel passages side by side in a scrap-book, thus forming a complete little harmony of the Gospels.

...Collage!

But in order that the child's mind may develop naturally and harmoniously, he must do more than simply acquire and interpret the material which we present to him. It is not enough even that his delight, love, and sympathy are aroused. He must have opportunity to express, to give forth, to work out, in some definite form, that which he has made his own.

Self expression in your own way

...dren. But usually she can provide for some definite muscular activity through which the story can be at least more securely fixed in the mind. One of the widest open doors to her is play. In the Beginners' classes, where the little ones are taught almost entirely through the nature stories, this method can be used frequently. Suppose, for example, the children have a lesson on the squirrel. They have seen what he looks like, how he sits up, runs, nibbles, etc. (A nature story should, whenever possible, be illustrated from life.) They have heard how he lives, how the family is provided for, how he goes to sleep in the winter time. The natural desire of each child now is to play that he is a squirrel in order that he may understand more perfectly. Susan Blow

'muscular' - physical activity to help us relax and fix the story 'in the mind'

playfulness to help our understanding



# THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

We tell the story of the dormouse teaching Nature's rhythms of Rest

## Programs for the Beginners' Classes 41

"Bless the pennies that we bring Thee,  
Give them something sweet to do;  
May they help someone to love Thee,  
Father, may we love Thee, too."

3. Lesson.—The story time (about ten minutes) comes next. The children listen to it, still seated in a ring on the floor. The story is one of a group illustrating how God provides a winter rest for some animals—the story of the dormouse. The children learn how the dormouse lives in the summer time; how it stores up food for the winter; how, when at last the cold weather comes, it curls up in its hole for the long winter rest, only waking up occasionally to take a bite to eat.

4. Nature Illustration of the Story.—A small cage containing a dormouse fast asleep in the straw in the little loft at the top is now shown the children. They see on a little shelf below the loft a nibbled apple, which the dormouse has fed upon at night. The teacher tells them that if they can be quite, quite still, so that the dormouse will not be disturbed, they may have a peep at it. She then lifts the cover and gently takes out in the palm of her hand the little round ball of fur, holding it so that all may see. (This can be done quite easily without waking the dormouse if care is taken, and will serve to show

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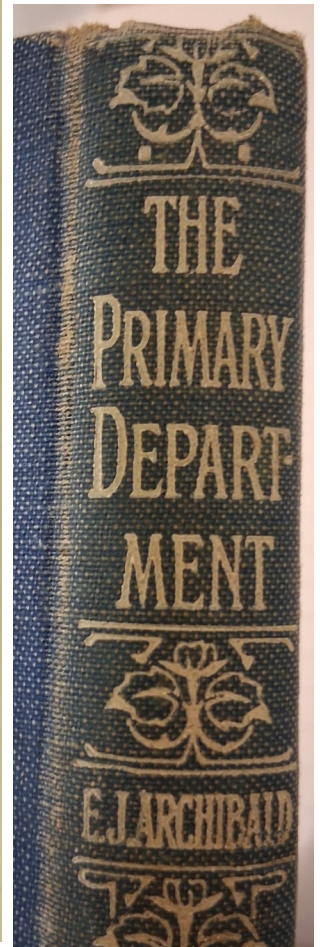
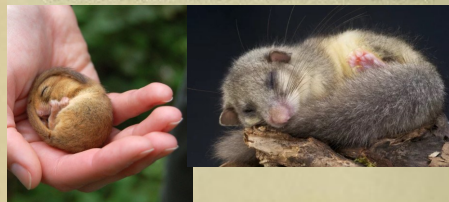
how very fast asleep the tiny creature is.) After putting it gently back the teacher allows the children to help her open the lower door of the cage, brush out the floor and the shelf, take away the old food and substitute fresh.

5. Physical Expression of the Story.—When the cage is safely back in its place the teacher and children decide that they, too, will be dormice. She allows them to scamper away to different parts of the room and curl up by themselves for a long winter sleep. Now for a little while, save for an occasional gentle disturbance, when some little dormouse awakens up to have a bite of food, there is perfect stillness in the room.

6. Lesson Prayer.—When the dormice have turned back into children, the ring is formed once more. All the hands are folded and the heads bowed while the children repeat after the teacher:

"Loving Father, hear our prayer,  
Keep within Thy loving care  
All the animals that sleep  
In their soft beds snug and deep.  
Shelter from the winter storm  
All the dormice; keep them warm."

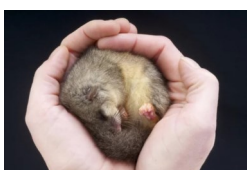
(Adapted from Miss Wiltse's winter prayer.)



From "Stories for Kindergartens and Primary Schools," by Sara E. Wiltse.

Loving Friend, oh! hear our prayer,  
Take into thy tender care  
All the leaves and flowers that sleep  
In their white beds covered deep.  
Shelter from the wintry storm  
All thy snow-birds, keep them warm.  
Hear our prayer.

Listen to prayers of Rest  
and Care



## GENERAL PRAYERS.

From "Song Stories for the Sunday-School," by Patty S. Hill.

Father, thou who carest  
For smallest tiny flowers  
And teachest bees and squirrels  
To save for winter hours,

To thee we little children  
Our loving thanks would bring  
For all thy loving kindness  
Of all thy goodness sing.



# THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

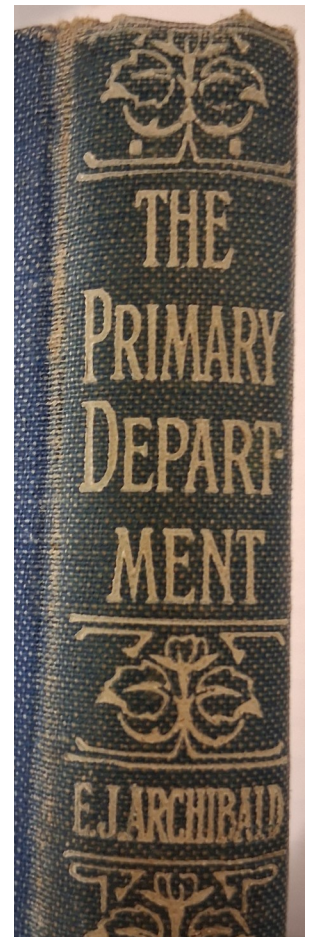
This workshop also borrows...

**Quieting Exercises.**—These are sometimes useful for the little children after a march or physical expression. The following is one appropriate for the summer time: Let the fingers of one hand represent a flower, and those of the other hand a bee flying from flower to flower gathering nectar. Accompany the exercise with a low humming and let the humming die away gradually, as though the bees had ceased work and gone to sleep for the night. (Selected.)

It may be well, sometimes, after the story expression, to have a few minutes of absolute quiet and rest, when all the children hide their faces and make believe that they are asleep.

Humming 'bee' breath, as a quieting exercise

Circles for teaching—not the teacher standing at the front of rows of desks



ing papers, which would bring a disturbing element into any of the exercises. Before all else she must be a guardian, a protector. In a sense the superintendent must even guard the department against her own personality. She is leader, director, and head teacher, and is recognized by the children as such. Up to a certain point, her personality is of value. As she leads the children impressively in the exercises her presence has a refining and dignifying influence on the atmosphere of the room. But she must have a care, lest she should go too far. In her anxiety to manage things well she may overstep the limit of her own sphere, and intrude upon the individuality of the child. Patterson DuBois says: "Our child training is too talky, too noisy, and too full of command." Good taste and fine insight are greatly needed at this point. In the work of education the teacher's care should be, not to stamp her personality upon the child and attempt to make him after her pattern, but rather to draw out his individuality and assist in its development.

More guidance than instruction

**Keeping the Weather Chart.**—At the beginning of the year a large sheet of paper marked out in squares—one square for every Sunday in the year—and daintily decorated, is put upon the wall of the Beginners' Room. Each Sunday, after a little talk about the kind of day, whether sunny, cloudy, stormy or snowy, one child is allowed to go to this chart, and, with golden, gray, black or white crayon, according to the state of the weather, fill in the section for the day.

The weather chart !



# THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

We also use a pianist and music to underscore and assist

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## *The Primary Department*

except for a subdued murmur of voices, as the teachers begin the lesson. About twenty-five minutes in all are allowed the teachers—fifteen for telling the story and ten for the children's expression of the story. A few very soft strains from the piano tell the teachers when the first fifteen minutes are over, a few more warn them when twenty-three minutes have passed and at the end some louder music summons the classes to turn back as they were at the beginning. The music continues until the children have brought forward whatever picture or other expression work they may have done, and once more resumed their seats.

