

Catechism 2016-2017
Bethesda Mennonite Church
Andrea Wall, Pastor of Faith Formation

Purpose: “The purpose of catechism is to build disciples of Christ and to baptize them into the body of Christ at Bethesda Mennonite Church where they are equipped and participate as faithful followers of Christ.”

Syllabus

God’s Story

Purpose: Using Michelle Hershberger’s (Bible Professor at Hesston College) book God’s Story, Our Story alongside the Bible, each student will be invited to join in the conversation about how God has been working in human history to restore us and all of creation to wholeness. Centering on Jesus, the youth will have an opportunity to claim God’s story as their own. This section of Catechism will include:

- Creating a timeline of God’s Story
- Reading the Bible along side God’s Story, Our Story
- Scripture memorization
- Participating in scripture reading on Maundy Thursday Service
- Studying Bethesda church history
- Studying Mennonite church history
- Answering the question – What is a Mennonite anyway?
- Looking at the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective
- Explore Spiritual Disciplines: Meditation, Prayer and Study

Our Story

Purpose: As we chose God’s Story as a part of our own by trusting in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and choosing to follow him in our lives, then the conversation of what it means to be a part of the body of Christ (the Church) begins. Baptism is a celebration within the church, which recognizes a person’s desire and commitment to follow Jesus and welcomes them into membership in the church. During this section, we will look at what baptism is and why it matters. During this time the youth will prepare and present their testimonies to the congregation and will be baptized.

- Understanding what it means to be a part of the body (Church Membership)
- Creating a personal timeline of their own story
- Participating in the Testimony Retreat
- Preparing a written testimony, reviewed by the pastors
- Sharing their testimony with the congregation
- Meet with the Deacons in preparation for Baptism
- Participating in the Baptism service
- Explore Spiritual Disciplines: Fasting, Confession, Solitude

Living into the Story

Purpose: After baptism, we will talk about what it means to follow Jesus Christ and be a member of His body, the church. During this time we will explore different ways to grow spiritually by reviewing Richard Foster's book, Celebration of Disciplines. We will explore our spiritual gifts and how we can use them to serve God and others. We will also begin looking at what does it mean to follow Christ as peacemakers.

- Finish reading the book God's Story, Our Story
- Scripture Memorization
- Learn about and practice inward, outward and corporate spiritual disciplines
- Practice living into membership expectations of Bethesda Mennonite Church
- Fill out the Celebration of Gifts Survey
- Explore Spiritual Disciplines: Guidance and Worship
- Discuss Peacemaker Registration Form

Their Story

Purpose: In Matthew, Mark and Luke Jesus says the most important command is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul mind and strength. But he doesn't stop there. He also challenges us to look beyond ourselves to others. He says "Love your neighbor as yourself." This section of Catechism we will talk about what it means to love your neighbor in the name of Jesus Christ.

Using the "Peace DVD" resource we will talk about how our lives and choices can show God's love to others. The youth will be challenged to own their faith and make personal decisions about how they will live when faced with questions like: How will you treat your enemies? Would you risk your life for your faith? Will you share your faith if it is unpopular? Will you be a good steward even if it requires sacrifice?

Using the "3 Story" DVD curriculum, we will talk about how to share our faith with others and how through relationship to invite them to trust Jesus with their lives. We will focus on the skills of listening, being real, depending on Jesus, loving others, tying their story to God's Story and helping them to claim God's Story as part of their own story.

