



Christian Education

A Manual for Parents and Teachers

Reformed Presbyterian Church of North Hills

Pittsburgh, PA

Table of Contents

	Page Number
Objectives for the Christian Education Program	2
Ideals of the Christian Education Program	2
Policy on Background Checks	3
Outline of the Christian Education Program	4-5
Memory Work Program	6-7
Appendix 1: Rationale for the Curriculum	8
Appendix 2: Evening Program Description	9-11

Objectives for the Christian Education Program

- 1) Each child would come to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a desire to do His will.
 - 2) Each child would have a thorough understanding of the Bible - having been exposed to the content of Scripture, its historical background and some basic theological issues.
 - 3) Each child would be helped to grow in the Christian life through scripture memory and learning to apply Scriptural principles to personal situations.
-

The ideals of the Christian Education program are, by God's grace, to produce mature Christian believers who:

- Have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- Become communicant members of their local church.
- Desire to know, and do, the will of God.
- Understand, love, and are committed to the doctrinal distinctives of the RPCNA.
- Love the Word of God, demonstrated by a consistent reading program through the Bible.
- Know how to study the Bible using various devotional and Bible study methods.
- Are aware of basic Christian resources for study and finding answers to questions.
- Demonstrate an ability to properly apply the scriptures to his/her own personal life.
- Demonstrate a consistent devotional life involving scripture memorization and prayer.
- Demonstrate a heart for serving others in the Body of Christ and in society.
- Demonstrate a love for, and a commitment to, the Body of Christ. This involves:
 - Active participation in the fellowship of the Church
 - A growing sense of belonging to the Covenant Community
 - Developing inter-generational relationships.
- Are able to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the lost.
- Have personally read the entire Bible.
- Demonstrate practical personal godliness through the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.
- Are prepared to give a reasoned answer for the hope that lies within them, in a godly manner.
- Know how to listen to and take notes on, sermons.
- Have studied the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

Policy Statement on Background Checks

The session of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in 2015, as a response to Pennsylvania legislation known as PA ACT 153, adopted a formal policy that seeks to bring the church into compliance with the law.

All adults (defined as individuals 18 years of age and older) who work with children as part of the life and ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North Hills will be required to obtain the following Pennsylvania clearances:

1. Child Abuse Clearance (Appendix A)
2. State Police Criminal Record Check (Appendix B)

The session has identified four primary groups of individuals who will be required to obtain these clearances:

- 1) All Pastors and elders in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North Hills
- 2) All Christian Education teachers and committee members
- 3) All Youth Group leaders and leaders at other youth events
- 4) Nursery Supervisors

Further details pertaining to the church's policy can be obtained by:

- 1) Reading the most updated copy of the session document entitled *"Policy in Response to ACT 153 and Related PA Acts"* or by:
- 2) Talking to Pastor Blocki, Elder William J. Weir, or Bette Clegg.
- 3) Reviewing the additional resources on the church website at <https://rpcnh.org>.

Outline of the Christian Education Program at North Hills

The morning Christian Education program is designed to be more “academic”. The morning program involves the impartation of core knowledge. (We are to love God with all our **mind.**)

The evening Christian Education program is designed to be more informal, focusing on application (discipleship, service, fellowship, and discussion).

To meet the objectives and ideals presented on the previous page, the Christian Education Committee has selected curricula and methodologies in an intentional manner. Some of the basic premises that lie behind these decisions include:¹

- A) The adoption and purchase of a “set” and cyclical curricula for the morning program:
- B) The adoption of set categories on a six-semester rotation for the evening program²
- C) The purchase of a variety of curricular materials for the evening program that leave latitude for individual class needs and teacher preference.
- D) The requirement that any additional curricular materials/suggestions should be approved by the CE committee.

Morning Curriculum

Ages 2-3

Materials published by Great Commission

Year 1: Show Me Jesus:

Fall: God’s Family

Winter: God’s Son

Spring: God’s Love

Summer: God’s People

Year 2: Show Me Jesus (See Above) along with stories from the Old and New Testament (Read with Me Bible – NIV Story Bible for Children)

Ages 4-5, K

Materials published by Truth78

Year 1: He has Spoken By His Son

New Testament Stories for Young Children

Year 2: He Established a Testimony

Old Testament Stories for Young Children

¹ See Appendix 1 for additional criteria for curriculum selection

² See Appendix 2 for descriptions of specific categories

- Grades 1-3** Materials published by Truth78
 Year 1: Faithful to All His Promises
 Year 2: Jesus, What a Savior
 Year 3: ABCs of God
- Grades 4-5** Materials published by Truth78
 Year 1: My Purposes Will Stand
 Year 2: To Be Like Jesus
- Grades 6-8** A Study of God’s Faithfulness to His Covenant Promises,
 developed by Kathy Blocki
 Year 1: Old Testament
 Year 2: Old Testament
 Year 3: New Testament
- Grades 9-12** A four year study of the Larger Catechism
 Various topics studied jointly with the adult CE Class

Evening Curriculum

The categories on a six-semester/five-category rotation for the evening program (See Appendix 2)

- ❖ Christian Living (Fall 2023)
- ❖ Creation (Spring 2024)
- ❖ Missions and Evangelism
- ❖ Christian Living
- ❖ Church History
- ❖ Christian Worldview

Church Membership class

The church membership class provides an opportunity to invite our children to become communicant members of the congregation. Typically, this involves a study of the questions contained in the covenant of church membership. This class is taught by one of our pastors and is not part of the topical rotation. It meets as the need arises.

