



When I Grow Up, I Want to Be...

By Melodee Simmons, Preschool/Early Childhood Learning Centers Representative

Have you ever taught a president, a doctor, a firefighter, a pastor, or a teacher? You never know what those little children you teach will become one day. Think about the terrific opportunity you have to influence our future leaders.

Most people would say we need to educate the children for their future. That is true, but there is so much more we can do for them to prepare them for their future careers.

Besides the academics, we need to give them the life skills they will need in any career they choose. Teaching students virtues like kindness and compassion as well as skills for making good choices and conflict resolution can be a good foundation, preparing them for any occupation they choose throughout their lives.

Career Centers

What else can you do to help the children with their future careers?

How about introducing them to many careers?

First, you can introduce students to wonderful children's books that show different occupations. Read such books with the children and talk about what each person does. You will find they want to hear certain ones over and over.

Set up a center in your class with costumes of different careers and pictures of or the objects used in the careers. You can buy these things; however, if you tell the parents what you are doing and what you need, they will be glad to help you obtain some of the items. Encourage the children to pretend they are working in a particular occupation—perhaps that of a doctor. Let them take turns telling what they

would do as a doctor. It is amazing to find out how much the children know about various professions. It will surprise them to learn about many different occupations!

Best of all, invite people, including parents, to come to your class to talk about their occupations and even tools and equipment they use in their job. Perhaps schedule the fire department to visit your class. When I invite the police to visit with the children in my school in Texas, they bring their patrol car and let the children see it. Sometimes, they bring the horses from the mounted patrol and the dogs from the K-9 unit. The children love to see the animals. Inviting the dentist in your area is another option. How about your county animal control person or the local zoo keeper? You won't lack ideas!

You Had a Part in Their Careers!

We are not trying to help the children select a career. We are trying to expose them to the many career fields so they are aware of the different choices and will learn more about them as they mature.

Just think, that wild little boy could become a surgeon who saves lives, or the shy little girl could serve on the Supreme Court. Just think, you had a part in it!

Melodee Simmons has worked in early childhood education for more than 30 years. She has worked in private corporate-owned centers in Christian and secular preschools. She currently serves at the Giraffe Kids Learning Center and Development Academy in Houston, Texas. She has received her national director credential. She attends Living Word Church of the Nazarene. You may contact Melodee at melodee.simmons@yahoo.com.