Christian Education of Adults

International Educational Fellowship School of Ministry

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Chapter One
Biblical Foundations for Adult Education

Essentially, the Bible is an adult book written by adults for adults and about adults. There are no specific programs or methods discussed in Scripture regarding adult education, but the fact that Jesus gave the great commission to His disciples to go and make disciples of all people seems to assume that adult education is one of God's high priorities.

How do the Scriptures speak to the principles of adult education? What teaching principles can we discern which may enhance the adult learning process? How do we transfer these concepts to our everyday lives in teaching adults in the church?

Two key things to keep in mind in the search for answers to these questions are: 1) people are people, no matter where they live. All have limitations; all are sinners, and all need help for growth; and 2) growth in the context of Christian education focuses on the goal of Christ-likeness. The aims are transforming the mind and life of the believer (Romans 12:1-2).

Jesus the Master Teacher

The four Gospels of the New Testament are excellent examples of the teaching ministry of Jesus who was without question the greatest adult educator of all time. He is referred to as teacher 41 times in the gospels and His love for people and desire to transform them into people with a proper understanding and love for God were the obvious goals of His earthly ministry. Flexibility and an intense attention to individual persons marked each approach that He used in teaching. Examples of this are seen in Luke 7:36-50, Matthew 15:2-3, Luke 7:18-23, and Matthew 18:1-9. Jesus also always responded to the particular needs of His audience whether they were strangers or friends. John 4 shows Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the

well where Jesus does a magnificent job of sharing the truth with her. This was an example of Jesus' way of moving people from a self-centered view of like to an other- centered life view. Jesus knew her, loved her, and thus transformed her. This illustrates very well the fact that Jesus always spoke the truth to the people He was involved with. He discerned the reality behind their questions and dealt with actual issues and problems. He knew His audience, their backgrounds, their interests, the ways in which they perceived themselves. He then spoke to this self-perception, whether they were sinners seeking help or scholars satisfied with their knowledge of the law. He never ignored the issue of self-concept in the adults He taught.

When Jesus called His disciples to follow Him, He expected active rather than intellectual assent. He chose these men to be with Him, learn from Him by observing and practicing, and to then ultimately go out and represent Him in the world through preaching and teaching themselves. He used the simple principles of telling, showing, and then allowing them to live out what He had told them and shown them. Jesus used many simple object lessons and active examples to make His points clear and easy to observe and understand. they were experiencing “developmental task education” at the hands of the Master Teacher.

Applicable Principles Uncovered

The methods of Jesus reveal some principles that we need to follow if we will be effective adult educators in the church today.

First, the teacher must know the students well in order to approach them on the basis of their self-perceptions. Knowing the students and their backgrounds helps the teacher focus in on the needs of the students and see where change needs to take place. The ultimate goal in this process is to move students from dependence to self-directed learning where they are finding truth for themselves and then are able to share that truth with others. Note the

disciples after the day of Pentecost (Acts 1-3).

Second, the learner must start on the basis of his or her own experience. The experiences provide a foundation of conscious knowledge on which to build, and they expose the need for further learning when present abilities prove inadequate to cope with the situation.

Third, the learning experience is far more "do" than "know" oriented. The learner needs to put into practice as soon as possible the lessons which have been explained or demonstrated. Just knowing truth is not enough. Practice helps to identify areas of weakness and causes the student to turn to the teacher for more help and interaction which leads to greater understanding and learning and ultimately greater transformation.

Fourth, learning experiences consume time. It takes time to get to know people, to understand how they think about themselves, what needs they have, what illustrations will best fit into their life experiences and help them to understand the principles of the information being taught. This process cannot be hurried. If it took Christ three years of daily involvement with His disciples to teach and train them, how can we expect to accomplish the same in a few minutes on a Sunday morning or evening? Adult education is a challenge that will never be completed in a person's lifetime and therefore we must use the time we have wisely and effectively in helping others transform their lives into the image of Christ.

A Biblical Model of Adult Education

Adult education needs to aim at certain target groups.

Older Men

The apostle Paul wrote to Titus and told him to "Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance" (Titus 2:2). It is obvious that Paul saw the older men in the church as needing to display certain attitudes which would be of help in training and teaching others. Their lives were to reflect character

worthy of Christ and worthy of being followed by others in the church.

Older Women

Paul continues to deal with other women in Titus 2:3 and instructs Titus to "Teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children." Paul shows Titus that his job as pastor is to train other adults to train other adults and so the body of Christ will grow as it should.

Young Women

Paul's instruction here is for the old women to do the training of the young women which is very wise advice for any pastor to follow. The older women are to train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. There is a direct relationship that Paul points out between the young women and godly homes and how those homes can be established and maintained. Each person in the church, whether young or old, has a responsibility to teach others in becoming more like Christ.

Young Men

Since Titus was a young man, Paul's instructions for them was to come from Titus' own behavior as he modeled correct character traits. He was told to encourage the young men to be self-controlled. “In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us” (Titus 2:7-8). The emphasis again is on being an example to others because they will be examples to someone else.

Slaves

Paul completes his instructions regarding adult groups in the church be referring to slaves. The principles here can be applied to us today in relation to employer/employee relations because the attitudes referred to here do not change with the change of societal

practices. Titus was told to teach salves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way, they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. To follow these instructions means becoming a model employee in a very selfish world system. To be transformed in this way will create curiosity on the part of many other adults and lead to many opportunities to share Christ in a very effective way.

Adult Education Objectives

Titus 2 contains further instructions from Paul that help us understand what our goals are in training adults to be more like Christ. The following objectives need to be a part of every adult training program:

The student shall reject ungodliness and worldly passions. The call here is to turning away from the old life and living a new life in Christ. The overcoming of temptation seems to be the essential quality that adults need to learn here (Titus 2:11).

The student shall live a self-controlled, upright, and godly life. The focus of life here is on a inward, outward, and upward lifestyle that brings glory to God and growth to the adult believer (Titus 2:12).

The student shall actively await Christ's return. The ultimate goal of every adult must be the seeing of Jesus face to face and to that end our life and energy must flow. To be like Christ means we want to see Him and must wait with great anticipation and work with a sense of urgency, for His return is always imminent (Titus 2:13).

The student shall seek to do that which is good. The goal here is to make disciples that are excited and totally committed to doing good works so that men may see their good works and glorify the Father in heaven. Providing challenge and opportunity for good works is an essential quality for the true teacher of adults with our perfect example being Christ Himself.

Adult Education Must be Primarily Developmental

The effective adult educator will always think in terms of need. The groups that Paul identified to Titus are still active in our churches today with some additions. Now we have growing numbers of young and old singles, divorced individuals, single parents and others that present new areas of need. To ignore these needs is to fail in presenting the truth to all people in our churches and circles of influence.

The effective adult educator concentrates on modeling. to be an effective teacher/model means constant attention must be given to one's own personal development in the area of learning and spiritual growth. A teacher cannot give what does not exist in their own heart nor can they be an example of something they have never learned or done. The words of Paul, "Follow me as I follow Christ!", must be the motto for every adult educator.

The effective adult educator concentrates on the development of seriousness. Food and fellowship have their place in the life of the church, but the serious matters of spiritual growth, struggle, and warfare are issues that must be addressed on the adult level as well. Sober, sensible, and serious are adjectives which should describe the adults of every local church. The young people need to see in the adults a steadfastness and commitment that will carry them through any difficult struggle. Adult educators must be the models of these qualities as well.

What happens when a church carries out its adult education program correctly? According to Titus 2, three results take place:

☒People will not malign the Word of God. As adults live lives worthy of the calling of Jesus Christ, the world must respond with respect and realize that God is God and everyone will someday give an account of their lives. When Christians live and act like heathens then the word of God becomes of no effect. This must never be the case.

