A Nursery School Project at Duke Memorial Methodist Church began at the request of a number of mothers in our church. A committee was appointed by the Board of Christian Education to investigate the desire for and possibility of such a school.

The Committee liked the plan of The Cooperative Nursery of Willow Run, Michigan and to that plan it is indebted for most of the suggested set-up herein described.

The suggested plan calls for a Nursery School to be held at Duke Memorial Methodist Church two days each week for children between the ages of two and five inclusive. The hours presumably would be from 9:00 o'clock to 12:00 o'clock. Tuition would be five dollars per month per child or eight dollars per month for two children in the same family. One trained employed worker would be secured and mother assistants would regularly participate in the work of the Nursery School. Further details of the administration will be found in the following pages. Enrollment would be limited to not more than twenty five children in the beginning.
The Nursery School seeks to provide for the Pre-School child a place to learn life by living for a short time at least in a world which is designed to fit him as a child as well as a potential adult. Here he has the opportunity to work out his particular problems with his contemporaries and to resolve his disturbances free from adult censure. The Nursery School in the Church, through its homelike atmosphere and its friendly, understanding leadership seeks to give each child a happy association with the church. It should provide many opportunities for the child to learn the joy of being with friends and learn to share, take turns, and play with others. Play is his medium of expression. Through it he learns how to give and take, about the rights of others and how to modify his own desires to meet the requirements of the society in which he lives, without losing his identity as a person. The teacher will endeavor to interpret religiously these experiences. She will teach religion by her very manner, the way she enters into the experiences of little children, and the way she works with other leaders and parents. Through his numerous play experiences the child will be guided so that he becomes a member of a group who are learning to live on their level the Christian way of life.

The Cooperative Nursery operates on the basis of a group of parents working together to provide a 'living space' for their children. Here parents as well as children have a chance to develop themselves for they live together with a group of children in a situation where the standards are those of childhood and not the customs of an adult world. It is important that all the parents involved take an active rather than a passive part in working out details for a cooperative nursery program. We as adults cannot hope to teach our children a way of living which we think important by word of mouth, but only by living out along with them the principles of life we would want them to live by.
PARENT PARTICIPATION

Mother Assistance

At the beginning of each quarter, the Mother Assistance Chairman will draw up a schedule assigning mothers for duty each morning. Each mother is asked whether or not she has a preference as to days of the week or times in the quarter.

In case an emergency should arise and it is impossible for a mother to work on the day scheduled, she is responsible for securing a substitute among the other mothers. Only a mother of a child enrolled in the school may serve as a substitute. When a member asks another to substitute for her she should make arrangements at that time to assist on one of the days scheduled for her substitute.

General Meeting

Once a month a general meeting of all the mothers is held at the church and attendance at this meeting is compulsory. Sometimes a program will be planned and a short business meeting will be held. The other times, meetings are given over completely to business, when policies of the nursery school are determined and discussed.

Work Night

A work night will be held as often as needed. Equipment will be kept in repair by the parents and it is at this time that the fathers are especially appreciated. All parents are required to participate and the Equipment Chairman will assign special tasks to any who are unable to attend the regular work nights. Experience has shown that these are among the most enjoyable of all meetings for they provide splendid opportunities for the members to become better acquainted.

MEMBERSHIP

Number

The nursery will be limited to twenty five children at present.

Age

Children must have reached their second birthday by registration day and not yet have reached their sixth birthday.

Health Certificate

On registration day each child will receive a health blank which must be filled out and signed by a physician stating that that child is free from contagious disease and physically fit to attend nursery school.

Waiting List

The waiting list is composed of people who have indicated a desire to be in the nursery. When a vacancy occurs it is filled by the first person on the list.
ADMINISTRATION OF THE GROUP

The suggested officers with their responsibilities are as follows:

Elective Officers

I. Chairman
   a. conducts general meetings
   b. supervises the administration of the group

II. Vice-chairman
   a. serves as program chairman
      1. arranges for program or speaker
      2. introduces speakers
      3. handles publicity
   b. substitutes for chairman in case of absence.

III. Secretary
   a. keeps minutes of general and board meetings
   b. takes care of correspondence

IV. Treasurer
   a. makes bank deposits
   b. pays bills
   c. keeps record of income and expenditures
   d. automatically becomes chairman of the Budget Committee

V. Co-treasurer
   a. collects tuition
   b. records individual payments
   c. notifies people in arrears

Committee Chairmen

I. Membership Chairman
   a. takes applications for membership
   b. calls on new applicants and explains operation of school.
   c. keeps file on waiting list
   d. posts an up-to-date list of children dropped and added in the nursery
   e. notifies co-treasurer immediately in case of dropped or added children.

