

## **The Everywhere Classroom**

*"Dad" Thomas R. Labagh, Executive Officer*

Everything we do in DeMolay provides you, as an Advisor, an opportunity to teach lessons and skills that will benefit your Chapter, but more importantly, the young man you are mentoring.

Sometimes, when Advisors focus on just the task at hand, they often miss the bigger picture. If you are the advisor to a committee, and you know that the group's task is to implement a program, or to accomplish a particular Chapter goal, you can sometimes get bogged down in focusing on a successful outcome.

For the young men of the Chapter, meeting the GOAL is the most important thing-- a fund-raiser that makes money-- a service project that is appreciated-- a degree well-conducted-- a competition or tournament won. As an advisor, however, your aim should be significantly different, because the outcome is of little consequence. What should matter to you is the process the Chapter members follow--their journey to accomplishing their goals.

Whether or not the Chapter achieves success or fails in any individual project makes little overall difference, if the members learn something in route to the final result. They might learn something about their planning method, how to "checklist" so as not to miss one or two essential details. They might learn about leading by example, or about motivating their peers. They might learn the importance of humility in competition, or they might learn that victory is sweeter after having been a "perpetual bridesmaid." The worst that can happen is that they learn nothing from their DeMolay experience.

You have the opportunity to direct their learning. You can provide a positive result, even in a negative situation. You can ask questions to help them increase their understanding. You can share your experiences, to help them broaden their point of perspective. You can suggest alternative solutions to their concerns. You can be a sounding board, to let them think out loud and debrief their own impressions. Most importantly, you can be the touchstone for their moral evaluations.

But I'm not a teacher! I can't think up concepts to teach!

You don't have to. Just use the DeMolay program, as described in the Leader's Resource Guide and the Rules and Regulations of DeMolay International. For example: the program calls for program planning by the Master Councilor, and this provides you the opportunity to teach ALL the Councilors the method to complete the task.

Every DeMolay Chapter is required, by the Rules and Regulations, to include in their program the seven Obligatory Days. This allows you to explain the meaning of the word, "obligatory," and to encourage them to find new and exciting ways to complete the observances.

Every Chapter is to have a Scribe and a Treasurer, but small Chapters often combine them into one officer, or even surrender these responsibilities to advisors. Instead, share the responsibilities. Let every member take a turn at taking minutes during a meeting- help them to learn what is important to record, and what can be left out of the record of the meeting. Assign some of the Treasurer's work to the Senior Deacon or another officer whose job is usually ceremonial. Help him learn how to review a receipt, issue a voucher, write a check, make a deposit, or verify a balance.

The DeMolay program affords numerous prospects for you to teach basic organizational and leadership skills to your members. If you place your trust in the young men of your Chapter, and allow them to make the decisions that will direct their activities, you will find plenty of opportunities to teach them about scheduling, budgeting, allocating resources, leadership, stewardship, motivation, planning, perseverance, trust, reliability, and real world applications of the DeMolay virtues.