



**Mennonite
Schools
Council**

Affiliated with the
Mennonite Church

High School Bible Curriculum

Written by Elam Peachey (1990)

Revised by Bronwyn Hestand (2010)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Mennonite schools offer students the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive in faith-infused communities that reflect Anabaptist values and beliefs. While each school is unique, these schools share a commitment to value-added education that promotes excellence and teaches students Jesus Christ's way of peace and reconciliation in the school, the church and all around the world.

The choice of Bible curriculum is critical for Mennonite schools. The following course outlines and resource lists are presented in support of Christ-centered understandings of faith. As Jeanine Bertsche Johnson says, “Most of all, we can continue to remind our students that God always loves them, seeks deeper relationship with them, empowers them through the Holy Spirit to follow the way of Jesus, and calls them to be agents of God’s reconciling love in the world. As our Vision: Healing and Hope statement says, ‘God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world.’ ”

This curriculum was first written in 1990 by Elam Peachey as a project of what was then the Mennonite Secondary Education Council (MSEC). Written with support from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and in consultation with the MSEC Bible teachers, a core curriculum was designed to bring an Anabaptist perspective to Bible instruction and to facilitate a more consistent Bible curriculum at the various Mennonite high schools. I am grateful to Elam for his enthusiastic support of the updating process.

This new “edition” maintains much of the original, but in an electronically accessible format. The course outlines themselves have been only slightly modified to recognize changes such as world politics, developing church history, or advances in science and technology. What has changed dramatically is the resource list. Many of the books listed in the 1990 version are no longer in print. Now, of course, many resources exist on the Internet. The activities listed have also been updated to emphasize growth on the Christian faith journey. The teacher will find suggestions for activities, journals and discussions that will challenge students to articulate what they believe and grow in faith in Christ.

This curriculum does not contain individual lesson plans or even specific suggestions of how to pace the course. Each school’s Bible department will need to write its own departmental objectives and set priorities. It is not expected that any teacher will “cover” all the material listed in the outlines. Instead, discernment of objectives as related to the local community, churches and history will be important. For example, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate

determined in 2007 that each course in their religious studies area would have these six elements: biblical grounding, spiritual disciplines, Anabaptist/Mennonite perspectives, connection with other faiths/cultures, ethical issues, and enduring questions. Other schools have created terminal projects such as presentations or faith-oriented “What I believe” speeches which are shared with family and friends at the end of the senior year.

Each course has an extensive resource listing. The list included in this introduction is intended to provide foundational understandings of Mennonite history and theology, especially for those who are new to teaching Bible in a Mennonite school. There are also several resources about youth ministry. Schools are encouraged to build and maintain a resource library for its Bible department. It should be noted that a new edition of the book, *Through Fire and Water*, was released in 2010 in support of the 11th grad course, “The People of God: Growth and Struggles of the Church in History.” The new edition includes a more sympathetic view of the medieval church period, a new chapter on the question of faith and ethnicity, more information about the North American Mennonite church from 1950 to the present, and new chapters on Mennonites in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Schools are encouraged to purchase copies of this book for student use. Another new book that is sure to be useful is John Roth’s book on Mennonite education. Though not yet titled, it is expected to be released in late 2010 or early 2011.

I would like to thank the Mennonite Schools Council (MSC) teachers who shared their perspectives on the curriculum and their resource ideas. Dale Shenk from Bethany Christian Schools; Ron Hertzler, Kirby King, Preston Bush and Rod Derstine from Christopher Dock Mennonite High School; and J.W. Sprunger, Timothy Yoder and Sheri Wenger from Lancaster Mennonite School graciously shared how their Bible curriculum has developed over the years. Their experience with high school students and faith development was invaluable. I also thank Steve Kriss and Marlene Frankenfield of Franconia Mennonite Conference for their input. Rachel Nussbaum Eby of Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) edited and reformatted the revised version.

Sharing of ideas, questions and resources between current teachers is strongly encouraged and can be facilitated online or at MSC events. In addition, the MEA website (www.mennoniteeducation.org) is a source for many resources.

With prayers for teaching and learning that builds God’s kingdom,

Bronwyn Histan
MSC Curriculum Coordinator

TEXTBOOKS

Careful review of materials is necessary for alignment with the school's mission and the departmental goals.

For the church history course, MSC has commissioned the revised edition of the following book:

Nolt, Steven M., and Harry Loewen. *Through Fire and Water: An Overview of Mennonite History*. Rev. ed. Scottdale: Herald Press, 2010.

For the senior level course, a peace and justice study such as the following is recommended:

Roth, John D. *Choosing Against War: A Christian View*. Intercourse: Good Books, 2002.

The following two books by St. Mary's Press may be useful:

Newland, Mary Reed. *Written on Our Hearts: The Old Testament Story of God's Love*. 3rd ed. Winona: Saint Mary's Press, 2009.

Zanzig, Thomas. *Jesus of History, Christ of Faith*. Winona: Saint Mary's Press, 1999.

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Augsburger, Myron S. *The Fugitive: Menno Simons*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 2008.

Bass, Dorothy C., and Don Richter. *Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2002.

Bender, Harold S. *The Anabaptist Vision*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1944.
Also available online at www.mcusa-archives.org

Braght, Thieleman Jan van. *The Martyrs Mirror*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1982.
Images available online at www.bethelks.edu/mla/holdings/scans/martyrsmirror
Text available online at www.homecomers.org/mirror/contents.htm

Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1995.
Also available online at www.mennolink.org/doc/cof

Dean, Kenda Creasy. *Almost Christian: What the Faith of our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

- . ed. *OMG: A Youth Ministry Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2010.
- and Ron Foster. *The God-Bearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998.
- Dunn, Richard R. *Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students: A Guide for Youth Workers, Teachers, Pastors and Youth Ministers*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2001.
- Dyck, Cornelius J., ed. *An Introduction to Mennonite History*. 3rd ed. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1993.
- Fee, Gordon D., and Douglass Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- Herschberger, Michele. *God's Story, Our Story: Exploring Christian Faith and Life*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 2003.
- Jackson, Dave and Neta. *On Fire for Christ: Stories of Anabaptist Martyrs*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1989.
- Kauffman, Richard. *Making Peace with Enemies: Ten Truths Christians Need to Know*. Scottdale: Faith & Life Resources, 2002.
- Kehrberg, Sarah, ed. *The Mennonite Handbook*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 2007.
- Nolt, Steven M., and Harry Loewen. *Through Fire and Water: An Overview of Mennonite History*. Rev. ed. Scottdale: Herald Press, 2010.
- Read the Book: A Reading Record for the Whole Bible*. Scottdale: Faith & Life Resources, 2006.
- Root, Andrew. *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press Books, 2007.
- Roth, John R. *Beliefs: Mennonite Faith and Practice*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 2005.
- . *Stories: How Mennonites Came to Be*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 2007.
- White, Julie Ellison. *Tent of Meeting: A 25-day Adventure with God*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 2004.