☒Families will be strong. The more effective adult education is in the church, the better adults will be able to handle their families. Family relationships are the testing grounds for the truth of God's Word because in the family, the struggles and conflicts of life become very real. How husbands treat their wives, how parents treat their children, and how all family members respect each other is a direct reflection on the effectiveness of the adult education of the church. this is a great

responsibility for the church and adult educators, but is possible because of the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us.

☒The gospel will be attractive. Proper behavior draws attention. Christians who let their light shine drive out darkness!

Chapter Two
Spiritual Formation

Adults, just like children and teens, are ever growing in the area of understanding, knowledge, and spiritual development. This process begins at salvation and does not end until we arrive in heaven when our understanding is fully opened. Since this process is an on- going event, it is very important for educators of adults to understand how spiritual formation actually takes place and how we can best make sure that the proper formation develops in the life of the student.

Spiritual formation is really the broad function of the church which begins in the life of the believer at salvation and then works to help the individual develop a Christian mind, overcoming the old temptations of the world, and opening their mind and spirit to the full measure of God's grace. Since this world system is moved by a strong addiction to power, pleasure, and personal freedom, one can easily see why spiritual formation requires conversion, detoxification, and ultimate transformation into the likeness and attitude of Christ. This road to transformation has been the call of the church since the days of Christ and continues today. The church must therefore commit to establishing new Christians in the local church, teaching the practices of holy living (abstaining from evil practices and developing a prayer life, study of the Word, witnessing, and faithfulness to the Body), and teaching that generates a renewed mind in the life of the believer. The accomplishment of these goals is somewhat hindered by two characteristics that all adults seem to have. The first problem deals with the fact that adults have the ability to merely conform to the religious expectations of those around them in the church without ever having a life changing experience with God for themselves. The second hindrance is the overwhelming attitude of individualism in the world lived out by most adults.

Two Marks of Adult Spirituality

Spiritual Conformation

Adults have the ability to deceive themselves and others regarding their level of spiritual development. The alert educator will realize that adults can easily mimic desired behavior and vocabulary. Thus they must always be pushed beyond the normal activities of the church to think and act with greater awareness of God's call of their lives and not merely what is socially acceptable. This behavior comes from a heart that is totally committed to Christ and willing to sacrifice to obey God's will. Adults who are spiritually immature will normally see religion in their life as their servant. Magical thinking, self-justification, and creature comfort are the focus for the immature It is obvious that their physical body is of greater importance than their spiritual development.

The mature adult will demonstrate a life that has yielded itself to spiritual growth in spite of the desires of the flesh. Their Christian commitment has become their master and not a servant to meet their physical wants and fulfill individual goals.

This outward, hypocritical expression of religion was something that Jesus pointed to in very strong and harsh words: *"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full"* (Matthew 6:5).

The Christian educator must constantly put before people the need to have and live a faith that comes from the heart and not merely live a lifestyle that is acceptable to their peers. We must always point people to Jesus Christ and proclaim His gospel of grace if we want to truly form Christians and overcome the deforming effects of the work.

Individualism

For many adults, individualism and freedom of choice have been very sacred things in their lives for years. To give this up and yield these privileges to follow Christ are major

challenges for the adult Christian educator. For years, as adults were going through the stages of childhood and teenage years, they had to do what everyone else was doing when everyone else was doing it. Now as adults, they no longer want those kinds of restrictions and thus they create their own agendas and ideas regarding what they feel is important for them. Spiritual growth will not lower its standard to the feelings, time, and whim of each individual.

Growth can only come through a servant's heart and attitude as exemplified in the life of Christ. As Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane "Not my will, but thine be done!" so the adult that desires to grow into a strong and mature Christian must set his individualism aside and become as a little child and follow after Christ. Personal time must take a second place to spending time in prayer, study of the Word and fellowship with other believers in the Church. Spiritual change requires moving from the comfortable and familiar to the place of sacrifice and challenge. It is there where true spirituality develops the best.

Factors that Enhance Spiritual Growth

Presence of Pain and Loss

Adults have come to a realization that life is full of pain and loss and how that is dealt with makes one either better or bitter. The adult that simply lives to avoid pain and loss will never mature or becomes a strong individual. Problems in relationships have always been a source of pain and loss for adults. Divorce, death, broken friendships and relocation due to jobs etc. all carry with them the reality of pain. The strong adult makes the best of these and will find in Christ the one who will never leave or forsake them in all of life. Job difficulties also become a source of pain since many adults see their careers as the key to success. the loss of a job can devastate the weaker, immature adult. The one who sees Christ as their source can continue on with faith and courage to the next assignment, knowing that God is in control. Chronic illness and disability are also areas that challenge adults and force many

adults that were once independent to now become totally dependent on others. Addictions, financial pressures, and parenting also add to the stress level of adults and make them much more receptive to the hope and encouragement that Christ can bring into their lives.

The above mentioned aspects of adult life are areas that the church must recognize as great opportunities to bring adults into spiritual maturity because these problems will cause them to acknowledge their need for help and growth.

Key Principles to Follow in Adult Spiritual Formation

Adults are the leaders in the local church, in business, in the community, and carry responsibility to raise and nurture the family. Because of this, their potential for spiritual formation is not only great, but also essential. The principles that must be a part of every adult's life in their journey to mature and Christ-like behavior include:

☒A commitment that being a Christian means living out of step with the dominate world culture.

☒A recognition that the spiritual life can be mimicked externally. Churches that place a high value on certain behavior to the exclusion of deep inner faith in Christ simply help to create even more hypocrites.

☒The need to provide both spiritual support and challenge.

☒The importance of both finding patterns of devotion that fit people "where they are" and also introducing patterns that allow for deeper fellowship with God.

Blocks to Spiritual Growth

Spiritual formation involves the accomplishment of two vital tasks. One is the reducing of the negative effects of common blocks or barriers to spiritual growth. The second task is helping adults open themselves up to God in a greater way.

The following blocks are common among adults and need to overcome by any adult desiring to grow spiritually:

Busyness

For many adults, the reason they do not take the time to develop in the area of their

relationship with God is that they feel they are too busy. The urgent things always take priority over the important things. A revising of priorities and lifestyle can help overcome this block.

Time Orientation

Most modern adults view life from a future perspective and miss the present. Activities, time, money, etc. are all seen as needing to be handled with respect to the future. Relationships must be built with God and people in the present. Waiting until tomorrow when you will have more time will probably be too late.

Laziness

People will always do what they feel is important and what they want to do. The things that are difficult, unpleasant, or that take discipline are usually put off. Prayer and Bible study require a great deal of discipline and only the strong and ambitious will succeed in this area.

Pain

Many do not grow because of a focus on pain rather than the Pain Reliever, namely God. How one responds to the pains of life will make them either better or bitter. The mature Christian uses pain to learn, grow, and minister to others.

Guilt and Fear of God

Many adults have compared God to a tyrant and dictator who simply desires to rule with an iron fist. Therefore they cannot have a loving relationship with Him. The God of the New Testament has always been portrayed by Christ as a loving and kind heavenly Father that rewards obedience and only punishes those that are disobedient.

Identity Confusion

Too many adults today see themselves only in light of what they do to earn a living. They do not fully realize that they have been created in the image of God and their first responsibility is to Him and not their earthly job or boss. Focusing on one's job as the basis for self-identity can cause real problems when job's are lost or one retires and has no job to go

to.

