

~~KENTUCKY LIBRARY COMMISSION,
FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY~~

The Study Club Program

Suggestions Relating to Courses of Study
and Aids Furnished by the Traveling
Library

IOWA LIBRARY
COMMISSION
DES MOINES, IOWA
LEAFLET NO. 8

ALL study clubs are confronted by the difficulty of arranging each year a course of study which meets the needs or requirements of a diverse membership.

Various methods are adopted by which a decision as to subject is reached. Sometimes a random suggestion will determine the choice, without sufficient consideration being given as to whether an outline can be obtained, or even satisfactory reference material from which such an outline may be prepared.

The Program committee should be selected a sufficient time in advance of the close of the year, so that suggestions from the various members may be carefully weighed and search made for available reference material, before the subject for study is decided upon.

It should be the aim of the Program committee to provide a study outline so arranged that all members of a club may be studying the same phase of a given subject at the same time, and to carefully avoid the introduction of unrelated topics.

THE MISCELLANEOUS PROGRAM.

The many activities in which women are now engaged frequently lead a club to include in its plans for the year's program a great variety of subjects. The result is what is known as the "miscellaneous program," in which several unrelated subjects are considered at each meeting.

"It is a common error, particularly among amateurs in club work, to crowd a program full of topics under the mistaken impression that the work is, in that way, made more interesting. Experience makes it clear that such courses result in weariness or inattention and at the end the members have received so many fleeting impressions that nothing, except possibly the topics of their own papers, stand out clearly and there is little incentive to follow up any suggestion received. Such a course may be literary, but it is not study."—New York State Educational Department.

It is suggested that if a miscellaneous program is desired that only one subject be assigned for each lesson and each member be requested to inform herself on the subject and take part in the general discussion.

LITERATURE.

If literature is the study desired, it is not strange that with the whole field of literature from which to choose, an attempt is usually made to cover more ground than is practicable during the average club year of 26 meetings, or sometimes half that number.

Literature of a Country.

It is easy to decide to study "French literature," or "English literature," or "American literature," forgetting that it is impossible in the time at command to obtain even a su-

perfcial knowledge of the entire literature of a nation. If such a course of study is desired, it should be outlined to occupy two or three years and studied by periods.

A Group of Authors.

The next step in the direction of concentration, after deciding that it is impracticable to attempt to acquire a knowledge of the entire literary history of a country in a year, would be to study a group of writers, choosing, for instance, the poets, or essayists, or novelists of a given country, or era. If this is done a good text book should be used in connection with the study outline, and since it would be impossible to read with care all of the poems, or essays, or novels included, one important work of each author in the group should be chosen for special study. As an illustration: if "American poets" should be the study, it would be manifestly impossible to read all of the important works of Lowell, of Longfellow, of Whittier, of Bryant, and the many other poets which such study would include, but one masterpiece of each of these poets might be studied with some degree of thoroughness.

A Single Author and His Works.

Distinct progress is made when a club is willing to devote a year's study to the work of a single representative writer. This unified program, however, can be sufficiently diversified to satisfy those in search of variety. A study of Jane Austen will lead to an interesting review of social conditions in the early 19th century. The novels of such writers as Dickens, Scott, Thackeray, Hawthorne and George Eliot will suggest themselves as desirable studies in fiction since they have an important bearing upon the literature of which they are a part. When an author who

has contributed to several departments of literature is chosen, a very diversified program results. Robert Louis Stevenson and James Russell Lowell are writers of this class.

A Single Masterpiece.

After experiencing the difficulties of crowding the entire work of one writer into one club year, it is not difficult to take the next step and concentrate the study for the year upon a single masterpiece. The study of a great poem like Milton's "Paradise Lost," Tennyson's "In Memoriam," or his "Idylls of the King," or Browning's "Pippa Passes," will bring surprising results to those who have considered such study impracticable. Historical novels like George Eliot's "Romola," or Tolstoi's "War and Peace," lead to a consideration of important historical events, and furnish a basis for a comparative study of fiction, while offering a course of study ample for one year.

