

A STUDY OF THE WEEK DAY SCHOOL OF RELIGION

IN SALINA, KANSAS

by

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the Week Day School of Religion in the city of Salina, Kansas, as a type of religious instruction on public school time.

The Week Day School of Religion is a movement which has made its appearance during the last twenty-one years. The first Week Day School of Religion was organized in Gary, Indiana, in 1909. In cities where a Week Day School of Religion is maintained, the pupils of the public school are released during certain periods of the week for religious instruction provided by the churches of the city.

The movement is the result of serious concern on the part of thoughtful men and women who desire that all the children of the nation may have the opportunity of religious instruction in addition to the moral instruction provided by the public school. It seems that the only means of reaching all the children of the nation is through the public school.

The city of Salina has maintained a Week Day School of Religion for eight years in a manner worthy of consideration by those interested in the project.

General education is advancing rapidly in the United States, while knowledge of the Bible and the Christian religion is diminishing. More than fifty per cent of the population of the United States are not affiliated with any

church and approximately three-fourths of the children and youth receive no religious instruction.

55 per cent unchurched	
	45 per cent churchd

Figure 1.

Investigation in Salina shows that less than fifty per cent of the children enrolled in the first eight grades of the public school attend church or Sunday school. The Week Day School of Religion in Salina has never had less than eighty-six per cent (enrollment for the first year of the school) of these pupils, and for four years of the eight an enrollment of ninety-five per cent.

Crime is on the increase in the United States. There is three or four times as large a percentage of Americans in our prisons as in 1850. During the last fifty years more than 300,000 people were murdered in the United States.

Better methods of religious instruction are imperative. No criticism of what has been done or is being done is offered here, but the religious instruction of the present is inadequate to the need. The child who attends the public school received each year twenty-five hours of religious instruction compared with one thousand hours in the public school where no Week Day School of Religion is provided.

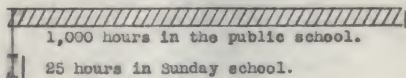


Figure 2.

The task of religious instruction belongs to the church. The public school is prohibited by the constitution from teaching religion. The church is hampered by nothing but its own lack of vision.

The objective of the church in its task of religious instruction is three fold:

1. That each pupil shall have a systematic knowledge of the Bible.
2. That he shall form right attitudes toward God and the church.
3. That he shall acquire skill in living with others.

A BRIEF SURVEY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PRIOR TO THE WEEK DAY SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Religious education is not new. It is as old as religion itself, for all religions have been compelled to make use of some form of education in establishing and propagating themselves. The Christian religion is no exception in this regard.

Very early in the history of Israel, we find this instruction, "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children." And throughout the history of the Hebrew people, we find them diligent in the instruction of their children in the laws of Jehovah in their homes, in the synagogues, and the Rabbinical schools.

Jesus himself was a teacher. The most of his ministry was spent in the careful training of twelve men. When he taught large groups, it was by the story method or the question and answer method usually.

The early church followed the precedent set by the Jewish nation and the example of Jesus and gave much time to instruction. During the Apostolic period of the church, the early Christians, after being crowded out of the synagogues, met in private homes and held worship services followed by

a period of instruction.

The second, third, and fourth centuries have left to the church an enviable record of religious education. Such teachers as Clement, Origen, Tertullian, and others will never be forgotten.

Christian education was continued in the monastic schools, the cathedral schools, and the court schools. These schools developed later into the medieval universities. The Reformation made large use of religious instruction.

For many years in America, religious education and general education were inseparably connected for each community was under religious control. The people had no knowledge of any other kind of school than that sponsored by the church. For more than two hundred years, church and school worked together. About the middle of the nineteenth century, the schools of America were secularized.