II. Mother Assistance Chairman
   a. schedules days for assisting
   b. notifies mothers by card when they are to be dropped because of rule violation.

III. Equipment Chairman
   a. purchases supplies and equipment in cooperation with department superintendent
   b. schedules and supervises work nights
IV Transportation Chairman
a. arranges car pools for transportation of children who need it
b. checks on observance of safety rules for driving children
c. determines fee to be collected by the driver daily.

V Communications Chairman
a. notifies mothers by card of meetings when designated
b. notifies members of any emergency
c. notifies mother assistants by card of assisting days.

VI Duplicating Chairman - makes/necessary printed matter for distribution to the group.
General Hints on the Play Program

On the day of mother assisting each mother ought to be on hand ten minutes before the nursery school program begins. This makes it possible for her to help children off with their clothing and to assist them in hanging their clothing in the proper place. Never permit a child the freedom of the building, as he can so easily leave by one of the many entrances without anyone being aware that he has done so.

On entering the nursery the children are allowed to select any activity which they desire. The shy child or the child who is having his first experience should be given an opportunity to look around and to feel his way into the group at his own rate of speed. However, a smile or a pat on the head sometimes helps to reduce the strangeness of a situation. Each mother assistant will be assigned by the teacher an area of play for which she is responsible. It is best to sit near that particular area. This does not mean that we direct the play according to our adult standards, but rather allow the children to develop an activity according to their needs, offering positive suggestion only when asked for or when conflict arises which the children themselves find it impossible to solve without danger to other members in the group. This takes personal patience and judgment. The mother assistant will find it best to handle a given situation in which she finds herself according to her personality and understanding of young children. In return she will allow other mother assistants the same right, recognizing that the ability to adjust to various types of personalities is part of the growing up process and that the people with whom the child lives, namely his parents, exert the greatest amount of influence, in the long run. Sometimes it is necessary to move from your own area of responsibility in order to handle a situation for which, at the moment, no one is free to cope. An occasional surveying of the whole nursery room will keep you posted and the exchange of casual glances with the teacher and other mother-assistants will iron out problems of divided authority. It is sometimes helpful to remember that some problems cannot be worked out IDEALLY on the spot as the causes may not be clear at that precise moment. We cannot always know what the justice of a given situation might be as the children would view it.

A large group of children require closer supervision in the interests of safety than one child might. Children tend to stimulate each other, to imitate and, like adults, to act in groups with less judgment than when alone. This means that rules for use of equipment must be observed which would be unnecessary for one child, i.e., use of shovels in a sand box. To the child in the middle of an uncomfortable situation a mere 'no' is usually not an adequate solution. He may need an understanding of the HOW we use certain pieces of equipment. This explained in a quiet well modulated voice, and then allowing him to use the equipment correctly under your guidance, with a smile of well done, may solve the problem for him without his losing his pride. Sometimes the 'how' of things is clearly understood but when many individuals are doing things together a child may become confused and forget that which under normal circumstances he well understood. A substitute activity or a reorganization of the present activity may help. Conflict cannot be avoided in life and all of us have to learn how to use it for growing.
RULES AND REGULATIONS

Cooperation

1. Mother assistants must work their full quota of days.
2. If a mother assistant is more than one half hour late arriving at the nursery on the day she is scheduled to assist, she is scheduled for an additional day.
3. Every mother must attend all scheduled meetings.
4. If a mother is absent from more than two of her responsibilities without a legitimate excuse she is automatically dropped from the nursery.
5. Every mother is required to mark every piece of wearing apparel that the child wears to, or leaves at nursery school. Blankets must also be marked.

Finance

1. All fees must be paid when due.
2. Unless the entire quarter's tuition is paid in advance, one dollar must be deposited to be returned if all fees are up to date when the child leaves school.
3. Two weeks notice must be given when a member drops or his dollar deposit is forfeited.
4. One week after the beginning of each pay period a notice is sent to members in arrears warning them that their fees are overdue. If, at the end of the next week these fees are still not paid, the member is automatically dropped.

Health

1. Each mother must have the health certificate signed by a physician stating that her child is physically fit to attend nursery school. This certificate must be turned in to the teacher.