

EFFECTIVE TEACHING APPROACH

To educate others, first come to their level

THE WATERMELON HUNTERS

Adaptation of the story: "The Water-melon Hunters" by P. Ribes, s.j.

Intent of the Story

- ✓ *How to teach life habits effectively*
- ✓ *How to educate children and simple illiterate people.*
- ✓ *How to help people to help themselves.*

The Story

Once upon a time, Mr. Brown, just a visitor, entered an unknown country. All of a sudden he saw the villagers running away in horror from their fields and shouting: "Monster! Monster!" He stopped them and asked what the monster was. They replied: "A monster appeared in our fields!"

Mr. Brown went into the fields to see what that monster was, and he found that the monster was a big, huge watermelon that happened first time to grow in their fields. Mr. Brown told them not to be scared. He volunteered to free them from that monster. There and then, he went into the field holding a knife in his hands. He plucked the watermelon with his bare hands, then cut it into slices and ate it in front of their frightened eyes.

When the simple villagers saw what Brown did, they got even more scared and alarmed now, not about the water melon, but about Mr. Brown. They said: "This man is too powerful! Very soon he will cut us also into slices and eat us!" So, they entreated him to leave their land as soon as possible.

Some time later, a certain Mr. John happened to visit those villagers when a similar incident happened. Terrified, the villagers were fleeing from the village screaming: "Monster! Monster!"

Mr. John, the new visitor, sized up the situation and in order to gain the villagers' confidence, he ran away from the fields along with them shouting: "Monster! Monster! : "Yes, it is a monster! It 's dangerous!"

Soon after that, the villagers became very friendly with him. Later on, Mr. John progressively, started giving them some hints on cultivation, and on how to grow fruits and plants. Sometime later, even to grow watermelons, which now they all cultivated in their fields and which they relish at their meals.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

- While educating the simple and the illiterate and children, we cannot be in a hurry. It is a lengthy and progressive process. There are no short-cuts.
- We have to come down to the level where they are now and slowly walk up with them to the place we would like them to reach.
- To help people to help themselves, we have to become one with them, understand their mentality, their prejudices and fears. We cannot disabuse them, all of a sudden, of their errors and mistaken views.
- We cannot discount people's perceptions and fears even if they look irrational to us. . To them, their perceptions look real.
- Parents and teachers too should not discount their children's feelings and fears but accept them.
- For children their problems are always big! Don't dismiss them easily.
- When they are wrong or mistaken, do not scold them, but patiently, consistently and lovingly show them the right way
- Rather than to rescue them from their mistakes and apprehensions, patiently, we have to help them to help themselves. In the course of time, their attitudes will change
- We have no right to forcefully thrust on others what we consider "good", "true", "right" or "civilized" according to our way of thinking.
- First, we have get them to see that what we teach them is good", "true", "right" and "civilized"
- Many a zealous and well meaning social workers, finally, felt disappointed when after trying to improve the condition of poor villagers and slum dwellers, they felt rejected and not wanted.
- Illiterate people are not able take easily to schooling, formal education, and new technological methods of farming, hygienic habits, and strange food patterns without proper preparation.