



DISCIPLESHIP FORMATION

*Scope and Sequence for Youth (Sixth-Twelfth Grade)
2011-2015*

First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth, Texas

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28.19-20)

Baptizing in the name of our Triune God. Teaching obedience to all that Jesus commands. Remembering and relating to Christ present with us. For nearly two millennia the Church has taken Jesus’ words to heart, seeking in each generation to live *The Great Commission*. In our own day and time, Jesus’ words challenge us to seek a faithful response for those whose journey’s God merges with the ministry of First Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth – whether for a life time or for a season of life.

Long obsessed with schooling models for education, the church now recognizes the need for creatively and imaginatively engaging children, youth and adults in intentional and diverse ways of living our Christian faith. *The Great Commission* finds its fulfillment in the fullest range of experiences as disciples of Jesus Christ. As members of the household of God through Baptism, worship with the community of faith is central to our Christian identity. As we gather around God’s Word read, proclaimed, and enacted in the Sacraments, we are lifted into the very heart of God.

With worship as the center of our Christian experience in the community of faith, we are sent out to engage the world with the love, mercy, justice and peace of Jesus Christ. The dual command of Jesus to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves, can be expressed in every relationship and interaction with the world around us. Through word and deed the people of God live out their faith as disciples of Jesus Christ, remembering all that Jesus commands.

Disciples of Jesus engaged in the world around them, supported by the community of faith, and grounded in Scripture and the theological resources of the Church, know that ultimately we are powerless on our own. It is only by the power and presence of our Risen Lord that we can awaken each day and seek to be faithful. Gifted by the Holy Spirit, we are provided for individually and as the gathered Body of Christ. Engaging in Christian practices brings us into deeper relationship with the One who promises to be with us always.

Worship, mission, Scripture, theological reflection, Christian practices, the community of faith...all a part of what shapes, forms and sustains us as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is the very life of the Church itself that is our “curriculum.” In the pages that follow a Scope and Sequence Plan for First Presbyterian Church guides how discipleship is nurtured for all ages (children, youth and adults) through Worship and Sacraments; the Bible, Theology and Faithful Living; Vocational Identity as a Disciple; and Spiritual Formation through Christian Disciplines.

THE BIBLE, THEOLOGY AND FAITHFUL LIVING

The ability to engage in theological reflection is a part of the life of mature Christian faith. Theological Reflection fosters the ability to consider with intentionality tradition, experience and culture in the living out of one's faith commitments. In many ways the image of conversation is most useful for describing theological reflection. Theological reflection involves individual and communal dialogue with Christian tradition, our experiences and the world around us.

Curricular goals broadly stated seek to equip and engage children, youth and adults for *participation in the conversations* that comprise theological reflection. To be equipped for such a conversation, general skills to be developed include:

1. *Befriending* the Christian tradition through an ever deepening familiarity with the content and interpretation of the Bible, the theological tradition of the Church (with special emphasis on the Reformed tradition), and Christian/Church history.
2. *Telling* one's story of faith and *Listening* with respect to the faith stories and witness of others. This includes being able to articulate individual experiences of God in authentic and intelligible ways that can be shared with others. A common biblical and theological vocabulary will enhance the ability to both share and listen.
3. *Observing and analyzing* the world around us. How Christian faith is lived in the midst of daily living, current events and cultural influences will be regularly examined and explored.
4. *Exhibiting* an integrated witness of faith in action through participation in mission and ministry in a variety of shapes and forms.



Befriending the Christian Tradition

The Bible – Content and Interpretation

Youth: As middle and high school aged youth continue to develop and grow in the faith through reading the Bible, many important and faithful decisions are often made in these formative years. With this in mind, the youth program seeks to provide a safe place for young people to explore their faith through the study and interpretation of Scripture while in conversation with their peers and adult leaders.