Performance Justification

Spiritual growth grown out of the fact that God has made us righteous by the blood of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. Nothing we have done or can do will ever justify us in the sight of God. It is only by His grace that we are saved and never by our own works. Our performance as Christians does not effect our salvation, it merely reflects on God as our heavenly Father. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Encouraging Spiritual Formation

The key to spiritual formation for adults lies in the ability of Christian educators to create a climate where that formation is possible. The church must realize that Christ's grace is the essential ingredient for any growth to occur. The grace of Christ comes in two contexts: 1) through the church by means of worship, wise counsel, fellowship, biblical preaching, and teaching; and 2) in our very private encounters with God as we pray, read the Scriptures, and meditate on the Lord. Within the context of these two activities spiritual formation can take place.

Chapter Three
How Adults Learn

The education of adults carries with it a greater level of complexity than dealing with children. Perception, experience, needs, desires, and goals will all vary greatly in the average adult class in a church. Please consider the following example.

When twelve people walk into your church or class for the first time, each one will come already equipped with various experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and ideas. Each person will organize his or her thoughts differently, and each will be able to absorb knowledge and ideas in his or her own way.

The adult's mental learning state is not a blank chalkboard on which you, the teacher, can write as you wish. Neither is the adult learner's head an empty pail for you to fill with your knowledge and ideas. The adult learner's chalkboard already has many messages on it, and his mental pail is almost full already. Your job as teacher is not to fill an empty chalkboard or pail, but rather to help your students reorganize their own thoughts and skills. A prerequisite to help adults learn is to understand how they learn.

The church in the past has not taken the time to evaluate the way adults learn. Insteade, the church has relied on sharing large amounts of information from the Bible and related sources. Adults today are very selective when it comes to the use of their time and energy. Those who see activities which seem to simply be exercises in memorization of facts for the sake of memory work will not accept the truths being taught. Unless we can make the Bible relevant, practical, challenging, and personally meaningful, we will lose many adults from our church educational programs.

Biblical Essentials

In order to effectively understand how adults learn, we must first see what the Word of

God says about who adults are. What are their needs and characteristics and how will this impact our desire to teach them and bring them into spiritual maturity?

The Bible first of all teaches that though the human condition is sinful and beyond human repair (Romans 3:10, 23). We are also capable of being perfected through the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. This perfection can be seen in three areas in Scripture (we are not talking about being perfect in the sense that we have need of nothing and we are without fault or problems). The Bible seems to indicate three areas of perfection:

Positional Perfection

We have been made perfect through the blood that Jesus shed on the cross. His sacrifice has made us perfect and acceptable now to a renewed relationship with God (Hebrews 10:14).

Prophetic Perfection

I John 3:2 tells us that we will be perfect someday in the future when we all get to heaven. Perfection will be an aspect of our eternal and glorified bodies in heaven where there will be no sickness, death, pain or sorrow.

Progressive Perfection

2 Corinthians 7:1 challenges us to progress in our pursuit of holiness and perfection in Christ. Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Perfection is the goal of every adult and the Bible is our message to follow in this pursuit of perfection. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 clarifies this message. *"All Scripture is Godbreathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped or perfect for every good work."*

Not only do we have the message, but God has also given us the means to accomplish this task. Ephesians 4:11-13 shows us that Christ has provided for the church the means by which the message is to be shared and adults are to be equipped for the works of ministry. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers have the honor of working with Christ and the Holy Spirit in perfecting the saints and helping them grow up into the Church and

Body of Christ that they need to be and were called to by God.

The method is simply one of teaching, admonishing, and living exemplary lives before our students. Paul says it this way in Colossians 1:28, *"We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ."* Based on the above challenge we must then consider how this task can best be accomplished. Adults must be approached in a method appropriate to their learning abilities. This should not merely be an advanced version of what is done with the children and youth.

Adults learn what they want to learn and feel is important for their personal growth and development. The teacher of the adult class must create an atmosphere that allows a great deal of participation, interaction, and application of the truth. The principle used in teaching children, where the teacher has all the answers and gives that information to the children who simply receive it, will not work effectively with adults.

Adults, however, do need a source of truth in any setting of learning. Therefore a combination of sharing and listening are essential for effective adult learning. The wise teacher will have resources available that represent sources of truth that are reliable and respected by all the adults. This eliminates the problem of the blind leading the blind in discussions that have no basis in fact or verifiable truth.

Adult Learning Psychology

All adults in their lifetime need to learn certain developmental tasks or skills. Social graces, job skills, people skills, reading, writing, personal hygiene, proper language and other tasks that if learned well, will yield a very successful life. If these are not learned, it will lead to failure and despair. As adults grow older they become more and more aware of these skills that they need in life to succeed. The Church must be aware of these needs and assist in the achieving of these goals in addition to the needs that adults have in learning to read and understand the Bible, pray, witness, and live the Christian life.

Motivational Elements

There are six motivators based on a study done by R. J. Wlodkowski which show the things that are common and necessary for adults to learn:

☒Attitude (the learner must have a satisfying experience in learning setting)

☒ Needs (the learning experience must focus upon what the adult perceives as his or her needs).

☒Stimulation (the learner must feel challenged that this experience will be personally productive)

☒Affect (there needs to be a "feel" that the learner is, in fact, achieving, progressing, and conquering)

☒Competence (the learner actually experiences genuine and meaningful accomplishment of need satisfaction)

☒Reinforcement (there is positive feedback as to personal accomplishment)

The wise Christian educator will use these motivator as ways to enhance the learning experience and teaching experience of his or her class.

The final aspect of adult learning deals with perception. Adults normally identify truth based on their perception of a certain situation or knowledge that they have gained. In the context of their experiences, likes and dislikes, values and influences from outside sources, adults will determine the truth or falsehood of any given information. Perception that is not based on an absolute standard of truth, namely the Bible, will be subject to the personal opinions of the adult making the judgment. Christian educators of adults must therefore make every effort to verify the Word of God and bring their adult students to a love and understanding of the Bible as the only basis for righteousness and truth in the world. Without Scripture as the standard for truth, personal perception of truth becomes the standard -- and that is no standard at all. Adults can and desire to learn, but they must be involved in the process, challenged to grow, and led in such a way that their perception of truth is always based on God's Word which will never change or diminish in its power to transform lives.

Chapter Four
Inductive Teaching for Adults

The most common method used in all education today is telling or lecture. For the teacher, this method is easy and basically effective. However, there is a better way to teach which Jesus used with His disciples on a regular basis. Simply to tell someone something and not let them discover truth is a poor way to convey something as powerful as the Good News of the Gospel. It must be experienced and lived to be enjoyed. Jesus sent His disciples out many times to experiment with what He had shared with them. Even when He was feeding the 5000, Jesus had the disciples deliver the food and be a part of this great miracle recorded in Luke 9:10-17. Letting the learner discover a truth for himself is called inductive teaching.

Inductive teaching transfers much of the responsibility for learning to the learner and the rewards for teaching this way are many. They include heightened interest in learning, a greater sense of community, increased respect for one another, greater likelihood of applying truth, and a realization that the Holy Spirit is doing some very significant work in each life. The teacher must develop more skills and put more time into preparation and methods, but the rewards are well worth the effort.

Inductive teaching is based on three assumptions. First, learning can happen, and may most effectively happen, when the teacher avoids doing all the talking. When the teacher does all the talking the learners normally become passive in thought and application. Second, a deliberate kind of sharing with learners is necessary: sharing talk time, sharing thoughts, and sharing an openness to new ideas and challenges to the old way of thinking. Learning becomes a journey that both the teacher and learner can take together. The teacher obviously must take responsibility for the overall design and direction of the class, but he will conduct it

in such a way as to engage the students' minds in a very active way. A third assumption reminds us that learning occurs in an atmosphere of trust. The teacher and students must trust each other. The teacher must create an atmosphere where truth is shared in love, students can feel free to share their ideas, feelings, and questions, and the general atmosphere is completely non-threatening to teacher and learner alike.