The result in general information, mental stimulus and actual knowledge is much greater than is possible from the study of any miscellaneous collection of subjects. The same rule of concentration applies to the study of Shakespeare, and not more than four plays should be studied in a year.

HISTORY.

When the study of history is considered, the suggestions relating to the study of a whole national literature in one year, apply also to history; but it is possible to study with some degree of thoroughness an epoch or period in the history of a country, and outlines should be so arranged.

A common mistake is to combine with history the literature, art, etc., of a country in a single program. After considering the dif-

difficulties involved in the attempt to study either the entire literature or history of a nation in one club year, it will be understood that to include this, together with art and music, in one program, is very undesirable. Such programs are inevitably superficial and disappointing. Attention is divided and an attempt is made to cover so much ground that the study is practicably valueless.

FINE ARTS.

The suggestions relating to the study of literature and history are applicable to the study of the history of painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and other arts. The entire history of the art of any country cannot be adequately studied in one year, but the history of painting or sculpture for a given period will prove a valuable study.

In considering the history of painting, sculpture, or architecture, it is always of interest to illustrate the study by the use of pictures. Good reproductions are not difficult to obtain, and are inexpensive. (A limited number of reproductions of masterpieces of painting may be borrowed from the Traveling Library.)

In studying the history of music and musicians it is usually wise to use a text book, rather than to depend upon a study outline. Very interesting special programs may be arranged devoted to the life and works of a single composer, with musical illustrations. Clubs desiring to specialize in musical subjects will find it of great benefit to use the one subject program, devoting at least half a year to the study of one great composer.

CURRENT EVENTS AND OTHER SUBJECTS.

It is suggested that when a club is unwilling to adopt a one subject program, that cur-

rent events be studied. What has been said of a miscellaneous program does not apply to the study of current events, for all that is notable in contemporary life is a part of the great subject of history. When current events and present day problems are combined with other studies, it is well to set aside a fixed time for their consideration at each meeting, as in this way they will not interfere with the continuity of the program, or distract attention from it.

METHODS OF STUDY.

There are two methods of study from which to choose; the question method and the topical method.

The Question Method. In using the question method each lesson is outlined by the use of from five to ten definite questions, which every member must be prepared to answer. In order that all may be familiar with each phase of the subject considered, it is better not to assign questions in advance to individual members.

The Topical Method. The question method is the more desirable, but some subjects are not easily outlined in this manner, and in some instances it is best to adopt the topical method. Care should be taken not to include more topics in a single meeting than can be thoroughly discussed, and while these topics may be assigned in advance each member should be prepared to discuss them. These topics should be logical steps in the development of the subject chosen for study, and unrelated topics should not be included.

If papers are desired, either with the question or topical methods, the subjects chosen should be the larger phases of that subject having direct connection with the lesson for

the day. Only subjects which require some degree of original thought should be chosen for papers, as all information to be derived from text books and encyclopedias should be included in the regular lessons.

• **SPECIFIC AIDS IN PREPARING
PROGRAMS.**

The Traveling Library has built up a collection of outlines and syllabi which are loaned to aid clubs in preparing programs.

The outlines in the collection include the following subjects:

History and Travel.

Canada.

China.

Egypt.

France.

Germany.

Iowa (Prepared by the State Historical Society of Iowa.)

Italy, Modern

Japan.

Our New Possessions.

Panama.

Russia.

Scotland.

Travel in Scotland and Ireland.

Travel in United States.

United States—Various Periods.

Shakespeare.

As You Like It.

Hamlet.

Macbeth.

Merchant of Venice.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

Julius Caesar.

King Henry IV.

King Henry V.
King John.
Tempest.
Twelfth Night.

Literature.

