

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, N CAROLINA
EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY GOALS
8/31/1997
INTRODUCTION**

In the summer of 1995, I called together a task group to formulate Educational Ministry Goals for our congregation. This process reflected our concern for how well we were doing in “making disciples of Jesus Christ.” The task group believed that the goal of Educational Ministry was to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 28:19-20, “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 observe everything that I have commanded you.*” It believed that our Educational Ministry also had its roots in Ephesians 4:11-16, in particular, “*to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.*”

We found ourselves questioning the effectiveness of our current Educational Ministry for the following reasons:

- ☒ Many of our children upon reaching confirmation age seemed to possess little biblical knowledge. While they knew some Bible stories, they knew little of the connecting biblical themes, nor were they aware of the differences between the Old and New Testament;
- ☒ We seemed to be more concerned in finding a curriculum that made teaching easy and effective, than with how well this curriculum did in making us disciples;
- ☒ Adult classes had little or no direction in selecting courses;
- ☒ We noted a tremendous drop-out rate following confirmation;
- ☒ We were deeply concerned with how best to pass along our Lutheran tradition that has deep roots in biblical knowledge and worship traditions;
- ☒ We felt that we needed a better balance between learning the facts about the faith and experiencing the faith and reflecting upon our own personal faith;
- ☒ We wanted a coordinated approach that would help us live faithfully as disciples of Jesus Christ in today’s world.

The task group began by defining what we meant by “making disciples” and “equipping people for ministry.” We read through the Search Institute’s booklet, *Exploring Christian Education Effectiveness: An Inventory for Congregational Leaders*. We then led a workshop for a group of Sunday School teachers and congregational leaders. The workshop was followed by a series of modified workshops for our adult Sunday School classes. Information from these workshops was collated and reviewed. We then arrived at consensus regarding the goal of our Educational Ministry program, what we understood a “mature faith” or “disciple” might look like. (See p.3)

Then, using *The Age-Group Objectives of Christian Education*, a document produced by W. Kent Gilbert in 1958 through The Board of Parish Education of The Lutheran Church in America, we began the task of examining age-appropriate learnings that would lead us toward developing a mature faith. The task group divided into small groups which reviewed developmental changes and learning goals for pre-school and elementary-aged children, middle-school and high-school youth, young, middle age, and older adults. Those goals were formulated in four areas: worship, learning, caregiving and service. These are the four areas that

we feel are essential for creating a balanced approach to a mature faith.

Along the way, we consulted with Dr. Roland Martinson, professor of Pastoral Care at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. Dr. Martinson also actively works with the Search Institute as well as the Augsburg Institute. Both are non-profit organizations dedicated to the improvement of education in the church's life.

Dr. Martinson made strategic suggestions for how we might go about formulating our goals and then was kind enough to review our first draft. He suggested that our Church's Mission/vision Statement be the main compass in guiding us; that our Educational Ministry Mission/Vision Statement should be a mini-compass; that as we develop our goals, we should do so chronologically, intergenerationally, with inter-discipline (all our program committees); decide what is the relationship between worship and learning, learning and caregiving, caregiving and worship. He also suggested that we use our Wesley Model of Spirituality as the framework for each age level. The Wesley Model focuses on developing discipleship through worship, learning, caregiving and service. Through worship and learning we take God's Word and presence into our lives. Through caregiving and service we let God work through our lives as we continue the mission of Christ in the world.

You will also find that we followed his suggestion for using the four story approach as the connecting themes from birth through the end of our educational program. This approach places equal importance upon learning the facts or content of our faith as well as experiencing the faith in our lives. (See p.4-6)

Having arrived at a working document, we present this to the congregation in draft form, ask for review and input. This document will then move forward to the council for adoption, and then back to the congregation for adoption as a major congregational goal and our guide to Educational Ministry for the foreseeable future.