Teaching Skills for Inductive Teaching

Teachers need to have the ability to organize and deliver information, but beyond that to teach inductively they most also:

☒structure learning experiences that bring the learners into some kind of thinking or physical interaction with the lesson content
☒believe learning can happen when they are not talking
☒ask probing, even provoking questions
☒guide conversation and discussion without closing it down
☒listen for understanding rather than evaluation
☒engage in open dialogue
☒handle spontaneous issues and questions
☒be open, communicate that you are a trustworthy and safe person
☒tolerate ambiguity
☒be comfortable with silence
☒interact while also communicating acceptance
☒be willing to take some risks and try some new ideas

These have been called “process skills” because the teacher attempts to carry the learners into a process of learning rather than just simply telling them truth. A guide to the discovery of truth is what the teacher becomes in this philosophy of teaching. The greatest benefit is that the students can now learn for themselves even when the teacher is not around to tell and explain things.

Inductive Methods

Simulation

Simulations are structured experiences that seek to imitate some piece of reality. For example, before American astronauts walked on the moon, they practiced "moon walking" in

a simulator that created the atmosphere which they would experience on the moon. It was not quite the real thing, but the astronauts did experience real emotions, had to make real decisions and had to try and solve real problems. Many video games are excellent examples of simulations that are not real, but try to create real feelings, emotions, and responses to life situations.

Reality is often too expensive and so, rather than take a class to Israel, slides, videos, pictures, food samples or clothing can be used to give the sense of what Israel is really like.

Reality can also be too dangerous. Teaching adults about the dangers of drugs, smoking, alcohol abuse, premarital or extramarital sex, and other sins can be effectively done through simulations without the danger of the reality of these sins.

Benefits of Simulation

Values are brought to one's awareness and exposed which allows one to evaluate and consider their life in light of God's Word. Knowing what we believe helps to identify areas that need to be improved. Simulations also tend to create questions about our belief system and how it is similar or different from the Word of God. This time of questioning usually develops into a powerful teaching moment. Simulations work well in making learning more enjoyable, and the material discussed becomes more of a permanent part of the learner's life and memory. Because the learner has experienced something and not just heard about someone else's experience, it becomes part of them and also results in stimulating inner motivation to change. A simulation, then, is an activity destined to place the learner in a situation that approximates reality and in which the learning is free to participate. The purpose is to create a better learning -- a learning that engages the whole person and which, ultimately, brings likeness to Christ.

Asking Questions

Asking mind stimulating questions is another inductive teaching method that works very well with adults. This is one of the most powerful learning tools for both teacher and student because it helps the teacher discover the world of the learner thereby being able to direct the

learning process in a much more effective way. Questions help the learner evaluate and formulate beliefs. Questions help teacher and learner engage in learning and appropriating God's truth-solving problems of life.

What then are some principles to remember in using the method of asking questions?

☒ Explore and probe the learner's thinking rather than just moving into a quick judgment or evaluation of their comment or question.

☒Sometimes other members of the group will challenge an idea. If critical, the teacher must defend. If sensitive and insightful, the teacher uses it to generate more discussion.

☒Use "I" messages rather that "You" messages. Focus the attention on your personal understanding of the question and need for explanation rather than on the person asking the question and making them feel inferior or foolish.

☒People change their ideas and attitudes because they think they should, not because they have been told they should. Questions cause people to think for themselves which becomes the context for the most significant change.

☒Lecturing presumes the ignorance of the learner and failure to allow questions or discussion simply promotes the idea that the students have nothing of value to share. This will never be the case in any class setting.

☒Most people did not experience their greatest learning in a lecture or monologue setting. What people are involved in they remember. The teacher's goal must be to create memories and not merely the dispensing of information.

☒Relationship between the teacher and the student is essential to effective learning. As Christians, our relationship with Christ is not entirely based on memorizing, reading, and talking alone to Him. It is based on our interaction with the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. Knowledge and obedience always flow from a healthy relationship. Teachers are called to build relationships, and questions help to build those bridges into the world of the student.

Inductive teaching can be a very powerful means by which God is able to change our thinking and our living. Its power lies in a three way union that yields great results. The teacher who includes the learner in the learning process; the learner who actively assumes the responsibility of learning; and the Holy Spirit who is able to take these efforts and bring the desired changes in both teacher and student.

Chapter Five
Teaching Young Adults

Definition of a Young Adult

For the purpose of this chapter, we will refer to young adults as those from ages eighteen to thirty five. The distinctions and stages which these adults go through will be review and principles for effectively teaching these adults will be discussed.

This stage of life can be defined in essence as the years of transition. Changing from home with the parents to life alone. Finding a life's partner and a life's career to support a family become major challenges to face. Expectations of others become much more demanding than those of school teachers, and parents now assume that the young adults will be moving out of the house to start a family of their own. The transitions of this age period are stressful yet exciting. Most young adults are equal to the task. The church can find a tremendous opportunity for ministry as guidance is given in the areas of marriage counseling, career counseling, ethical choices regarding lifestyles, financial planning, and spiritual development.

Early Adult Transition: Ages Seventeen to Twenty-Two

Transition can basically be defined as bridges between two stages of development. In this case the teen years are changing into the adult years with the old life of parental control giving way to a new life of independence and self rule to a certain extent.

The following characteristics will help to understand how transitions work in the realm of adulthood:

It is a boundary zone between two more or less defined or structured periods or stages of life. It is essentially a period of struggle to help define exactly who a person is outside of the

identification with parents.

It is a period when relationships of the past are terminated or modified with important people and institutions.

It is a time when the young adult questions the world and their place in it. Values, religion, authority, and the basic meaning of life all come under close observation.

The questioning naturally leads to experimenting with new ways to do things. Relationships with the opposite sex, friends with which to associate, career choices, and the unexplored become of greater importance.

Questioning and experimenting lead to new patterns of commitment in the areas of love, marriage, and career. Friends and family relationships are somewhat restructured and strengthened.

Transition comes to an end when questioning and experimenting lose their importance and the settling into more stable patterns begins.

The leaving of the pre-adult world for most is not a traumatic time and it generally offers some great opportunities for adventure and growth. Most young adults move away from home during this time to start their new lives as adults.

Entering the Adult World: Twenty-Two to Twenty-Eight

This stage requires that choices be made in the area of relationships such as marriage, life's vocation or career choice, and personal goals. The essence of this time period is the tension between these two demands: to explore and to commit.

There are two unique relationships that grow out of this period: the "mentor" and the "Special woman or man". The mentor is older than the student, but not old enough to be seen as a parent. The mentor is successful and responsible and becomes an example for the young adult. Mentors provide challenge and support in several areas.

☒they act as models of examples
☒they are involved in teacher/trainer functions helping the student to develop expertise in various areas
☒they often act as sponsors helping the mentored one to enter the system or

find advancement

☒they act as hosts or guides helping the student find their way through the new maze of values, customs, norms, standards, and rules of the new social system

The second relationship for men is the special woman who is able to bring out the romantic, affectionate, and sexual feelings of the young adult related to dealing with the opposite sex. She also works to support, direct, refine and encourage the realizing of the individual's dream for his life. The same is true of the special man in a woman's life. This God ordained relationship that men and women need to establish helps to balance each against the other creating two healthy, maturing young adults.

Ministry Implications

During this period, a teacher has the opportunity to help young adults consider their careers and dreams as they examine their ideas and expectations of competition, achievement, power, wealth, and success. They need to find strong Christian mentors that can help define how Christ relates to all their choices and ultimate decisions. Relationships with the opposite sex must also be seen in light of scripture and all the directives given by God with respect to marriage and family. This is a key time for the church to impact the lives of young adults so that they can avoid many of the problems that their parents and others faced due to a lack of understanding of God's Word.