American literature.
Comus (Milton).
Cranford (Gaskell).
English literature—Early Victorian period
Essays of Elia (Lamb).
Faerie Queene, Book 1 (Spencer).
Henry Esmond (Thackeray).
Heroes and Hero Worship (Carlyle).
House of Seven Gables (Hawthorne).
Ivanhoe (Scott).
Lady of the Lake (Scott).
Idylls of the King (Tennyson).
Legend of Sleepy Hollow (Irving).
Lorna Doone (Blackmore).
Lays of Ancient Rome (Macaulay).
Mazeppa and the Prisoner of Chillon
(Byron).
Pilgrim's Progress (Bunyan).
Poe's poems.
Princess (Tennyson).
Sesame and Lilies (Ruskin).
Silas Marner (Eliot).
Tale of Two Cities (Dickens).
Vicar of Wakefield (Goldsmith).
Vision of Sir Launfal (Lowell).

The collection also contains syllabi on many subjects including those from the American Society for Extension of University Teaching, and University of Chicago, University Extension division.

The Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs has urged the use of one subject programs through its Program Committee, and the following outlines have been prepared for use of federated clubs:

Literature.

Arthurian Legends.

Austen, Jane.

Bible. Literary study of Old Testament scripture.

Bible. Work of the Old Testament sages.
Browning.

• Dante.

Dickens—Tale of Two Cities.

Dramatists, Group of Modern

Eliot, George.

Eliot—Romola.

Emerson.

Hawthorne—For 12 meetings; for 18 meetings.

Hugo—Les Miserables.

Kipling.

Lamb.

Longfellow.

Lowell.

Meredith, George.

Shakespeare—Various plays.

Stevenson, R. L.

Tennyson.

Thackeray.

Tolstoi—War and Peace.

Sociology.

Civics (U. S. Government and Iowa Government).

Civics (Iowa Government).

Municipal Housekeeping.

Woman Movement (The)

History and Travel.

American History.

Canada.

English History.

Note.—Arranged for two years' course of study. The first year's study includes the early history, the Era of the Tudors and Age of the Stuarts. The second year's study includes the Age of the Georges and the Victorian Era.

England and Wales (Travel).

Holland.

Italy (Travel)—Arranged for 1 year's study; for 2 years' study.

Japan.

South America.

Switzerland (Travel).

United States (Travel).

Russia.

Fine Arts.

American Art.

English Painters.

French Painters.

Italian Art.

Italian Masters.

Child Study.

Study of the Child.

Home Economics.

Home Economics.

Household Management and Cost of Living.

REFERENCE BOOKS.

Select a subject upon which reference material is available. Find what can be obtained at the local library and ask the librarian to make a list of such material. If there is no local library and the club expects to depend on the Traveling Library, send the program to the Library Commission before printing, to make sure that books can be procured, or, send the list of what can be procured in the local library with tentative program, if books are desired from Traveling Library to supplement these books.

There is nothing which contributes more to a general lack of interest in a course of study than inability to procure reference material for topics assigned to individual club members.

Traveling Library books may be borrowed from the Library Commission and collections will be selected to suit the needs of each club. To receive the most helpful material it is absolutely necessary to file the request for books, with program, some time in advance of the need, so that careful selection may be made and books purchased, if necessary.

For applications for Traveling Library books, outlines, etc., address:

Iowa Library Commission, State Historical Building, Des Moines.

THE PRINTED PROGRAM.

If special days are to be observed, group them at beginning or end of the year's work, so that the course of study will be consecutive.

See that the subject to be studied is printed on the title page of the year book, and also the name of the town in which the club is located.

It is convenient to have a list of the reference books to be used during the year printed in the year book.

If they may be found in the local library, it should be so stated.

If the question method is used, and it proves too expensive to print the questions in the year book, they may be typewritten and duplicated on separate sheets.

It is convenient to have the year book small enough to slip into a large envelope.

Federated clubs find it desirable to print the list of officers of the I. F. W. C. in the back of their year books.

STATE LIBRARY OF IOWA



3 1723 02083 1582