Memory Work Program

Reformed Presbyterian Church of North Hills

The Session of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North Hills having received the recommendation of the Christian Education Committee, has adopted a new Congregational memory program. It is the hope of the session that this will be a tool that will 1) assist parents in the spiritual training of their children and 2) encourage memorization by all members of the RPCNH. A description of the new program follows:

Content:

The scripture passages we will work on memorizing as a congregation will be taken from a five year sequence developed by Children Desiring God ministries. Children Desiring God calls their selection of verses “*Fighter Verses*” (The entire Five Year program of verses can be found in Appendix 4. The length of the passages range from 1-3 verses in a unit. We currently use curriculum published by Children Desiring God Ministries in our Lower and Upper Elementary Classes during our morning Christian Education classes, so there will be a degree of natural overlap between class content and scripture memorization. We will also work on memorizing one question selected from the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* every two weeks. Children under the age of 12, will memorize one corresponding question selected from the *Children’s Catechism*. All “*Fighter Verses*” will be memorized in ESV, the translation found in our pew bibles. As a church we will begin our memorization on September 10, 2023 with the first verse of the second year of the “*Fighter Verses*” program. The memory program will continue through the Christian Education summer break.

Administration of the Program:

Each week a bulletin insert will publish the following materials:

- 1) The memory verse from the previous week
- 2) The memory verse for the upcoming week
- 3) A question from the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (one every two weeks)
- 4) A question from the *Children’s Catechism*, that parallels the selection taken from the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*.
- 5) The memory verses and Catechism questions will be recited during announcements and led by the presiding elder for the week.
- 6) Our evening classes will also be used as an opportunity for review.

Resources:

Shorter Catechism set to music: <https://www.reformedmusic.com/>

Children's Catechism set to music:

<http://www.askmewhooo.com/series.html> or

Teach Them the Faith (available at www.crownandcovenant.com)

Fighter verses set to music: <https://www.fighterverses.com/>

Truth78 Website: <https://truth78.org/>

Fighte Verses offers the following resources on its website (listed above):

An App for Android or Apple

Memory Cards

Devotionals for each set of verses (great for family worship!)

(<https://truth78.org/pages/studies-to-help-you-understand-and-apply-gods-word>)

Coloring Books and Journals to accompany the verses

Bookmarks with memory verses.

Progress charts

This is a parent-driven program, with each family being responsible for what they wish their children to learn. Obtaining signatures from members of the congregation encourages us to fulfill our membership vows and promotes intergenerational relationships. The session hopes that this program will be easier for families to manage as each member of the family will be working on the same materials simultaneously. Further, it is hoped that by congregational participation in the program, we as the people of God, will demonstrate the value of the Word of God to visitors and be further built together as we are conformed to the Word together. Finally, it is hoped that these changes to our memory program will free the teachers in our morning Christian Education classes to focus on the excellent content of the curriculum.

The memory program previously developed by the church will continue to be available as a resource on the church's website: www.rpcnh.org

Appendix 1

Rationale for Curriculum Selection

Although God alone brings the fruit of conversion and sanctification, He uses various means. We have every reason to believe, even expect, that as we set up a deliberate plan of instruction, God will use it to bring our covenant children to Himself. The *spiritual* development of our children is far more important than any other aspect of their lives (physical, intellectual, social, etc.) We take our responsibility to be faithful stewards of God's covenant seriously. By God's grace, and expected blessing, these goals will be accomplished through the establishment of a "set" curriculum at every level of instruction. The advantages of a "set" curriculum include:

- 1) The ability to achieve goals.
- 2) The ability to set high standards.
- 3) Not having continually search for curricula each year.
- 4) No longer being subject to the materials published by commercial producers of Sabbath School curricula which may not conform to our Reformed faith and standards.
- 5) More effective oversight of Sabbath School curricula by the Session.
- 6) The reduction of teacher preparation. During subsequent repetitions of the curriculum, teachers can focus more on fine-tuning effectiveness of lessons and praying for the class.
- 7) The C.E. committee will seek to periodically review the effectiveness of our chosen curricula. Any potential curriculum change will be evaluated by the criteria set forth in our Christian Education program objectives.
- 8) The ability to properly balance morning and evening topics.