Age Thirty Transition: Twenty-Eight to Thirty Three

This period for many becomes a time of reevaluation of dreams and choices made thus far. For some it can be a traumatic time because of the nature of the earlier choices made. For others it is a time of realizing feelings, goals, talents, and interests that were temporarily overlooked because of other pressing issues. This time of discovery adds new excitement to what could become a boring time of life as they settle into career and marriage commitments. This time of transition, when resolved, is followed by a deeper sense of acceptance or the development of a personal philosophy of life. It may also lead to a more realistic understanding of one's strengths and abilities.

Ministry Implications

The teacher of this group has the exciting task of helping these young adults reflect on where they are in their careers, marriages, parenting, and Christian life. Opportunities must be made available for them to evaluate alternative choices and then make final choices in light of God's Word and call on their personal lives. Choices made must be seen in light of the impact on the individual, their family, and the church.

Settling Down: Thirty-Three to Forty

This stage of development is a time of growing stability and the focus of life is now on finding a home, raising the family, and succeeding in the career choice. Major goals have been defined and set and energy is expended to see those goals come into being. Marriage dissatisfaction increases here because the practical pressures of life now replace the adventures of earlier romance. The challenge for this group is to stay focused on the future and continue to build relationships with those in the home and outside. Mentors are now a thing of the past and true adulthood has become a reality.

Ministry Implications

The church's greatest challenge in this age group is dealing with divorce and separation. The healing of hurting people that have been devastated by a failed relationship are many in this age group. The key to effective ministry is involvement and challenge. This is the group from which mentors need to be drawn and sent out to serve other younger adults.

Principles for Teaching Young Adults

1. Develop materials that relate to their developmental tasks as young adults. Relate the Bible to issues and tasks that they are facing in everyday life. They must relate God's will for their lives to all the choices they are going to make.

2. Provide a balance between content presentation and active learner involvement and feedback. Young adults all have personal experiences and training that can benefit the entire

group. Use the resources of people that are available.

3. Plan for a variety of learning activities such as discussion, practice, and problem solving. Use questions to draw everyone into the learning experience. Everyone's participation is essential for growth.

4. Assist learners in their personal search for meaning in the topic being studied. Encourage them to find and apply principles from Scripture to their specific concerns. Provide times for dialogue, self examination, questioning, and setting goals.

5. Vary the methods used in the learning situation. Master a variety of methods and add new tools to your teaching method often. Variety is the key to maintaining interest.

6. Pay attention to the interpersonal relationships between you and the students and between the students themselves. A positive learning environment is essential for honesty and openness to prevail. Within this context, values and faith can be tested and allowed to grow.

7. Provide models that students can acquire and investigate. Expose them to a variety of models, illustrations, and resources that will help them see what the Word of God is saying to them.

8. Support young adults in becoming self directive. Provide time for participation in the learning experience and allow the students to make decisions. They need to be involved!

Chapter Six
Teaching Middle Adults

What are middle adults? The age ranges vary among different educators, but basically it is from ages 35 to age 55.

This group can be seen as the adults who are moving from the starting of their careers and families to just before they prepare and seriously consider retirement. This time period is again full of many transitions that come into the life of the middle adult and the stress that comes along as well. This is where the church can be of a great help. Coping with change just when it seemed that change would stabilize is difficult. Children are growing older and independent and parents of this group are growing older and more dependent. The challenges are many and wisdom from God is an essential for success.

Middle Adult Transitions

The following is a list of the transitions which face adults in this middle age group:

CHILD REARING	EMPTY NEST
PHYSICAL STRENGTH	GROWING WEAKNESS
UNLIMITED ANTICIPATION	PERCEIVED LIMITATION
HEALTH	INFIRMITY
ANTICIPATING MARRIAGE	ACCEPTING ALONENESS
PROVISION FOR OTHERS	PROVISION FOR SELF
UNBOUNDED ENERGY	GROWING WEARINESS
MEANINGFUL WORK	UN OR UNDER EMPLOYMENT
SATISFYING MARRIAGE	LOSS OF SPOUSE

LARGE SOCIAL GROUP	FEWER CLOSE FRIENDS
ACTIVE LIFESTYLE	PASSIVE LIFESTYLE

This list gives us an understanding of one of the objectives of adult education: helping adults understand the normal events of the middle years and how to choose appropriate behaviors based on the will of God. All adults need to learn how to cope with the changes they will encounter. Coping with this stress can be a great challenge, but also a time of real spiritual growth.

In the midst of these changes, many adults at the midpoint in life must come to terms with their own mortality. It is not possible to delay indefinitely the tasks which are to be accomplished. Mid-life is an appropriate time to examine the meaning of life and the values and priorities which have been help up to this point. The key to not losing all sense of reality is for the church to step into this process with love, guidance, wisdom, education, and support from others that have made the mid-life journey and found God to be an ever-present help.

Educational Ministries to Middle Adults

Adult education has been a matter of importance from the beginning of time. God educated Adam and Eve in the garden and education of adults has continued ever since. Today the emphasis of the church as been on educating youth and children to the exclusion of adult ministry. A Bible lecture on Sunday or during the week will not help meet the greater needs that adults have of making their Christian life an everyday experience. The following principles need to be considered for a successful ministry to adults in the church.

Teach the Bible

The teaching of the Bible by knowledgeable, gifted teachers is still a strong mandate for the church. Rightly dividing the Word of truth has to be done on a regular basis for adults to grow spiritually. Clear, authoritative Bible teaching will always be able to stop the spread of

heresy and error. Creative methods and student involvement will make the adult classes of the church the best attended of all. When more adults come to Sunday school and other Bible study opportunities, the more youth and children tend to come as well.

Speak to Real Needs

In addition to strong Bible teaching, the need is ever-present to make the Word of God relevant to the needs of people today. Biblical principles are as powerful today as they were in the days of Moses. However, society has changed the way the Bible needs to be applied to our lives. The stress of life and the transitions that middle adults face are not new to them. The same problems have been around for centuries and God is no stranger to these needs either. How can we make Scripture apply to the daily needs of our adults?

This question must be answered by the educators in our churches and the methods used to convey the application of truth to all adults. Speaking to the real life issues as Jesus did in His day will help the church regain its credibility as a source of hope for the world and society.

Listen to What Adults Say They Want

The wise educator will take a regular checkup of his class so that he will be meeting the needs of his students. We know not because we ask not. Surveys, discussions, question and answer sessions, or debates are all methods that reveal what is going on in the hearts and minds of our students. Adults have opinions and experiences that can be of great help to the class and therefore time must be set aside for the sharing of these resources. What do modern day adults want? ASK THEM!

Permit Freedom of Choice

Freedom of choice is a key factor in gaining the attention and support of adults. Choice allows them the sense that they are involved in their future and learning. The successful educational program in the church will have several electives from which adults may choose. Even a small church should try this to enhance the involvement of the adults in the church.

Life is full of choices, and if adults do not find choice in the church they will exercise

their choice not to come at all. Self-directed learning is growing in popularity in the secular educational institutions and the church must not be caught asleep in this area or we ill lose our greatest asset, the middle adults.