Content of Scripture:

1. Orientation to the Bible: Building upon the foundation of the 5th grade *Know My Bible* class, and continued engagement with scripture in 6th and 7th grade church school classes, **youth in the 8th grade Confirmation Class are engaged in an extensive overview of the Bible, including examples of various translations of the Bible and how the Bible is organized.**

2. Reading the Bible for Content mastery:

- In a mid-week small group setting, high school students will study books of the Bible in community. **In a four year cycle, students with study a minimum of two books from the Old Testament, two gospel accounts, and two New Testament books.**

- Youth will continue to be engaged with the Bible and its contents on a weekly basis through Church School lessons, Sunday evening Youth Group lessons, Bible studies, and singing Scripture in our youth music program.
- **Youth will be encouraged to develop practices to pray and read Scripture on their own throughout the week.**

The key stories in the Bible that youth will study build on the children's program by diving deeper into the following pivotal stories and characters in the Bible:

- Key Old Testament characters (Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Esau, Joseph, Moses, Samson, Ruth, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Elijah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel)
- Key New Testament characters (Jesus, John the Baptist, Mary, the disciples, Zacchaeus, Stephen, Paul)
- The calling of the first disciples (special emphasis on the calling of Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Levi, Matthew)
- The parables of Jesus (special emphasis on the following parables: the sower, the mustard seed and the yeast, the treasure/pearl/net, workers in the vineyard, the talents, the great banquet, the good Samaritan, the rich fool, the Pharisee and the tax collector, the sheep and the goats)
- The miracles of Jesus (special emphasis on the following miracles: changing water into wine, feeding the five thousand, walking on water, calming the storm, and select healing stories including but not limited to the healing the paralytic, healing the boy with the evil spirit, healing the demoniac)
- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)

3. Youth will travel deeper into the content and meaning of scripture

through lessons on Sunday mornings in Church School, Sunday evenings in Youth Group, and Wednesday evenings in Bible Study.

Over the next five years, the high school Bible Study will proceed to study books according to the following plan:

Fall/Winter 2010	<i>Acts</i> (New Testament)
Spring 2011	<i>Being Presbyterian in the Bible Belt</i>
Fall/Winter 2011	(Old Testament)
Spring 2012	(Gospel account)
Fall/Winter 2012	(New Testament)
Spring 2013	(Old Testament)
Fall/Winter 2013	(Gospel)
Spring 2014	<i>Being Presbyterian in the Bible Belt</i>
Spring 2015	(New Testament)

- 4. In order to gauge and encourage a growing mastery of the content of the Bible, our youth program will hold an annual *Bible Jeopardy Tournament*.**

Interpretation of Scripture

1. Introduction to Interpreting Scripture:

- In Youth Group and Bible Study, middle and high school students will be able to use a method of Bible study that will include using the following **OICA** questions (source unknown). While the observation and interpretation questions are typically the most common questions we ask in Bible studies, youth will be encouraged and able to take steps in order to ask deeper questions that Scripture asks of us—namely, the correlative and application questions.
 - *Observation questions (What do you see?)*
 - *Interpretation questions (What does it mean?)*
 - *Correlation questions (How does it compare?)*
 - *Application questions (How does it apply?)*
- Another method of studying and interpreting Scripture that middle and high school students will be able to use and articulate is a simple set of four questions from the youth specialist, Rodger Nishioka:
 - *What does this passage say about God?*
 - *What does this passage say about humans?*
 - *Who is being transformed in this passage?*
 - *What does this passage say to you?*
- Attention will also be given on occasion to *The Message* paraphrase of the Bible by Eugene Peterson as a tool (not a replacement) to read and study Scripture.

2. Advanced interpretation of Scripture opportunity: In preparation for Youth Sunday, **senior students who choose to write a sermon will learn the required skills to exegete a passage of scripture and utilize their**

exegesis as the foundation of their message to the congregation.

Telling one's story of faith

Middle School students, particularly in Confirmation, will be engaged in a variety of activities that seek to provide opportunities to begin expressing their sense of personal faith.

