**Catechism 2020**

**Bethesda Mennonite Church**

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:

**Class Time**

* 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
* A Family Meal at Church following SS – students, parents and grandparents or a mentor (if grandparents aren’t local) are invited

**At Home**

* Read God’s Story, Our Story in preparation for next class
* Students and Parents watching a video that matches the themes in God’s Story, Our Story (produced by the Presbyterian church) and participating in discussions. Please take notes about what you discussed and have your youth bring them to the following class.

**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.

**Class Time (2x a month)**

* 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
* Studying Mennonite church history (Living the Anabaptist Story) and Bethesda Church History
* What does it mean to be a Mennonite (Mennonite Handbook)
* Understanding what it means to be a part of the body (Church Membership)
* Church History Night

**At Home**

* Assigned reading in preparation for next class
* Discussion Questions. Please take notes about what you discussed and have your youth bring them to the following class.

**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.

**Class Time (2x a month)**

* Finish reading the book God’s Story, Our Story
* Scripture Memorization
* Learn about and practice inward, outward and corporate spiritual disciplines
* Family Meal at Church following SS

**At Home**

* Practice Spiritual Disciplines together regularly as a family
* Fill out the Celebration of Gifts Survey (one per person)

**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.

**Class Time (2x a month)**

* Scripture Memorization
* Talking about service opportunities and Bethesda Scholarships
* Discuss Peacemaker Registration Form (helps youth to discern between participating in the military or becoming a conscientious objector)
* Optional: Fill out the Christian Peacemaker Registration form
* Discuss how to be a disciple beyond Catechism

**At Home**

* Continue a regular family faith practice of your choosing
* Plan a family service project (options: Angel Tree, School Kit Night, Canner, other)

**FAQ:**

When will we meet?

* SS in Powerhouse Room – (11-12 pm)
* Family Meal at Church (occasionally)
* Weekly at Home Conversations, Reading or a Video

What are the Important Dates?

* Catechism Kick Off March 8
* Maundy Thursday Service April 9 (evening)
* Family Meals following SS TBD
* Testimony Retreat May 3 (Sunday from SS – late afternoon)
* Draft of Testimony Due May 17
* Church History Night TBD
* Baptism and Welcome Social (SS hour) May 31
* Class Ends January 2020

What will I need:

* Journal
* Something to Write With
* Bible
* Books provided by church
* Access to bmcfaithformation.com
* Either a suit or a white dress for Baptism

**Resources:**

* <http://www.bmcfaithformation.com> - See the Catechism page for links and resources.
* God’s Story, Our Story (Book provided by church)
* Living the Anabaptist Story (Book provided by the church)
* Mennonite Handbook (Book provided by the church)
* <http://www.ourstoriesgodsstory.org> (Video provided by Presbyterian Church for study at home)
* <http://mennoniteusa.org/confession-of-faith/>

**Teachers:**

Pastor Andrea Wall,

 402-710-3195 (cell), andrea@mainstaycomm.net

Pastors and Guests from Bethesda Mennonite Church

Each Other (Students, Parents, Grandparents/Mentors)

**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 school and 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 for the possible dates and will communicate to Pastor Andrea if they work.
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;
	1. Speaking with honesty,
	2. Giving space for all to speak,
	3. Exhibiting patience,
	4. Listening with grace,
	5. Enjoying the diversity of personalities in the catechism class,
	6. 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:

**Resources**

**Core Curriculum:**

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. Scottdale, PA: Faith and Life Resources, 2003.

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

The Mennonite Handbook. Scottdale, 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. Scottdale, 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. Scottdale, 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. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2005.