Select Appropriate Methods

As was mentioned earlier, methods will make or break an adult educational setting. Lecture alone will no longer work to motivate adults to life a certain way or accept a certain set of values or standards. Adults basically accept those things that they have personally found to be true and fulfilling. Dialogue is an essential aspect of any class because it involves others. Debate, reports, discussion groups, question and answer sessions, small group projects, anything that involves people with the Word of God and each other is going to be very effective. The teacher must see him or herself as an equipper, facilitator, guide, and challenger to the thinking of the adult. Lectures alone will no longer keep a class of adults interested or motivated. The method a teacher uses conveys the general attitude towards the students. Those who use a variety of methods show great confidence in the students and their abilities to grasp truth and understand it. Those who merely lecture are saying "I have some very important information that I need to give you. Just listen and write down what I tell you." The message to the student is one that conveys a lack of trust or confidence that the students can learn anything on their own. Adults will not normally accept or appreciate such an attitude.

Conduct Educational Programs with Excellence

Adult ministry in the church should be of the best possible quality because people are used to quality in the world. Classroom settings, material, organization, and teachers should be the best the church can provide. Adults read messages that children do not see when rooms are a mess, material is not available, or the teacher is not trained or gifted in the area of teaching. Since the church is presenting and representing Christ, our goal must be quality in every area and especially in the area of teaching God's Word. God gave His best when He sent Christ. May we as Christian educators strive to do the same in all that is taught or

presented in the name of the Lord to our students and the world.

Chapter Seven
Teaching Older Adults

The diversity of adulthood does not become less as one grows older. If anything, it becomes even greater. People today, those over the age of sixty-five, are more active and have a longer life expectancy than those fifty years ago. These adults have greater energy, education, interests, talents, and a lifetime of knowledge which should not be ignored by the wise teacher. This group does have age related needs that make them unique from any other group of adults and those needs need to be taken into consideration when planning and preparing to minister to this age group. Other factors to consider are the fact that those over 65 are healthier, have more formal education, are more active, and less likely to retire. These senior citizens are more politically active and issue oriented. Knowledge of these matters increases our ability to work effectively with older people in the context of the church. These essentials are a must for any teacher of senior adults.

The Bible and Aging

The Bible treats aging in a realistic way. It recognizes the limitations that accompany old age (e.g. weakened eyesight, diminished sexual activity, reduced effectiveness of the senses, slower movements of muscles and joints, and the need for more time to accomplish the routine tasks of life). Even with these limitations the older person has arrived at a wonderful place in life. Now the wisdom and experience of life can give greater insight into the real issues of life. Based on Scripture, the elderly deserve our love, honor, and respect.

The Bible also challenges the elderly to remain active in their service for the Lord and the church. Examples like Simeon and Anna in the New Testament show us that people are

able to serve well past their eightieth birthday. Christian service does not have a retirement program and no one is ever too old to love people, share the gospel, and continue to serve God. Their greatest ministry is one of being a good example to the younger Christians in the church and Christian community. They must always be available to assist the younger with the challenges of life and be willing to share their experience and wisdom as needed.

The Older Adult Learner

Can older adults still learn? The answer to this question is a very strong YES! Do the limitations that older adults face mentally and physically eliminate them from the ability to still grow and learn? The answer to this question is a resounding NO! The key in all of these questions is the fact that the teacher must be able to understand the pace at which older adults can learn and then adjust the material and presentation to that pace.

Developmentally the older adult is going through another period of transition. They may need to make the following adjustments:

☒Adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health
☒Adjusting to the death of a spouse
☒Adjusting to retirement and reduced income
☒Meeting social and civic obligations
☒Establishing satisfactory physical living arrangements

The adult teacher and the church must see these needs as means of ministry opportunities and should address them in some way as to provide help to the elderly in making these necessary adjustments. Another way to view the adult learner is through the following five need areas with which all older adults must deal:

COPING NEEDS: How to cope with the loss of friends, spouse, job, money and influence.

EXPRESSIVE NEEDS: How to express themselves, their ideas, talents, or needs to others in a positive and creative way.

CONTRIBUTIVE NEEDS: How to help other adults give to others and feel needed.

INFLUENCE NEEDS: Giving the older adult a true sense that they are still important to society, the church, and their family.

TRANSCENDENCE NEED: Finding meaning in life and even in death. What has their life rally meant in light of eternity, past, present, and future. Helping them answer the question of why they are here?

As the wise teacher considers these areas of need a limitless list of ideas should come to mind as to how to best work with this age group of adults.

The Older Person and the Teaching / Learning Experience

To begin, one must always remember that the older adult is an LEARNER! They can learn, they are involved in the development of social roles and skills, they can perform age related tasks, and they have identifiable needs. Using these basic guidelines, we do not need to eliminate the older adults from our educational attentions in the church. One must also keep in mind that change for the sake of change is never received well by older adults. They process new things and ideas through a filter of a whole lifetime of experience, habits, and learning. Knowing this and introducing change slowly with plenty of time for explanation and adaptation will smooth out the process greatly.

The elderly also come into the teaching/learning situation with various fears and a lack of self-confidence. Things are no longer the way they were in the past and the elderly are now on the outside looking in on what the younger people are doing and saying. These feelings come from physical limitations, failings, and a lack of formal education. Because of these truths, our goal as teachers should never be to merely finish the lesson, but rather to meet the needs of those in the class. What are they interested in? Have their questions been answered? Has there been time for them to share their insight into the material being studied?

How then should we teach the elderly of the church?

The following guidelines should prove helpful in answering this question:

☒Introduce new methods slowly. The personality of your group should guide you in this matter.

☒Choose methods appropriate for the group, the lesson, and the class location.

☒Choose methods that tap the experience and gifts of the group.

☒Choose methods that help fulfill goals. Never select an activity because it fills time.

The key is to always seek ways to involve as many as possible in the class in the learning process. The greater the involvement, the greater the learning on the part of these older adults. Some of the methods that can prove useful include discussions, debate, storytelling, demonstrations, hands-on experiences such as craft projects or service projects, small group work, role play and question and answer sessions. Trips, luncheons, ministry activities in the community and around the church and other social times are all ways to increase involvement and thereby the learning of the older adult.

Teachers of older adults should see their work as more than just a maintenance ministry for seniors in their final days of life. This is an exciting time of life where many people find fulfillment in their continued striving to be like Jesus and lead others to Him. Effective teachers of older adults should be clear about their own self concept and their own values. They should be knowledgeable about what they teach and possess the skills of an enabler. They should always be aware of and sensitive to the needs and potentials of those they seek to teach.

Chapter Eight
Family Life Education

In the beginning, when God desired to fill the earth with a visible manifestation of His image and presence, He created a family (Genesis 2:4-4:2). God brought the man and woman and their children together into this unique relationship, older than the church, more ancient even than the nation of Israel. Through families, God would fulfill specific purposes for the world and for mankind.

God would use the family to bring Jesus Christ to accomplish the work of redemption (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, Matthew 1:1-16, Luke 1:26-38, Luke 3:23-38, Galatians 4:4-5). He would use the family to portray in their relationships with one another the same love and grace He shows for His people (Hosea 1:1-2, 14-23, Ephesians 5:22-33). God would use the family as the primary instructional agency for teaching children spiritual truth (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Ephesians 6:4), and He would use the family as a safe environment for the development of a person's mental, physical, spiritual, and social health (Luke 2:51-52). Without question, the family is a very vital part of God's plan for mankind and the church must be able to appropriately train parents to create a strong environment for the growth of strong Christian families. The world situation today does everything possible to destroy the whole concept of the family. Activities for children and parents keep them separated. Television has become the substitute for family and simple communication between family members. Homosexuality, cohabitation, and a general attitude of no respect for the institutions of marriage and family have caused great problems around the world. The church must rise against this trend and help families become solid units of love, faith, and cooperation in this very unloving, faithless, and selfish world.