At least once every four years, 8th grade students and high school students will have the opportunity to read the book *Being Presbyterian in the Bible Belt* by Foote and Thornburg.

- After studying the book, students will be able to express their faith story that reflects a Presbyterian theological perspective.
- Students will be able to articulate a faithful understanding of salvation.
- Students will be able to provide a thoughtful and informed response to inerrantist, literalist, and fundamentalist points of view.

High School seniors will be given the opportunity to engage in a conversation with the Associate Pastor (Youth) reviewing the main tenets of *Being Presbyterian in the Bible Belt* the summer before they go to college.

Listening with respect to the faith stories and witness of others

- 1. In order to continue learning to listen and share our stories faithfully, the summer youth program will include a mid-week Summer Bible Study, providing older youth with the opportunity to read a popular Christian book together in order to engage in further biblical and theological reflection building on the school year Bible study format.**
2. Youth will be encouraged to participate in the adult program's lectures, events, and conversations when appropriate.
- 3. As part of the Confirmation Class, students will be encouraged to attend an alternative worship service in another faith tradition with their Confirmation mentor.**
4. The Sunday morning Church School curriculum for youth will engage students in current events and contemporary conversations about the Christian faith and our interactions with others.

Observing and Analyzing the World around Us

- 1. Sunday morning youth church school will use the "LinC (Living in Christ)" curriculum for middle and high school students.** The LinC is a current events based curriculum which equips students with theological interpretations surrounding various current events. The curriculum intends to



engage youth in important faithful conversations surrounding current events, global issues, and hot contemporary topics in our world.

- 2. Events ranging from mission trips, youth conferences, ski trips, and Presbytery youth gatherings will provide students with fun and challenging activities while also engaging them to think theologically through group devotions, small group activities, keynote presentations, with time for personal reflection.**

Exhibiting an integrated witness of faith in action (See Vocational Identity as Disciples)

WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS

Christian worship joyfully ascribes all praise and honor, glory and power to the triune God. In worship the people of God acknowledge God present in the world and in their lives. As they respond to God's claim and redemptive action in Jesus Christ, believers are transformed and renewed. In worship the faithful offer themselves to God and are equipped for God's service in the world.
(W-1.1000, The Book of Order)

*The Worship and Music Committee engages, encourages and supports the gifts, talents, and resources of God's people in encounters of the Holy Spirit as we gather together in the rhythm of worship and ministry.
(Worship and Music Committee Statement of Purpose)*

As Christians, all that we are and all that we do flows out of our worship of God. Through worship we are equipped to lead a Christian life through mission, education, stewardship, congregational care and so on.


"Through Scripture, proclamation, and the Sacraments, God in Christ is present by the Holy Spirit acting to transform, empower, and sustain human lives. In Christian worship the people of God"

1. Hear the Word proclaimed,
2. Received the Word enacted in Sacrament
3. Discover the Word in the world, and
4. Are sent to follow the Word into the world. (W-1.1005 The Book of Order)

At First Presbyterian Church worship is at the heart of all that we do. Our corporate worship engages people of all ages to gather together, praise God, receive the Word and go out into the world to follow Christ.



1. Frequent Worship Leadership:
 - **Youth will be prepared to be fully engaged in the acts of Christian worship by participating regularly in worship by serving as ushers, liturgists, and acolytes.**
 - **Youth will have the opportunity to praise God through the gift of music with our youth vocal and bell choirs.**
2. Annual Youth Sunday:
 - **Building on the lessons learned from leading Children's**



Sabbath, and under the direction of appropriate pastoral and musical staff, middle and high school youth will be equipped annually to plan, prepare, and lead a service of worship on the Lord's Day (Youth Sunday).

- Youth will be able to create a thematically coordinated order of worship.
- You will be equipped to write prayers, choose appropriate congregational songs and hymns, plan and rehearse music, read and study Scripture.
- Youth who are juniors or seniors in high school will be able to prepare sermons based on a solid exegesis of Scripture.

3. Presbyterian Understanding of Worship in 8th Grade Confirmation:

- Youth will be able to articulate an understanding of the Sacraments of Communion and Baptism, and how Presbyterian understanding differs from Roman Catholic and Baptist/Bible Church understandings.
- Youth will be able to name unique aspects of Christian Worship in the Presbyterian tradition.
- 8th grade youth will demonstrate memorization of the Apostles Creed.
- Youth will be able to write a statement of faith.
- Youth will be able to articulate that Confirmation is not simply an educational experience; Confirmation is also a worshipful experience. Regular attendance in worship will be expected in order to highlight that worship is integral to Christian discipleship. Students and Mentors will also be encouraged to attend a worship service of another denomination so that they are able to compare and contrast worship styles in thoughtful ways.

4. Special Worship Opportunities:

- Continuing engagement with a Presbyterian understanding of worship, 6th and 7th grade youth will be equipped to volunteer to help lead worship on conferences and retreats. High school youth, in turn, will be encouraged to volunteer to lead worship during the annual Grace Presbytery Senior High Youth Connection (SHYC).
- During the annual summer mission trip, high school youth will experience a special ceremony of foot washing in the context of worship. Youth will be able to articulate a theological understanding of the importance of foot washing in the life of a disciple as a core element of servant leadership.
- Youth will be experience a variety of special worship services at youth conferences, retreats, and mission trips.

VOCATIONAL IDENTITY AS A DISCIPLE

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. *“Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever.*

I Peter 4:10-11

“Those who follow the discipline of Christian stewardship will find themselves called to lives of simplicity, generosity, honesty, hospitality, compassion, receptivity, and concern for the earth and God’s creatures.”
(W-5.5005, The Book of Order)

As we seek to follow Christ together as a congregation, we remember and teach the central understanding of our vocational identity as disciples: we are all children of God, created in God’s image, and are invited to follow Christ in our daily lives through a variety of experiences and opportunities. Because we claim our identity as disciples of Jesus Christ, we recognize that all of our life is a response to God’s grace – our response becomes our vocation, where our deep passions rise to meet the world’s greatest need.¹ So, in living out our faith, we are called to be good stewards of caring for God’s people and God’s world through our active discipleship. At the heart of stewardship in a mature disciple lies a radical trust in God who alone is the source of our life and who calls us into genuine community with the earth and God’s people. We acknowledge that we are, created by God, as interdependent as Christ’s body on earth (I Corinthians 12). We who have been given much are required to share generously and extravagantly (Luke 12:48).

Our vocational identity can be seen in three lenses: stewardship, outreach, and congregational care and compassion. Of course, all of these categories overlap and are all integral to what it means to respond to God’s grace in our lives. Vocational identity is not just one part of Christian discipleship; it involves every aspect of life in all the stages of life.

(1) Stewardship of our Resources and of the Environment: God has entrusted God’s people to be the caregivers of this earth and the managers of God’s money and talents. We respond to God with faithfulness and generosity, joyfully proclaiming our need to give, rather than merely the church’s need to receive. The Book of Order says, “The ways in which a believer uses God’s gifts of material goods, personal abilities, and time should reflect a faithful response to God’s self-giving in Jesus Christ and Christ’s call to minister to and share with others in the world”

1 Paraphrase of Frederick Buechner.

(W-5.5004). Therefore, the mark of a mature disciple is generosity in participating as God's stewards of money and creation.

(2) **Mission Outreach:** We are called to serve others and to extend hospitality and care for the "least of these." Mission and Outreach is a broad description covering many approaches to achieving these ends. Whether in the form of disaster relief, justice advocacy, direct aid, sustainability and development assistance, mission and outreach is a call to respond domestically and globally to the pain and poverty of our world.

Currently, our congregation is involved in talking about the variety of paradigms for mercy and justice: *working for*, *working with*, and *being with* as defined by the Rev. Dr. Sam Wells in the Nazareth Manifesto. The first one assumes an effort to do ministry on the behalf of another (colloquially, fishing for another person); the second places the mission giver and receiver together to alleviate deficiencies (teaching a person how to fish) and the latter is a model of mission that presupposes all parties are giving and receiving in relationship with one another (going fishing together!). Our present mission commitments and opportunities span these three models of outreach, and we are committed to continue these conversations as we engage in mission together.

(3) **Congregational Care:** As we have been created in the divine image, so we are to affirm that very truth in the lives of others. Congregational Care speaks to the ways we minister to the needs of our church community by providing care of mind, body and spirit, nurturing our congregation's efforts to live the second greatest commandment to love one another. Congregational care upholds the ministry of presence, showing in tangible ways how to embody compassion and care.



Vocational Identity: Youth will continue to grow into their own callings as disciples of Jesus Christ through a variety of stewardship, mission, and congregational care teaching moments and experiences. Youth will build upon their understanding of Christian vocation in helpful, creative, tangible, and thought-provoking exercises in order to deepen their understanding of their identity and purpose in God's world.

1. Stewardship

- **Youth will experience annually a minimum of one Stewardship lesson in both their church school classes and Sunday evening youth group meetings.**
- **Youth will be able to articulate a biblical definition of stewardship and the understanding that we are all managers of God's resources and called to share and serve in all aspects of our lives as followers of Jesus Christ.**

- Youth will be invited to pledge and tithe as an act of Christian worship and, in turn, will be encouraged to fill out a pledge card during the annual Stewardship effort.
- Youth will organize at least one alternative giving effort each year (i.e. CROP Walk, Super Bowl of Caring fundraiser, Toms “One Day without Shoes” event, etc.).
- Through the exercise of completing a gifts and talents survey, youth will be able to identify at least one gift God has given them and be offered guidance in age appropriate ways to apply that gift to their daily lives.
- Youth will be able to provide a theological response to environmental issues by articulating an understanding of environmental stewardship that is grounded in a biblical study of the creation story through at least one church school class lesson on an annual basis.
- With the guidance of the Youth Committee, youth will be equipped to form an environmental stewardship team that will work on ways to encourage a greener youth program. This “Youth Green Team” will begin locally by organizing recycling efforts during weekly youth programs and annual youth trips.

2. Mission Outreach

- Youth will be offered weekly (Youth First Hand Blitz) and monthly (playgroup at Presbyterian Night Shelter) mission projects as a way to encourage youth to live out their Christian vocation on a regular basis in our local community.
- 8th grade Confirmation students will participate in at least one service project with their class as an expression of the importance of mission work in the life of a disciple.
- Annually, at least one local and intergenerational mission event will be organized by the Youth Committee and offered to youth and families.
- In order to build upon their service learning activities through local mission projects, high school youth will be given the annual opportunity to participate in a several day summer mission trip. Both domestic and international mission opportunities will be offered.
- The Youth Committee will begin to implement an annual mission trip schedule using the following four year rotating cycle in order to maximize the variety of mission trip opportunities for our high school youth:
 - Summer 2011: domestic mission trip by bus (Marvell, Ark.)
 - Summer 2012: domestic mission trip by plane (TBA)
 - Summer 2013: domestic mission trip by bus (TBA)
 - Summer 2014: international mission trip by plane (TBA)
- Youth will be able to articulate the importance of relational



ministry as part of a mission experience by sharing stories of their mission experience with the larger congregation by preparing an opportunity for members to learn about their mission trip and ask questions to a panel of youth mission trip participants.

3. Congregational Care

Building upon the children's goal to articulate ways of showing Christian care to others, youth will be able to demonstrate at least one expression of care and compassion for members of the congregation.

