

ITALIAN INSTITUTE AND CENTRAL CHAPEL
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI By J. B. Bisceglia
Junior Choir

Thousands of people are blessed each year by the ministry of this splendid mission of the Presbyterian Church. Converts from the Institute have gone to various parts of the United States and to four foreign countries persevering in the faith and carrying forward the banner of Jesus Christ. During the thirty-two years of its ministry to the Italians of Kansas City hundreds have accepted Christ as Saviour, and many young people have dedicated their lives to Christian service.

Child Welfare Station

In 1920 the Child Welfare Station began its work at the Italian Institute. Two outstanding medical specialists were secured, one for mothers and the other for babies, and a younger man to assist them in their work. A nurse from the Kansas City Visiting Nurse Association is cooperating in the ministry of healing. Thousands of people have been benefited by this agency. The attendance at the clinic for the last twelve months was 1,635, besides 1,278 treatments and dressings.

Nursery School

The Kindergarten was one of the first activities started in 1908. In 1920, anticipating the modern interest in the pre-school age child, we opened the first Nursery School in our city. Today we have two groups, one in the old building and one in the new, with an enrollment of 70. Free and supervised play, handwork, a mid-morning meal of graham crackers and milk, rest periods, stories and songs comprise their activities.

Blue Bird Club

Girls' Work

Our work for girls was started in 1918 with a Girl Reserve group, and we have gone through the various phases of Blue Birds, Campfire, Brownies and Girl Scouts, young women Circles and Mothers Club. Today we have the only Auxiliary made up of women who have come from across the sea, and their daughters who were born and reared in our country numbering 80. Besides this activity we have a Friendship Circle, Blue Birds, Campfire, Northeast Junior Girls' Circle and Northeast High School Girls' Circle. The aggregate attendance for the fiscal year was 3,407.

Boys' Work

Our boys' work was started in 1920 with just a volunteer worker. This first attempt was followed by the employment of young men preparing themselves for various careers, among whom we are happy to number the Rev. Walter B. Passiglia, who served for almost ten years; the Rev. Veto Venezia, who served for eleven years, Mr. Sam Passiglia, now a high school teacher, who served for seven years, and Mr. Charles Fazio, now a dental student, who served for two years. The present worker, Mr. John LaForte, a student for the Gospel Ministry, has served about two years. The following list of activities will give you an idea of the extent of our work: A Boy Scout Troop No. 107, two cub packs, three boys' clubs, basketball and baseball teams, manual training, Gymnasium and Playground supervision. The aggregate number served during 1939 was 25,559.

Girls' Junior Club

Italian Institute Court of Honor April 15, 1940.

Woman's Auxiliary Religious Organizations

A complete religious program is conducted on Sunday and during the week, with the following activities: Two Church Schools with an enrollment of 227, a Junior Church with an average attendance of 15, Morning Service in English and Evening Service in Italian with an active membership of 240, a Christian Endeavor Society, and an Intermediate Kingdom Highway with an active roll of 55, and mid-week prayer meeting with an average attendance of 55.

Our main Church School is manned almost entirely by young people from Italian Institute and consists of eight departments from Cradle Roll to Young People's.

This is the first picture of our elders and deacons, representatives of our manhood and the hope for a more perfect and more useful church organization.

Dr. Bisceglia and the Church Officers

Mrs. Bisceglia and the Senior Intermediate Choir

Music Department

This department has been under the general direction of Mrs. J. B. Bisceglia, as a work of love since she came to Kansas City, Mo., in 1919. With her unusual ability and energy, she has been teaching piano, directing our choirs, playing the piano or the organ for all our services, as well as being a mother or a sister to every one who has been in need of her services. Hundreds and hundreds of children have been introduced to the enobling influence of Music at the Mission, during all these years. In each department: piano, voice and violin, we have met with some outstanding success. The Institute helped a most promising young woman to return to Italy for advanced vocal studies, and two young men at the Kansas City Conservatory in the violin and voice departments.

Daily Vacation Bible School

The Italian Institute is practically the only agency in Kansas City that still conducts a five-week period Daily Vacation Bible School for hundreds of neighborhood children. It is very interesting to notice that over seventy-five per cent of the children come from nominally Roman Catholic homes. During the last five years we have created our own programs which are better suited to the needs of our children.

As an illustration, two years ago, anticipating general conditions, we selected as our topic: "My America." The five weeks were

divided as follows: first week, "A New Nation Under God"; second week, "Americans All-Immigrants All"; third week, "Building a Strong Nation"; fourth week, "Building a Friendly Nation," and fifth week, "Building a Christian Nation."

Since the main motif is religious, all stories, songs, music, games, and handicraft work revolve as much as possible around the main topic. We strive to enrich the life of every boy and girl with twenty-five Bible verses, twenty-five Bible stories and as many choruses and hymns.

During the school year we conduct a similar program on Saturday afternoon, one at the Institute and the other at the Branch.

Church Services There are two distinctive congregations: the first is made up of Young People with a service entirely in English at 11:00 a. m., the Junior Church meets also at this time; the second is made up of older people, who meet at 7:00 p. m., and their service is entirely in Italian.

We are doing extension work in our new building with a Church School on Sunday

afternoon, conducted by a group of teachers from our main Sunday School.

During the week we conduct a prayer meeting in Italian on Thursday evening at which time we show slides on different parts of the Bible.

The New Building

EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

The Executive Committee of Home Missions Presbyterian Church in the United States, 573 W. Peachtree St., N. E., Atlanta, Georgia.