How can this be done? The church must address the family crisis brought about by such

conditions as these. To do so, it must enable people to understand the biblical characteristics of a Christian family; such characteristics as spiritual training with consistency (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Ephesians 6:4), love with commitment (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:1-6), discipline with dignity (Hebrews 12), Holy Spirit guidance and control (John 14:13, 16-17, 26; Galatians 5:22-23), prayer (I Thessalonians 5:17), and mutual respect (Ephesians 5:22-6:9; Colossians 3:18-25; I Peter 2:18-3:7). In addition, the church must take advantage of every opportunity to become a center for the development of friendships and a source of insight into practical skills in personal relationships and communication. It must become an avenue for celebrating successful, working examples of marriages and family and solving tough issues in family relationships.

Family life education is a basic ministry to adults even though the entire family will reap benefits from this type of education. When the church is helping families become stronger the entire church program will grow and become stronger. The key to a successful church is always ministry to families that make up that church. The whole church program should revolve around and take into consideration the impact on the family life of the church. Strong families equal strong churches!

Content of Family Life Education

A family life curriculum should be need-oriented, practically relevant, and immediately useful. Family needs felt by adults in the church will fall broadly into two areas:

(1) developmental needs and (2) crisis needs. The following list gives some ideas of what the basic developmental needs are for different age groups in the lives of the adults in the church:

Early Adult Years (18-35)

☒Courting
☒Understanding children
☒Selecting a mate
☒Preparing children for school

☒Preparing for marriage
☒Helping children in school
☒Family planning
☒Solving marital problems
☒Preparing for children
☒Managing a home
☒Raising children
☒Managing money

Middle Adult Years (35-60)

☒Helping teenage children become adults
☒Letting adult children go
☒Relating to one's spouse as a person
☒Adjusting to aging parent
☒Planning for retirement

Senior Adult Years (60 and over)

☒Adjusting to reduced income
☒Establishing new living arrangements
☒Adjusting to the death of a spouse
☒Learning to live alone
☒Relating to grandchildren
☒Establishing new intimate relationships
☒Putting the estate in order

These tasks serve well as a basis for curriculum development in the ministry of family life education. They create felt developmental needs in adult family members, preparing them to learn and making them eager to apply what they learn to the work of problem solving. The following topics would be a good list from which to choose when trying to determine what to offer to the adults of the church in the area of family life education:

Christian Marriage

☒Preparation for Christian Marriage
☒Dating
☒Engagement
☒Biblical Foundations (Genesis 2:18-25)
☒Mutual Commitment
☒Marriage roles and responsibilities
☒Meaningful Communication
☒Conflict resolution
☒Sex and sexuality
☒Family finances
☒In-law relations

Christian Family Issues

☒Priorities of Christian Family
☒Principles of parenting children
☒Principles of parenting teenagers
☒Discipline in the home
☒Family nurture-fostering a sense of security
☒Building Christian convictions
☒Setting Christian standards
☒Worshiping as a family
☒Sending out young adults
☒Marriage enrichment
☒Relating to adult children and their children
☒The task of grandparenting

The above themes must all flow from a biblical understanding of the concept of family life education. This can best be seen in the following list of biblical texts and themes dealt with in each of these passages. A strong biblical foundation is obviously essential for any form of Christian education to be successful and effective. The biblical texts that address family themes are:

Genesis 2:18-25	Biblical foundations of marriage
Ephesians 5:22-23	Roles and responsibilities in marriage
I Peter 3:1-7	Roles and responsibilities in marriage
I Corinthians 7:1-7	Roles and responsibilities in marriage
Song of Songs	God's view of love in marriage
Proverbs 5	Faithfulness in marriage
Deuteronomy 6:4-9	Teaching in the home
Proverbs 22:6	Parent-child relationships
Ephesians 6:1-4	Parent-child relationships
Colossians 3:18-21	Parent-child relationships
2 Timothy 1:5	Parent-child relationships
Hebrews 12:1-11	Discipline in the home

I Timothy 5:3-8 Responsibility to care for family members

The second area of need that adults have are crisis needs. The church must also address these. The crises that adults in the church will face include physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, divorce, drug dependency, alcoholism, physical or mental disabilities, dying and death. For adults struggling with the trauma of any of these crises, the family life educator must be there as a resource person to help the adults deal with their. The Bible must become the source of all the answers for life's questions and God must be the one we turn to for strength and comfort. This can be encouraged under the love, attention, and care of a wise family life educator. Meeting needs is the call of all educators and that includes much more than just the need for knowledge.

Chapter Nine
Adult Sunday School

For adult Sunday Schools to be effective, they must focus on the needs of adults as we mentioned in the previous chapter. Adults seem to desire informality, intimacy, and relevance in the activities that they commit themselves to today. The Sunday School must strive to provide these three characteristics if they desire to hold the interest and enthusiasm of the adults in the church when it comes to education. The challenge for future Christian educators will be to continue to develop more creative ways to fulfill the adult needs for informal discussion and fellowship, intimacy in relationships with other Christians, and relevance to the world in which they find themselves living. The Bible must be used as the standard for determining the value of all the programs we develop. God the Father must always be the ultimate source of our strength and spiritual growth. As adults understand these basic principles, growth will come spiritually as well as numerically. Adults need to have the value of Sunday School and Christian education in general made real to them again. This is the job of the pastor and the Christian educator. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the task will not be that difficult.

Principles and Structures

Adults Grouped According to Life Stages

How adults are grouped together is the initial concern of any Sunday School educator of adults. As adults move from young to middle to older adult, they engage in new cycles of life and therefore they face new times for learning about life. Because adults learn best when they face a common conflict, wise churches offer opportunities for adults to learn with other adults in the same stage of life. For example, the following groups would do well to be put in

the different classes: singles, young marrieds without children, young marrieds with children, parents of elementary age children, parents of teenagers, parents with children that have grown up and moved away and retired adults. Our need to learn God's Word comes to bear when one of these stages is reached because the needs and application of God's Word changes with respect to the new circumstances faced. The key in all of this is understanding that great emphasis needs to be placed on the involvement of adult learners in a process of self- diagnosis of needs for learning.

An important principle to remember is that people generally require four to nine months to feel sufficiently comfortable and become genuinely involved in a learning experience. For some more aggressive people the time is less, but there is always a transition period where the student becomes familiar with the program. The Sunday School often serves as the means of assimilating people into the congregation, perhaps an objective equally important with the study of the Word of God.

Classes with Common Goals

Most adult classes need to have a common goal in focus to be effective. Adults need to sense that there is a relevance and purpose for their coming together each week. Answering the questions of

- ☒Why are we here?
- ☒What are we learning?
- ☒What can I do with this information when we are done?

are all valid inquiries that the adults will make.

One of the main goals that adult Sunday School classes need to strive for is the development of people for leadership positions within the overall church structure. Teachers, visitation teams, hospital ministry, administrative help, maintenance assistance, children and youth workers are all positions that need to be filled with strong, adult leadership. The adult Sunday School classes can prepare just those people for those positions.

Classes Out to Build in Fellowship Settings

Fellowship is a major purpose of the adult Sunday School class. Christians need to

fellowship and share with other Christians in an informal way as much as possible. Special activities outside the classroom setting need to be planned and carried out. The sharing of common experiences tends to create a community of memories and then those memories help build a sense of commitment to the community. Class members need to be involved in the process of building these memories and the activities in which everyone can participate. These memory building moments need to happen as often as possible in order to help promote a strong sense of belonging among all the adults in the class.

Constantly Start New Groups

The key to success among adults in the area of education is to always be offering something new. New classes, new study topics, new approaches to the Word of God, or new challenges to their lives in the world. Variety is the essential factor in the successful adult Sunday School. Growth comes through developing new classes even if there are only a few people in the beginning of the class. Creativity on the part of the pastor and adult educator will draw many more adults into the vital area of education in the church.