- **Annually, youth will prepare encouraging college care packages and send them to our congregation's college-aged members.**
- **Under the guidance of the Youth Committee, a "Youth Care Team" will be established to encourage the care of congregation members (both youth and adult) through prayer and in other compassionate ways to be determined by the team.**
- **When appropriate, middle and high school youth will be encouraged to participate in adult congregational care efforts.**

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

“Spiritual formation is the activity of the Holy Spirit that molds our lives into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This likeness is one of deep intimacy with God and genuine compassion for all of creation. The Spirit works not only in the lives of individuals, but also in the church, shaping it into the body of Christ. We cooperate with this work of the Spirit through certain practices that make us more open and responsive to the Spirit’s touch. Disciplines such as Sabbath keeping, works of compassion and justice, discernment, worship, Scripture study, hospitality, spiritual friendships, and contemplative silence.” (Hungry Hearts, PC (USA) Office of Spiritual Formation, Spring 2010, p. 10)

The Christian tradition has engaged certain practices throughout its history that have proven to be effective ways to grow in Christian discipleship. Worship, study of Scripture, and Vocational Identity as a Disciple (works of compassion and justice/mission and cultivation of generosity/stewardship of resources) have been addressed in detail in previous sections of this Scope and Sequence plan. The practices that will now be addressed include: forms of prayer and contemplation (labyrinth, *lectio divina*, silence, breath prayer, body prayer, prayer with others), discernment, and spiritual friendships.



Our youth program will consistently teach and encourage students to engage in a variety of spiritual practices during their middle and high school years in order to strengthen and deepen their faith in Jesus Christ. The spiritual formation of youth will be supported throughout the many dimensions of our program - from retreat settings to special events to weekly activities.

- 1. In a variety of settings such as a youth conference, and using an array of resources such as *Praying in Color* by Sybil MacBeth and Leslie Weatherhead’s *A Private House of Prayer*, youth will be offered opportunities to study and practice the spiritual discipline of prayer. This will be offered twice a year.**
- 2. Through our youth music program, students will be able to understand the art of song and ringing bells as a tool to pray to God and meditate on Scripture.**
- 3. Because of the simplicity and pace of studying God’s word through the prayerful practice of *lectio divina*, youth will be given the**



opportunity to learn this spiritual discipline on an annual basis.

- 4. Annually, youth will be provided the opportunity to learn to use *The Message* as a tool to prayerfully read Scripture at least twice a year.**
- 5. The ancient spiritual discipline of prayerfully walking the labyrinth is a powerful tool for people of all ages; therefore, youth will be offered the opportunity to experience the labyrinth with a trained guide twice a year.**
- 6. Lessons on practicing a variety of spiritual disciplines will be offered at least twice a year, such as studying Lauren Winner's book *Mudhouse Sabbath* during Summer Bible Study, as a way to provide new spiritual practices for youth to incorporate into their daily lives.**
- 7. Youth will be invited to attend adult spiritual formation events when it is deemed age appropriate.**

Our congregation is a closely knit family of faith and, in turn, our youth program is built on relational ministry. Such a perspective directs our program to build spiritual friendships among our youth and with adult mentors.

- 1. Nurturing spiritual friendships among our youth is one of the central goals of all youth group activities and trips. A weekly and informal Sunday evening youth dinner among middle and high school youth will be offered in order to encourage these relationships.**
- 2. To encourage spiritual friendships of our youth with adults, each Confirmation Class student will be paired with an adult "mentor" in order to provide a spiritual guide to our youth during the Confirmation journey and in the years to come.**

Because all of the good works we seek to accomplish cannot be understood apart from God's grace, connecting the missional to the spiritual will be foundational to our youth program. To nurture the growth of our young people in their frequent and annual mission efforts, youth will be equipped to connect the missional with the spiritual.

- 1. During the weekly First Hand Blitz service project, youth will be provided the opportunity to offer their labor to God through prayer.**
- 2. During the monthly service project at the Presbyterian Night**

Shelter, youth will be equipped to practice works of compassion through leading a playgroup for children who are underprivileged.

- 3. On the annual mission trip, youth will be engaged in daily devotionals (both personal and communal) in order to be open and aware of the work of the Holy Spirit in the midst of their mission experience.**