While separation of church and state is the ideal for a democracy, it has left a large percentage of our children with little or no religious training. Thinking men and women have deplored this fact and have been making an effort to establish some method of giving all children in our nation religious training. Week day religious instruction is one of the methods being used at the present time.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION ON PUBLIC SCHOOL TIME

For more than a half century, it has been a recognized fact that religious educational activities and agencies in America must be improved upon and supplemented. The Week Day School of Religion is one method of accomplishing this end.

The Week Day School of Religion carries on its classes during certain periods of public school time, when the pupils are released for religious instruction provided by the churches.

The oldest school of this kind reporting was established at Gary, Indiana, 1909. Some of the older and better known schools are to be found in South Evanston, Illinois; Gary, Indiana; Van Wert, Ohio; Toledo, Ohio; Batavia, Illinois; New York City.

There are two types of the week day school of religion. One is the denominational or individual type, the other is the interdenominational or community type. The question as to which type of school is the better is worthy of consideration. There is much to be said on either side of the question.

Where the denominational or individual type of school is used, each church assumes the responsibility of class

rooms, teachers, transportation, and any other equipment essential for the required standards to be met in the instruction of the children of its own parish.

Where the interdenominational or community type is used, the churches involved have common classrooms, teachers, and all other equipment. Each church is apportioned its share of expense in maintaining the school.

The first week day school of religion established in Kansas was at Salina, 1922. This school will be considered as to organization and operation in the following chapter.

THE SALINA PLAN OF
WEEK DAY SCHOOL OF RELIGION

The Week Day School of Religion in Salina is the result of a deep conviction on the part of the ministers of the city that the children of their parishes were receiving too little religious instruction compared with the instruction furnished by the public schools.

A committee was appointed by the ministerial association to confer with Mr. Heusner, the superintendent of the city schools. The committee returned a favorable report to the association. A petition, in which twelve churches of the city were represented, was formulated requesting the board of education to release the pupils of the first eight grades of the public schools during certain periods of the week for religious instruction. The petition was readily granted and Superintendent Heusner was instructed to formulate a plan for a week day school of religion.

Wednesday was selected as the day for religious instruction. This day was used until the beginning of school in September, 1929, when Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons were used instead of the whole day of Wednesday. Under the Wednesday plan the fifth and sixth grades were released from the public school for religious instruction from nine

until ten twenty; the seventh and eighth grades from ten forty-five until twelve; the third and fourth grades from one thirty until two forty; the first and second grades from three until four. Under the two day system, the first four grades are released at the same hours, but on Tuesday instead of Wednesday. The fifth and sixth grades are released from one thirty until two forty on Wednesday, and the seventh and eighth grades from two forty-five until four.

Superintendent Heusner and the board of education required that each church establishing a school provide:

1. Adequate equipment
2. A suitable course of study
3. Qualified teachers

When the board of education had granted the petition and Superintendent Heusner had formulated a plan, a meeting was called through the ministerial association for the purpose of organizing a board of religious education.

At this meeting a board of religious education was formed, consisting of the pastor and one lay member from each church represented. The lay member in each church was selected by the pastor.

The board decided that each church would provide the best equipment possible at the time and make such improvements as supervisors would suggest. Each pastor is the director of his own school, selecting his teachers, choosing

his course of study and other essentials. However, the board of religious education asks that as far as possible all teachers have public school qualifications and experience.

The board is advisory only, and cannot demand anything of any church. Should a church fail to meet the recommendations stated above in a satisfactory manner, the board would advise with the pastor of the church, then if conditions were not improved the superintendent of city schools would demand that the particular church discontinue its week day school of religion.

The board meets on the third Monday of each month and takes care of matters of common interest.

The board selects a supervisor who, with a committee on supervision appointed by the board, selects seven visitors who assist with the work of supervision. The first paid supervisor was secured in September, 1928.

Other committees appointed by the board are: teacher training, enrollment, standards, and curriculum and unification.

The following denominations are represented in the board of religious education: Baptist, Christian, Christian Science, Episcopal, Evangelical, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Unitarian, and United Brethren.

