

The Cradle Roll Department Superintendent

CRADLE ROLL!!! BUILD WITH BABIES???

In any given establishment, whether in government, business, home, etc., children form the future of that particular establishment. It is no different with the Church.

The time given in which to reach these children is very short. Statistics show us that by the time a child reaches school age, most of what he will become, his character and his values, are already formed. What can we do as Christians to reap this great harvest for Christ?

In 1880, there was a little boy in Elizabeth, New Jersey who one Sunday during Sunday school dropped a penny into the birthday bank in honor of his baby brother's birthday. The Sunday school teachers hearts were so touched that they compiled a list of all the other babies in the church. Thus the Cradle Roll was born.

The plan of the Cradle Roll is to reach families with babies from birth through two years. This means we have a very short time in which to reach them.

It is a fact that when God blesses a home with the gift of a new baby, there is a tenderness and gentleness of spirit that at other times might not be evident in the home. So, it is an opportune time to reach the family for Christ.

In the two years the child is enrolled in the Cradle Roll, he is brought in contact with love and Christian influence which will help mold his entire life. Should we fail to reach him through the Cradle Roll, he may be lost forever to Christian principles and a Christian atmosphere as he becomes surrounded by social and achievement pressures and worldly ideas. But if we reach him early, he will begin at once to develop Christian ideals and principles which will not only guide his life, but those around him, thus making his world a better place to live.

In the Christian world, leaders are constantly looking for new ways to reach people for Christ and to make their churches grow. One of the tools for church growth has been among us for a long time. It's parts have been stuffed into drawers, hung on bulletin boards until it faded away, or has just been neglected altogether. This long-forgotten, ill-used tool is the Cradle Roll, a program designed to be administered by the Sunday school and programmed to win whole families to the Church. Many programs were designed for a certain age group or type of people, but the Cradle Roll is designed to win whole families to Christ and the Church.

Your appointment as Cradle Roll Department Superintendent affords you a wonderful opportunity for service in your local church. Strong leadership will be demanded to develop this department. In getting a Cradle Roll ministry started one person can accomplish a great deal, but because of the unlimited possibilities for reaching new families through this medium, you will ultimately need a number of callers or visitors. It will be your privilege to appoint other workers as the demand for additional help is needed.

Whether it be you as superintendent or others appointed by you, calling upon homes is an important task. You may enroll babies through friends, through church members, or by whatever method the acquaintance is made. Be especially prayerful that God will make you a blessing to each family you visit. In some cases you may be the only Christian to visit that home.

When visiting a home and inviting parents to enroll their baby in the Cradle Roll Department it is very important to explain what this enrollment means. It should be specifically pointed out that this enrollment does not mean church membership. If the

parents agree to enroll the baby, the caller will present them an enrollment certificate which already will have been signed by the Cradle Roll superintendent, the Sunday school superintendent and the pastor. At this time they may also be presented with the attractive cover in which this initial enrollment certificate plus all subsequent bulletins will be bound. It should be pointed out that this binder with its series of bulletins will, no doubt, become a souvenir of the child's first years. (These materials are contained in the Cradle Roll packet, "Baby's Guide," available from the White Wing Recourse Center.) Before leaving, encouragement should be given to family worship and family attendance at church. If there are other children in the home, an offer might be extended to take them to Sunday school.

Each caller will have a specific number of families assigned to her. This number could vary depending upon the time she has available to give to this work. From six to ten homes is the suggested number to give to each caller. The caller will be expected to keep an up-to-date record on each family assigned to her. Birthdays should always be remembered with cards being sent on the child's first and second birthdays. These cards are included in the Cradle Roll packet. As far as possible the same caller needs to follow through the two-year program with her assigned families.

The callers should be alert to detect the arrival at church of any new families with whom they have been working. It would be very appropriate for the caller to arrange to sit with these "strangers" on their first visit and, following the service, introduce them to other members of the church.

The superintendent will maintain an overall view of the department, keeping accurate and up-to-date records of all babies enrolled. She will be expected to guide and inspire her workers in this very special ministry of outreach. Periodic meetings with her staff can be helpful as they share the blessings of the work, pray about the problems, and seek ways for improvement and growth. Callers may need training in visitation and evangelism techniques.

She should represent her department in the general teacher's meetings, giving a report of the work being done and seeking budgetary allotments for needed materials. She should furnish the Sunday school secretary a list of needed supplies to include with her quarterly order of Sunday school materials, or she may order them, herself.

The Cradle Roll superintendent should be an idea person—reading articles, pamphlets, and books on the Cradle Roll ministry, child care, etc.—constantly searching for new helps and ideas. She should search for ways to publicize the department, such as having new babies listed in the church bulletin, placing babies' pictures on a special Cradle Roll bulletin board, and asking all church visitation workers and other members to inform her of new babies in the community.

An annual Cradle Roll day can be scheduled on the church's calendar of events with special honor being given the babies and their parents on this day. This would be an ideal time for baby dedications and would serve as a clincher for getting new parents, with whom the callers have been working, into our church services.

In this work we do not want to neglect our own young couples. Many of these couples are lost to the church during the first few years of parenthood, and some never find their way back into active participation. In the church's program, by maintaining close contact with these young couples, and providing literature that will help them as Christian parents, we will be keeping alive their relationship with the church and helping them establish strong Christian homes.

The Cradle Roll Department is a powerful arm of the Sunday school. God's blessings

be upon you, superintendent of the Cradle Roll!

Where Do I Find Help and Materials???

Cradle Roll Manual—A Guide for Workers by Bernice T. Cory, White Wing Publishing House, Box 1039, Cleveland, TN 37311

The Creative Cradle Roll, Scripture Press Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 1825 Wheaton, IL 60187

Cradle Roll Program—“It’s Never Too Early,” Gospel Light Publications, Glendale, CA 91205

Baby Days in the Church, Lillenas Publications, Kansas City, MO

Cradle Roll Workers Handbook, Gospel Publishing Company, Springfield, MO

How to Organize and Conduct Cradle Roll, Standard Publishers, Cincinnati, OH

Sunday School Guidelines, Sunday School Department, Bible Place, Cleveland TN 37311

Ties That Bind—a filmstrip in color plus record. A training course for Cradle Roll Workers.

Meditations for New Mothers, Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania

How to Organize a Cradle Roll, David C. Cook, Elgin, Illinois

The Creative Cradle Roll, Victor Books, Wheaton, Illinois

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRIES
P.O. BOX 2910
CLEVELAND, TENNESSEE 37311, U.S.A.