Additional goals that conceptually drive the choice of curriculum:

- 1) Encouragement of parents to be involved on a daily basis in their child's spiritual growth.
- 2) Provision of curricular materials that can serve as the basis for preparing parents to lead family devotions.
- 3) Establishment of a "whole church" vision for discipleship.

Note on Cyclical Curricula:

Classes are structured on a 2, 3, or 4 year rotation of materials, depending upon age groupings of the classes. Each student will spend the same number of years in a class level, but they will encounter the material in differing sequence depending when they enter that class of the C.E. program.

Evening Program Description

Rotating by semester, the evening classes will use the following categories to define their instruction and interaction.

Worldview

“The philosophical or theological “spectacles” through which we view the world and all reality; the framework within which we interpret the data of the world and life. Biblical revelation is the foundation for a proper understanding of the nature and purpose of our existence. That revelation establishes divine truth about God, man, sin, salvation, purpose, and our destiny. Thus both our belief and our behavior are governed, not by changeable theories, but by God’s immutable truth.” (Dictionary of Theological Terms, by Alan Cairns)

The morning CE program is designed to lay the groundwork for, and to build the structure of, a Christian world view, by teaching the gospel and Christian doctrine. The evening program seeks to provide the opportunity for our children to struggle with the real issues of life. *What does Christianity have to say about “x” or “y”? How do I think about and respond to the world that I live in and what it is trying to tell me?* We might examine culture in the form of music, advertising, and movies. We might discuss social issues. There is not a single area of life where Christ does not currently reign as king. As creator, Christ has established His truth in every facet of life, including politics, marriage, and the sciences. To impact the world, our children must come to see everything they learn (in church, school, or from society), and everything they do, through a Biblical lens.

Christian Living (occurs twice during the three year rotation)

Christianity should be neither dead intellectualism nor a vapid emotional experience. Vibrant Christianity is rooted in the facts of God’s redemptive love as expressed in the work of Christ. Saving faith includes knowledge and assent to that knowledge. Once embraced, our faith in the work of Christ changes the way we think and therefore the way we live. The scriptures tell us that God writes His law on our hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1-2). Furthermore, faith without works is dead (James 2:26). True faith transforms our actions. Therefore Christian Living would encompass such topics as:

- Personal disciplines (e.g. Bible memory, Bible reading, prayer, Sabbath observance, giving)
- Personal godliness: (e.g. family relationships, school performance, attitudes toward work, money, and marriage)
- Service (the practical expression of our love for one another and for others outside the church)
- Psalm singing

Church History

History is ultimately the record of God's providence in the affairs of men as He works all things according to His purpose. History is "His Story"! If we fail to understand church history, then we fail to understand God's sovereignty and we lessen our roles in the achievement of His plan. Studying church history encourages and emboldens us as we see the great heroes of the faith. Studying church history helps us to understand heresy and the impact of sin. As the author of Ecclesiastes notes: "There is nothing new under the sun!" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Therefore to know history is to know where modern false teachings find their roots. It is to know how to refute them. A proper understanding of church history builds confidence that God has protected His church in the past and will continue to do so in the future. Possible time periods to be studied include the following:

- The Gospels and Acts
- Apostolic Fathers, Post Apostolic Fathers, Constantine, The Fall of Rome
- Medieval Church History
- Reformation History: Luther, Knox, Calvin, Bucer
- Scottish Covenanters
- Modern American Church

Creation

The book of Genesis is foundational to the Christian Faith. Secular humanism and atheistic Darwinism (evolution) seek to undermine our confidence in the scientific and historical accuracy of this book. The *Answers in Genesis* ministry has rightly noted that if the church fails to defend the first three chapters of Genesis as literal, space-time history, the Christian Faith is undermined and rendered powerless. Committed to science that starts from Christian pre-suppositions, AIG shows how a Christian world-view actually provides answers that more accurately interpret the world around us. Six day creation and the Noachic flood are shown to be scientifically superior to an evolutionary interpretation of the evidence. The intricacies of creation are explored and the evidences of God's careful design are laid out, filling the heart with wonder at the majesty of God! AIG has numerous high quality DVD's, story books and other print materials, that could be used at various age levels. (Under this umbrella, other publishers and materials may be used to promote the same ideas.)

Missions/Evangelism

Jesus commanded us to "go and make disciples" of all nations" (Matthew 28:19), and this component of the evening program would seek to equip our children with the tools to do so by providing:

- A chance to review and present the gospel and call our children to faith.
- Methods for sharing the gospel: The Bridge, the Romans Road, Bill Fay's 5 questions
- Instruction, preparation, and practice in Apologetics (positively answering objections and promoting the faith).
- A chance to be inspired by stories about the "heroes of the faith"

- Opportunities to relate to our own missionaries (visitation, support through offerings, letters, care packages, etc.)
- A chance to present denominational programs: Theological Foundations for Youth, International Youth Leadership Conference, Short Term Missions Teams, summer trips to E.C.H.O (Ecological Concern for the Hungry Organization)