- 3 Story Video and Exercises
- Scripture Memorization
- Talking about service opportunities and Bethesda Scholarships
- Fill out the Christian Peacemaker Registration form (helps youth to discern between participating in the military or becoming a conscientious objector)
- Explore Spiritual Disciplines: Simplicity, Service and Celebration
- Discuss how to be a disciple beyond Catechism
- End of the Year Party

Calendar

(Deacon and Parent approval will be needed to finalize the calendar)

1. When to meet?

Sunday late afternoon/evening – 2 hours every other week

2. What dates work for the following activities?

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Oct. 9 or 16 | Catechism formally begins (meet in the conference room) |
| Jan. 8 | Church History Night |
| Apr. 13 | Maundy Thursday Service (evening service - Youth read scripture) |
| Mar./Apr. | Testimony Retreat |
| May | Draft of Testimony |
| May | During Catechism meet with the Deacons in preparation for Baptism |
| June | Baptism and Testimonies during Morning Worship (around Pentecost?)
Welcome Social for new Members in FH during SS hour |
| Dec. 2017 | Last Class |
| Jan. 2018 | Party |

Resources

Core Curriculum:

End of the Spear. [DVD] William Bowling and Bill Ewing, 2006.

Epp, Robert O. One Hundred Years of Bethesda Mennonite Church.

Foster, Richard. Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth. New York, HarperCollins Publishers, 1978.

Hershberger, Michele. God's Story, Our Story: Exploring Christian Faith and Life. Scottsdale, PA: Faith and Life Resources, 2003.

Rahn, Dave. 3 Story: Preparing for a Lifestyle of Evangelism. Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 2006.

The Mennonite Handbook. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2007.

Peace DVD. [DVD] Mennonite Media Productions, 2005.

Thieszen Preheim, B. Lois. Here We Stand: Reverend Arnold Nickel and the Bethesda Mennonite Church During the Korean War. Henderson, NE: Blue River Publishing, 2011.

Wismer, Cathy. Mennonite Mystery/History Nite.

Reference Material:

Clawson, Julie. Everyday Justice, The Global Impact of our Daily Choices. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books, 2009.

Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995.

Golden, Don and Rob Bell. Jesus Wants to Save Christians – A Manifesto for the Church in Exile. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2008.

Loewen, Harry and Steven Nolt. Through Fire and Water: An Overview of Mennonite History. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1996.

Novelli, Michael. Enter the Story – 7 Experiences to Unlock the Bible for Your Students. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2010.

Roth, John D. Beliefs: Mennonite Faith and Practice. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2005.

Catechism Covenant

As a catechumen, I will...

1. Take ownership for growing in my faith by participating in the Catechism gatherings and events, Wednesday night activities, Sunday morning worship.
2. I will be accountable for attending Catechism classes, retreats and events (see calendar) with the help of my parents and Pastor Andrea.
3. I will inform Pastor Andrea and Pastor Jim if I will not be in attendance.
4. I have checked my calendar and will be at the March 5, April 6 & 17, May 4, June 15 events.
5. I will be accountable for keeping up on catechism readings and assignments.
6. I will engage my parents and/or mentor on the weekly assignments/discussions.
7. I will bring my journal, Bible, notebook, pen or pencil and the book being studied to each class session.
8. I will attend Sunday morning worship at Bethesda Mennonite Church sitting as a catechism class in the pews reserved for catechumens.
9. Practice Christian community by;
 - a. Speaking with honesty,
 - b. Giving space for all to speak,
 - c. Exhibiting patience,
 - d. Listening with grace,
 - e. Enjoying the diversity of personalities in the catechism class,
 - f. Allowing myself to enjoy my further training as a follower of Christ at Bethesda Mennonite Church.
10. Respond to Christ and the body of believers through my faithful participation at Bethesda Mennonite Church both during and after catechism.

Catechumen Signature

Date

Cell Phone: _____ Texting Yes No

Cell Phone Provider: _____

Email: _____

As parents, we commit to nurturing our catechumen's decision to receive discipleship training as a follower of Christ for the purpose of baptism into the body of Bethesda Mennonite Church by modeling Godliness and earnestly supporting activities and assignments in catechism. We will participate in a weekly assignments.

Parents Signature

Date

Cell Phone: _____ Texting Yes No

Email: _____

Best way to communicate weekly: _____ Text _____ Email _____ Other: _____

Discussion with Students and Parents: