

Basic Curriculum for Christian Education of First United Methodist Church

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Curriculum from denominational publishing houses is not always the same from year to year, or one quadrennium after another. And whatever the curriculum source, over the years there seems to be repetition of some of the 'highlight' stories, without touching on some other basic Biblical and/or traditional stories, passages, skills and information that students might find helpful later in life.

There seems a need for baseline, biblically-based, foundational Christian teachings for which the local church must assume the responsibility to teach the next generations. Who knows, in the process, perhaps some of the current generation may also come to a new or renewed appreciation for our biblical heritage! For your consideration, I present the following list of passages and statements for consideration and possible inclusion into our 'basic curriculum.'

The Lord's Prayer

[Kindergarten]

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

{*Matthew 6: 9–13; Luke 11:2–4*}

John 3:16

[1st Grade]

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (NRSV)

The 23rd Psalm

[2nd grade]

1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;

3 he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil;

for you are with me; your rod and your staff-- they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

(*New Revised Standard Version: NRSV*)

The Ten Commandments

[3rd grade]

1. You shall have no other gods before me.

2. You shall not worship any graven image.

3. You shall not take God's name in vain.

4. Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy.

5. Honor your father and your mother.

6. You shall not kill.

7. You shall not commit adultery.

8. You shall not steal.

9. You shall not bear false witness.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.
{Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21}

Order of the Books of the Christian Testament [4th grade]

Order of the Books of the Hebrew Testament [5th grade]

The Apostle's Creed [6th grade]

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died, and was buried;
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
Is seated at the right hand of the Father,
And will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy [catholic]* church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen.

OPTIONS - for any age

The Greatest Commandment (Luke 10:27; Mark 12:30; Matthew 22:37)
The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)
The Gloria Patri
Scripture passages and/or stories
I Corinthians 13 (NRSV)

The 12 Disciples {Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13}

Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas,
James son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus (Lebbaeus?), Simon the Zealot, Judas Iscariot

The Doxology

Praise God, from Whom all Blessings Flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen

The Beatitudes (NRSV: Matthew 5:3-12)

- 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- 5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
- 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
- 10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- 11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
- 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven,
for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Psalm 150 (NRSV)

- 1 Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament!
- 2 Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness!
 - 3 Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!
 - 4 Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!
 - 5 Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
 - 6 Let everything that breathes praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

TEACHING NOTES on the "Basic Curriculum"

To require memorization of the above items might be more devastating to individuals and divisive of classes than it is worth. This would be in addition to the frustration of the classroom teacher, whose entire class memorizes at a different pace, guaranteeing some helter-skelter in the classroom! Of course it is appropriate to memorize and be able to recite, but I am wary about making it a requirement across the board. Instead, consider...

Does the student grasp what it's about?

Can the student put the (or 'a') meaning or application in her/his own words?

What evidence is there to show the student worked with the materials?

This may be pictures, tape recordings, video, whatever!

Oral 'testing' of the material may be done most comfortably as a group, all together. Do not use this material to create winners and losers in your class!!! ALL are Winners in Jesus' love!

It is also understood that a variety of modes of study should be made available to the teachers of these items. Make manipulative games; order movies or games or kits from the Iowa Religious Media Services; create interactive games/activities; be creative!!! In addition, it is possible that we will, hopefully sooner than later but we're not sure, have available a computer lab for such teaching-learning settings. I recommend these games and activities be catalogued and kept for use and exchange by all teachers and Christian educators in the church.

Another source for teaching resources is old curriculum, the church library, perhaps the pastor's library. You could even host an "Idea Fair" when persons will have constructed an activity or game and they would display it for all to see.