Superintendent Heusner sends the teachers of the public schools to visit the week day school of religion

classes in the various churches. These teachers report to Superintendent Heusner but not the board of religious education.

Recent decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States and of the Supreme Court of New York state would seem good evidence that the week day school of religion as carried on in the city of Salina is entirely legal. The decisions referred to are those concerning the Oregon Compulsory Education Act, 1925, and that of Joseph Lewis vs. Frank P. Graves, Commissioner of Education for New York state.

In Salina all expense for printed matter is met by the board of religious education. No school property is used for class purposes. Attendance of pupils is optional. Regular classes for grades released for religious instruction do not meet at that hour. Special classes are provided for those who do not enroll in the week day school of religion.

All parents are invited and urged by the pastors to enroll their children in some one of the schools provided by the churches.

When the children of the first eight grades enroll in the public schools of Salina at the beginning of the school year, they receive cards which they take home to their parents. The parents fill out the cards requesting that their children be released for religious instruction and indicate

the church which their children will attend. The children return the cards to the public schools. From these cards, lists of the children's names who will attend each church school are made in the superintendent's office and sent out to the proper pastors.

When a church school has been selected, the parents are urged to keep the child in this school during the year. However, if a change becomes necessary, the parents must notify the public school of the desired change with reasons for it. Then both churches concerned are notified and the change is made.

Transportation is furnished for the lower grades by the churches.

The percentage of enrollment for the eight years of the school's existence indicates to some extent the success and popularity of the week day school of religion at Salina.

The following table gives the public school enrollment for the first eight grades during the time in which a week day school of religion has been maintained. Beside this is the enrollment of the week day school of religion for the same year and the per cent of this enrollment when compared with that of the public schools.

Enrollment of Grades 1 - 8

Year	Public School	Wk. Day School of Religion	Per cent
1922-3	2538	2186	86
1923-4	2608	2351	90
1924-5	2594	2410	93
1925-6	2622	2478	95
1926-7	2698	2587	95
1927-8	2752	2622	95
1928-9	2954	2820	95
1929-30	2779	2573	91

The 1929-30 enrollment given is from a report made early in the school year. The others are all from reports made each year after school has closed. The increase of enrollment in the week day school of religion thus far seems to indicate that the percentage is about the same as that of the last few years.

Perhaps the statements of two men who have served the city of Salina for several years and who resided in Salina previous to the existence of the week day school of religion will be helpful in making an estimate as to the value of the school.

The following is a statement made by W. S. Heuser, superintendent of the public schools of Salina:

"The nearest thing that we have to any competent data is the cumulative result of some tests given under my direction by one of our junior high school principals involving

the general question of honesty among pupils of secondary school age. This test was given in Salina primarily because of the fact that if any effects of religious education were discernible at all, they should be discernible here. Now, these tests show very clearly a decided improvement in the status of children of secondary school age so far as honesty in their relation to their daily work and their tests is concerned over pupils in like standing and age in systems where there has been no influence of week day religious education.

"I am perfectly free to express to you a rather enthusiastic opinion as to the results of the work in week day religion. I am clearly of the opinion that the work has been all to the good. I mean by that, specifically, two things. First: One of the very common criticisms of the work in week day religious education by those who have had no experience is that the sending of the children from the schoolhouses to the churches and from the churches to the schoolhouses leads to a certain type of disorganization of morale, which ultimately induces serious and difficult problems of discipline into the schoolroom. Positively, we have not found this to be true. It is true, we have some problems of discipline, but, so far as I can see, no more than if the week day school of religious education did not exist.

There may be added to this statement the not infrequently expressed opinion of many of my best teachers that, without doubt, the influence of the week day school of religion has a softening, a mollifying and a constructive influence in the lives of our boys and girls so far as their relations to the common problem of ethics in school life are concerned.

"The second point I wish to make is that many people who have had no experience with the week day schools of religion are fearful lest the time that is taken each week for this work in religious education will result in a lowering of the standards of scholarship in the school giving such time for that purpose. Here again, our experience is contrary to that prediction. The record of the Salina public schools in two aspects contradicts this assumption:

- a. The record of the Salina public schools covering the last four or five years in the state scholarship contests are ample answer. (The record of these scholarship contests can be secured from the Director of the Scholarship Contest at the State Teachers College, Emporia, Kansas.)
- b. The work of the pupils in the Salina public schools as measured by the results of standard tests and measurements has been improved year by year and in no year have the pupils of the Salina schools fallen below the median standards set forth in these tests.

"Now, of course, we must be very careful in setting forth the two above claims that we make it clear that we are not attributing these results to the influence of week day religious education. The point I am making is that we are securing these results in spite of the time and the energy necessary to the carrying forward of the work in religious education."

William F. Miller, probate judge, makes the following statement:

"Having been a close observer of the week day school of religion as it functions in the city of Salina in connection with the public school system, the writer wishes to use this method of commending the religious school, and does not hesitate in his commendations.

"As the writer has observed the reactions, there are two praiseworthy results, among others, as a result of the establishment of the school upon which hearty approval is given:

"First: It has produced in the mind of the child life, a higher thought of Christian living, a higher degree of Christian responsibility, and advances the child to a more exalted social plane.

"Second: That the child receives a greater conception of the necessity of obedience, not only to the spiritual laws, but to the laws of governing the home, the city and

the land, and instills in the mind a better thought of right living and consequently a lesser degree of incorrigibility and delinquency.

"I further believe that the week day school of religion is a forward step in religious and moral training for better citizenship and individual responsibility."

SOME PROBLEMS OF THE WEEK DAY SCHOOL OF RELIGION.

Like every other board of religious education which undertakes the task of a week day school of religion, the board in Salina is confronted with many problems.

One of the problems to be faced is the indifferent attitude of a large percentage of the church membership. While there are more than a few who are fully aware of the necessity of the school, there are far too many who are indifferent as to the progress and efficiency of the school. There is little or no opposition, but a deepened interest on the part of the church people is urgent.

The seventeen churches of Salina maintaining week day schools of religion show annual budgets which make a total of \$122,300. Statistics show that these same churches use one dollar for each pupil of the week day school of religion for one year, or \$2573 for the entire week day school of religion in the city for one year.

If the week day school of religion is to develop into a permanent method of religious instruction, a much larger percentage of church budgets must be set aside for this work than is set aside at present. Compared with other cities, Salina has done commendable work.

Another problem of the school is that of discipline in the upper grades. There is very little difficulty in the first six grades. But the teachers of pupils of junior high school age face real problems. Added to the problems which confront the teachers in the public schools are those peculiar to a church class. The authority of the church and that of the public school differ greatly. Older children are often conscious of this fact. Then too, children are inclined to consider any time away from the schoolroom as something of a holiday and protest against any kind of program which presents real work. The matter of credit adds to the difficulties of discipline and cooperation. No credit is given by the public school for work done in religious school. In spite of the many perplexing problems, many of the teachers are meeting the situation in a most satisfactory manner. However, discipline is highly important in the religious school and must be given serious attention by pastors and teachers.

The pastors of the churches maintaining schools of religion find difficulty in securing the services of trained,

competent teachers. The school is compelled to depend upon those who are able to give one or two hours each week to the task since the work does not demand full time teachers. Perhaps the most difficult task in the whole system is that of securing competent teachers. Each year, a community class for religious school teachers is provided, but attendance can not be made obligatory, hence attendance is not satisfactory. In the school for training teachers last year in Salina, thirty teachers of the week day school of religion were enrolled.

Supervision in the Salina school of religion is inadequate, since it is impossible for a paid supervisor to visit more than four of the seventy-six classes held each week. Volunteer visitors have been secured each year, and they have done splendid work. But thus far, it has been impossible to secure a sufficient number of such visitors to meet the needs of the school. The pastors of the schools are quite careful in the matter of supervision and add greatly to the efficiency of the schools.

In common with all other types of schools, the week day school of religion owes most of its success or failure to the teachers and curriculum selected. Since the religious school is yet in its infancy, it is almost impossible to find a course of study that is altogether satisfactory.

Each church selects its own course of study under the Salina plan. Many courses have been tried and discarded. During the past three years all of the eighth grades in the Salina religious schools have studied the life of Christ. At a recent meeting, the board of religious education adopted a recommendation of the committee on curriculum to recommend that a common theme be used for each of the grades in all the schools which cared to accept the plan.

Transportation is another problem. Thus far, the churches have been able to secure cars to take the children to and from the classes, but the matter is difficult.

Those most interested in the school are keenly aware of their many problems in maintaining the school, but they are doing commendable work and providing Salina with a school of which she is justly proud.

A DESCRIPTION OF A TYPICAL WEEK DAY SCHOOL OF RELIGION IN SALINA.

When the board of this church decided to establish a week day school of religion, the pastor set about organizing his school. Each pastor is the director of his own particular school, since the board of religious education agreed unanimously on this part of the organization.

First of all he asks his board to make a budget for the school covering all items that are likely to appear. Since

this is a typical school, the teachers will not be paid a salary. Only eighteen of the one hundred twelve teachers in the week day school of religion in Salina are paid a salary. Those who are paid for teaching receive one dollar for each period of teaching.

The pastor selects his own teachers. As nearly as possible he secures those who have the same qualifications and experience as the teachers of the public schools. The majority are young mothers with public school experience.

Early in the summer this pastor, with the teachers selected for the year, plans the course of study for all grades for the entire year. Schoolrooms in the church are equipped for class work. With these matters all carefully planned and with the roll of pupils who have selected his school before him, the pastor is ready for the pupils who present themselves at the church at the beginning of the school year. Usually the week day school of religion begins the last week in September.

When each group meets as indicated in a previous chapter the pupils first participate in a well planned worship service. This is followed by a study period which usually consists of a lesson taken from the Bible, which fits into the theme for the entire year. For example, if the theme for the year is "God's revelation of Himself to man through the

Old Testament", perhaps the lesson for the first class period may be "God Reveals Himself to Abraham". The story will be told by the teacher or read by the pupils from the Bible or an approved text. A discussion will follow. This period is followed by a period of hand work which varies according to teacher and pupils. A short period of memory work precedes dismissal.

At the close of each day's school the pastor sends a report of attendance to the superintendent of the city schools.

REPORTS AND BLANK FORMS.

A committee appointed by the board of religious education edits a booklet each year containing all the aims, plans, goals, etc., of the organization. On the day of enrollment in the public school, copies of this booklet are given to the children to take home to their parents. Along with the copies of the booklet go blanks which the parents fill out designating the schools of religion to which their children will be sent. The booklet is too lengthy to be given here but a copy of the blank is given below.

Building _____ Grade _____
 Salina, Kansas. _____ 1929

To the Superintendent of Public Schools,
 Salina, Kansas.

Dear Sir:

It is my desire that my child _____
 shall be enrolled in the work of religious education
 under the auspices of _____ church.

It is understood that the school authorities extend
 this privilege to the children under the statement set
 forth in the "Letter to Patrons", which is sent with
 this card.

Signed _____
 Name of parent or guardian
 Address _____

Return this card at once. Use separate card for each child.

The following is the heading of the blank on which the
 superintendent lists the pupils for the pastors of the
 churches:

Salina Public Schools		
Pupils enrolled in Religious School		
In _____	Church.	From _____ School
Note: Make separate report for each church. List pupils by grades in the following order: 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.		
Name of Pupil	Grade	Remarks

After the public school begins and before the school of religion begins the teachers of the several grade schools make out these lists for their grades and send them to the superintendent of schools, who sends them to the pastors in order that the churches may know their enrollment and be ready to care for the children when they present themselves for religious instruction a few days later.

A copy of the record of transfer is given below:

Record of Transfer in Religious Education	
Building _____	Grade _____
Date _____	
To the Superintendent of Schools, Salina, Kansas	
Dear Sir:	
It is my desire that my child _____	
shall be transferred in the work of religious education	
from _____	church to _____ church.
My reason for this request is _____	

Signed _____	Name of parent or guardian
Address _____	_____

A copy of the following card is sent to the school where the child discontinues his work:

RECORD OF DISCONTINUANCE	
_____ School.	_____ Grade
This is to certify that _____ has discontinued the work of religious education in the _____ church.	
Reason for discontinuance _____	
Date _____	
_____ Parent or teacher	

The card below is sent to the school in which he will now enroll:

_____ Church The following are new entries in your school of religious education:			
Name	Building	Grade	Source of Entrance

At the close of school on each Wednesday, each church sends a report of all cases of tardiness or absence to the superintendent of public schools. The following is a copy of this report:

SALINA, KANSAS Week Day School of Religious Instruction Report of Absence and Tardiness The following pupils have been absent or tardy as indicated on the following date _____.			
Name of pupil	School	Grade	Cause of absence
_____ Church.			_____ Group _____ Teacher

On the next page is the uniform grade card provided by the board of religious education. On the back of this card the parent reports the student's home activities to the teacher.

WEEK-DAY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION—SALINA, KANSAS

REPORT OF.....CHURCH

School Grade.....Group.....

Subject for the Year.....

PART OF YEAR	ABSENT	TARDY	REVERENCE	REPORT WORK	CLASS WORK	WRITTEN WORK	COURTESY	CO-OPERATION	SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN
NOV. 20									
JAN. 29									
MARCH 26									
MAY-FINAL									

TO PUPIL: Bring this Card back to Church School Next Wednesday. Reverence at Church means the same as deportment at school.

Teacher.....

Grade Card

PLEASE

Send This Card Back the Following Wednesday
or Mail Direct to the Church Teacher

Home Report

Check activities in which the child has taken
part under direction of the home.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Daily Bible reading						
Grace at Meals						
Daily Prayers						
Attendance at Sunday School						
Attendance at Church						

There is no compulsion in grading the home activities of the pupil. We will appreciate your co-operation however in marking these. We want you to know what pupils are doing in the Church School, and we are anxious to know what pupils are doing at home.

A is Excellent or 90 to 100
B is Good or 85 to 90
C is Medium or 75 to 85
D is Poor or 65 to 75
F is Failure

Back of Grade Card

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Salina plan of the week day school of religion has been successful for eight years, and has grown in the respect and approval of the parents of the children enrolled in its classes. However, the board with its various committees have been working toward improvement from year to year.

There was no uniformity of curriculum whatever until three years ago when the board by common consent decided that the life of Christ should be taught in the eighth grade classes of the several schools. Last year the board recommended uniform topics for each of the eight grades. These topics were selected by the supervisor and the committee on unification and curriculum, and approved by the board.

These topics have been used in all the schools with the exception of three or four. The experiment has been quite satisfactory to the teachers and the supervisor.

A uniform curriculum for all the schools should be prepared and adopted by the board.

A full time director of the week day school of religion with authority similar to that of the city superintendent of schools would bring about a decided improvement in the schools. Such a director should be added to the staff.

Permanent records of the several schools should be kept for reference.

The budgets for the schools should be two dollars rather than one dollar, the present budget.

The available objective data and the consensus of opinion in Salina indicate that the week day school of religion has influenced the behavior of pupils toward better conduct.

No doubt there will be many changes in the week day school of religion during the next few years. Salina hopes to be one of the cities that take advantage of any real improvement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Date Due

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