The next item is a hymn, which bears appropriately upon the thought of the lesson.

The first note is struck once  
dren raise their voices hear  
proceeds the voices become  
until at the end they are hus  
pers. A soft chord is the si

hymn lyrics which  
reflect our theme

## *Atmosphere*

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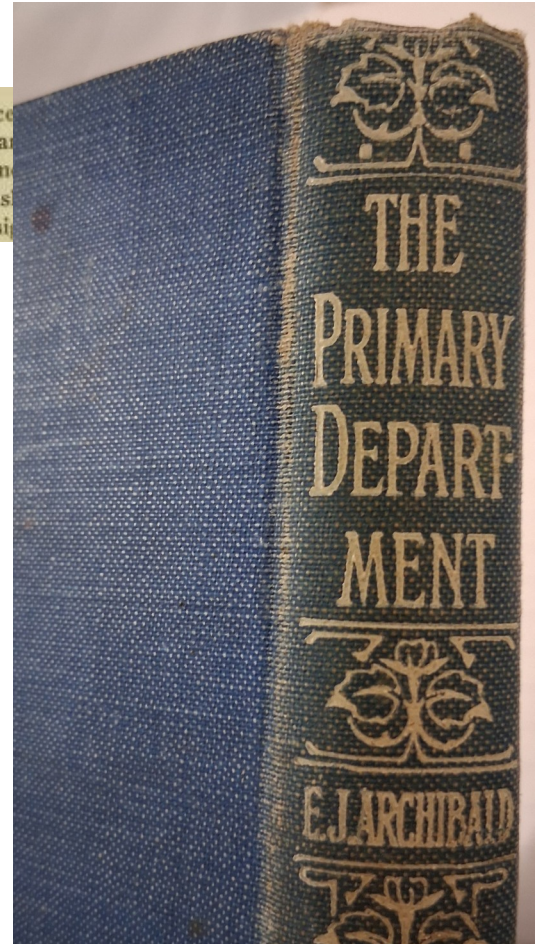
ment during the session must be carefully arranged and cared for. The room in which the children meet for their service should be beautiful; beautiful not only by virtue of its suitable and tasteful adornment, of its brightness and airiness, but also by virtue of its state of perfect arrangement and readiness. It should breathe an atmosphere of sacred and sweet quietness, so that the children on entering are at once impressed and involuntarily assume, both mentally and physically, the attitude that seems fitting in such a place. The best atmosphere can never be obtained in a room where the children are allowed to meet and talk and play before the beginning of the session. Such a room cannot be turned instantly into a place of worship. The room must be reserved and guarded jealously until the time for the school to begin. The children should assemble somewhere outside, in the cloakroom or lobby.

Music, as everyone knows, has very great power to influence the child. To make for reverence, to help him in his worship, it must be very carefully chosen. Much of it should surely be bright and cheery, but much also should be serious and even solemn. In the desire for songs and hymns which interest the children we are naturally apt to choose those in which the music is light and bright and "catchy."

and care for the  
classroom  
environment  
and atmosphere

creating a space of  
'sweet quietness' for  
you to reflect and  
make today, in a way  
that feels right for you

making room for expression of  
the 'solemn' as well as the  
'bright'. All the 'weathers' of your  
moods are welcome here today.





# THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

How can we have *patience* as we reflect on the (challenging?) subject of Rest?

## THE LESSON

The Primary Department teacher is apt to fall into the error of trying to teach far too much. Many of us insist upon forcing on the children truths and facts which they are far from ready to assimilate. We are anxious to see a flower where we have no right to expect more than a bud; we can not be content to work according to the law of God written in the child's nature. This law decrees that the child must develop always by exercise which is in harmony with his nature and proportioned to his strength. The young child should not be given a great deal of memory work, adult theology, formal rules for living, abstract warnings, exhortations, and admonitions; he craves ideals, heroes to worship and live with, something from the wonder world about which his imagination can play. What shall we give him? Stories—image-forming material out of which he can make his pictures and create his ideals. There can be little doubt that this "golden method," story-telling, is the ideal one for teaching nature and the Bible to

How can we be simple in our 'storytelling' and speak to our Child Self?