Curriculum Guidelines

Choosing or creating the correct material for adult classes is a vital aspect of the overall program. The following objectives should be followed in order to assure a quality program will exist for the adults in the church:

☒Adults do not attend Sunday School primarily to study the Bible; their first and primary objective is fellowship.

☒Teachers will need to practice genuine skill in plowing new ground in the area of mental thinking, not just cover what seems to be attractive at the time the curriculum is selected.

☒Teachers must guide students in interacting rationally, not just emotionally, and with a high sense of responsibility to the full counsel of God.

☒Efforts must be made to get students to internalize the Word of God.

☒Enriching curriculum for adult Sunday Schools will move people from the fantasy world of their perceptions into the reality of the eternal Word of God.

☒Students must be encouraged to develop new spiritual skills and habits.

☒The genuine art of teaching adults is all based on the central theme that focuses the learning and decision making on the student and not the teacher. Adults only give their energy to those ideas they have personally been involved in learning, not ides they have merely been told about or instructed to believe.

Effective Sunday School classes do not just happen; they are created by godly and dynamic leaders. Creative leaders who will learn and apply the previously discussed structures and principles will find growing, happy adults as a part of their growing church. God has gifted people for leadership just as well as He has gifted people to teach. Both gifts are absolutely necessary in adult education. Spiritual nurture and growth can and will happen in adult Sunday School classes if the church and its leaders give their time and effort to make it happen.

Chapter Ten
Discipleship

Jesus presents the basic key to all adult education when He gave the great commission to His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20:

And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go therefore, and TEACH all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: TEACHING them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

This great commission challenges all believers to realize that their purpose in life is to teach or disciple others to follow after Christ just like they are following after Him. We disciple others by example and not just instruction. This entire study on the education of adults can be summarized in this one passage of Scripture. Jesus has called us to be disciple makers of other adults who will in turn do the same with adults in their circle of influence.

What is a Disciple?

The Bible describes a disciple as one who follows after Jesus, and models his/her life after His in obedience, love and commitment to the Father. It is a learner who follows and obeys Jesus, exercises loyalty, willingly sacrifices, and engages in works of service. Belief in Jesus is the basic foundation of all discipleship. Faith in Christ and belief in what He taught and did is the pattern that the believer's life must follow, a lifestyle change from the way the world thinks and lives.

This definition raises the question, How do we enable adult believers in Jesus Christ to observe a lifestyle patterned after His, characterized by learning, obeying, serving, sacrifice, and loyalty? The Bible gives the initial clue to the answer for this question. The original

disciples of Jesus acquired these traits by following Jesus and adopting His lifestyle of service, prayer, Scripture study, meditation, and worship. After they were taught by the Lord, they continued by teaching and discipling others. 2 Timothy 2:2 provides us with the pattern we need to follow.

Discipling and the Local Church

Discipling has three key features: 1) Leading people to follow Jesus and to pattern their lives after His, 2) providing personal examples of what it means to be like Jesus, 3) designing a church context where discipleship can grow and develop among the adults. The prime candidates for this kind of activity are adults. Adults have sufficient experiences to identify a lifestyle and live it. In their social and cultural context, adults are able to learn how to obey, sacrifice, serve, and be loyal. They are more attracted to teaching strategies that recognize and personalize their unique situations. The discipleship process must begin immediately after a person has confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior of their life. The growth of the new believer is dependent on their growth in the basic means of grace which are the Word of God, prayer, and the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and water baptism.

As a first step in the discipling process, the adult educator should help the new Christian recognize the value of Bible study and to acquire some basic skill in using and studying it. From what the Bible teaches, there can be no doubt that Christian growth requires a knowledge of the Word of God. The pages of the Bible provide the only resource for the believer to learn about Christ and His teachings and activities while here on earth, as well as learning about God the Father and God the Holy Spirit and their work throughout history.

Prayer plays an equally important role in fostering growth in grace. Following Jesus and His way of life can only come through communion with the Father through the Son under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Prayer characterized the practice of Jesus in His earthly ministry. Even now, Jesus continues to intercede for us His people at the right hand of the Father. In

true prayer, one exhibits the essential attributes of a disciple -- obedience, service, sacrifice, and loyalty. Adult Christians will grow in prayer and Bible study as they see others use these means of grace. Adult learners respond to examples being modeled in life for them. They are also more inclined to use the tools of growth when other adults encourage them and hold them accountable for their stewardship in prayer and Bible study.

The sacraments historically have played a crucial role in developing the character of a disciple. In the Lord's Supper, one confirms the fact that Jesus' death on the cross was for our salvation: *"...take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. This cup is the new testament in my blood, this do as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He come"* (I Corinthians 11:24-26). In this sacrament, the believer confesses sin and gains assurance that God forgives sin for Jesus' sake.

In a similar way, the sacrament of baptism demonstrates that one belongs to Christ. Baptism can be likened to bearing the mark of God's ownership. Every time believers see a baptism, they should remember that they belong to the Lord and that He will never leave nor forsake His own. It is a concrete reminder of what Christ has done and that the believer is unite with Him. It should encourage all believers to continue to imitate Christ and to persevere in discipleship.

Both of these sacraments serve a very important teaching function for adults being discipled. Each of them provides a sign of God's grace that enables the believer to grow in his or her relationship with the Lord. These two sacraments also seal or affirm for Christian adults that God's grace can and does benefit them. As followers of Christ use these means of grace, they can grow to be more and more like the Savior who gave these gifts to the church.

Discipleship: A Lifelong Process

The loyal practice of obedience, sacrifice, and service for Christ's sake never ends in the

earthly existence of the believer. Through history the church has basically equated discipleship with the striving for sanctification or holiness. A complete setting apart unto God of the believer and a total dying to the desires of self and the flesh. This cannot in all reality ever happen on this earth, however, it must never stop being the goal of the true believer. Total sanctification and holiness will be realized in heaven, but must be practiced and prepared for here on earth for our entire lives as believers.

To accomplish this task the church must develop discipleship in two areas; follow up of new believers and the development of servants committed to reproducing themselves in the lives of new Christians. One of the best ways to begin is to put the new follower of Jesus into contact with someone who increasingly possesses the characteristics of a disciple. Jesus Himself set the pattern when He lived with His disciples as their teacher and example. Contemporary discipling cannot improve on the method of Jesus. Those who follow the Lord now need to see the life of Jesus lived out in another believer. Discipling simply requires the personal demonstration of the qualities that one hopes to see in the disciple and the willingness of the discipler to explain the reasons for his or her actions. A godly life, a clear explanation, and a glimpse at the passions of one's heart are the keys to discipleship. The church provides the context for discipling. Discipling creates maturity in the church and affects every aspect of it. A program aimed at building disciples in the church should be at the center of instilling in the people a greater interest in educational opportunities and in the worship service. It should become the guiding force for all the activities of the church.

Christian Education of Adults
Final Exam

Answer the following ten essay questions in complete essay answers using your own words and demonstrating an understanding of the text:

Chapter 1

1. Explain why Jesus should be considered the "Master Teacher."

Chapter 2

2. Name and define four of the six blocks to spiritual growth.

Chapter 3

3. Name and define the six essential motivational elements needed for adults to learn.

Chapter 4

4. Explain the two methods of inductive learning discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5

5. Name four of the principles mentioned in Chapter 5 for teaching young adults. Explain the importance of each principle given.

Chapter 6

6. Identify four principles for teaching middle adults and give an explanation of the importance of each.

Chapter 7

7. Explain why the older adult should still be viewed as a "learner."

Chapter 8

8. Explain the importance God places on the family as demonstrated in the Bible.

Chapter 9

9. List the seven objectives to follow in order to have a quality adult Sunday School program.

Chapter 10

10. Define the word "Disciple."

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