

How to Provide A Substitute Teacher in Rural Schools
(About 300 Words)
By Marilyn Kratz

I had just earned a one-year teaching certificate when I took my first job in a small rural school nine miles south of Scotland, over 50 years ago. My students responded to me with respect and eagerness to learn. I loved them and my work.

That's why, when I woke up one school day with stomach flu, I panicked. We had no such thing as substitute teachers in the county. How would I let my students know there could be no school that day?

I didn't know if they had phones in their homes - most likely they did, even though there was none in the school house. But I had no list of their phone numbers. I had no way of letting them know I was too ill to teach.

At that time, my brother was living with my parents, as was I. Just out of the army, he hadn't found a job yet.

"Please be my substitute teacher today," I begged him. He had nothing else to do that day, so he agreed to go.

I sent him off with a long list of instructions. All morning, I worried and wondered how things were going.

By noon, I was feeling better and missing my students. I drove to school to relieve my brother.

When I walked into the school room, I saw the students happily at work. My little first grade girl was sitting contentedly on my brother's lap as he went over the reading lesson with her and her classmate.

Of course, my students were glad to see me, but they had had a wonderful morning with my brother. In fact, some of them continued to be friends with him into adulthood. His one and only experience as a substitute teacher had been successful, much to my relief.