Our hope is for these goals to

- ☒ be a working document for each of our program committees as we seek to work together in forming disciples and developing a mature faith;
- ☒ guide us as we teach our children, youth and adults about the faith;
- ☒ balance the content of our faith with our experience of it;
- ☒ deepen our awareness of God's Word and will for our lives and world so that we might more fully participate in serving God as we live;
- ☒ lead us to live more faithfully as disciples of Jesus Christ.

I wish to thank Penny Stein, Chris Bernhardt, Marlene Barringer, Helen Lochra, Michael Shore, Pete Schwarz, Sherrie Harmon, Director of Children's Ministry, Rick Frederick, Director of Youth Ministry, Dana McIver, Director of Music, for their many hours of hard work and dedicated service in this task. Without their vision for excellence, their belief in God's shaping our lives through the work of his Holy Spirit through the educational process, and their hope for our future, we could have never achieved our goal.

Pastor Charlie

A VISION FOR OUR EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY

Our **vision** for Educational Ministry is to help people live out faithfully our affirmation of Baptism (LBW, p. 201):

- ☒ to continue in the covenant God made with us in Holy baptism;

- ☒ to live among God's faithful people;
- ☒ to hear his Word and share in his supper;
- ☒ to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed;
- ☒ to serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus;
- ☒ and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

It is our understanding that the **goal** of Educational Ministry is to help people develop a “**mature faith**” that will help us “to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death.” (Philippians 3:10) By this we mean that knowing Christ is our only goal in life; that entering into this relationship with Christ in Baptism begins the shaping and reshaping of our lives so that we might become more and more like him.

As St. Paul writes in Philippians 2:5-8, “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Or again, in Romans 12:1-2: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

We believe that **the following 10 expressions of faith**, when taken together, give a well-rounded portrait of a person with mature faith. **According to this model, a person of mature faith ...**

1. trusts in God's saving grace and believes in the humanity and divinity of Jesus, and in the presence of Jesus now in the person of the Holy Spirit;
2. experiences a sense of security and peace;
3. integrates faith and life, seeing all life as God's domain. This means that all of life's decisions and actions are subject to God's Lordship, including social relationships and political choices;
4. seeks spiritual growth through both personal and communal study, reflection, prayer, worship, and discussion with others;
5. seeks to be part of a community of believers in which people give witness to their faith and support and nourish one another through worship, learning, caregiving, and service;
6. holds life-affirming values, including commitment to racial and gender equality, living in harmony with those of different cultural and religious views, and has a personal sense of responsibility with the welfare of others;
7. advocates social and global change to bring about greater social justice;
8. serves humanity, consistently and passionately, through acts of love and justice;
9. is nourished by the sacraments;
10. knows the biblical story.

THE FOUR STORY APPROACH: RECURRING THEMES THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES

We are grateful to Dr. Roland Martinson for his suggestion to track throughout our lives the following four stories: God's Story, My Story, the Church's Story, and the Story of God's

World. Like strands in a tapestry, these stories weave their way through our lives leading us to see how God reveals himself and shapes and transforms life. These stories from the basis of our teaching approach bringing together both content and experience. While the factual content of the faith can be taught, our Christian faith is something that we experience because of its relational nature. Experience without knowledge, however, leaves us without a firm foundation upon which to stand. So we need to find balance and respect for both the factual content and experiential sides of our faith.

The four stories are outlined below, and then illustrations follow in how we might use them in our teaching.

God's Story centers on:

- ☒ discovering the content of what the Bible teaches us about God; his presence, promise, and power;
- ☒ understanding the message of a present and active God who enters deep into the life of God's people, who is active in bringing about new life;
- ☒ knowing Jesus Christ both as a historical person revealed in the Gospels as well as the Risen Lord who invites us into a personal relationship with him today.

My Story centers on:

- ☒ experiencing what it means to be created in the image of God;
- ☒ attending to the history of our own lives, including the meaning and message of our life, our hopes and fears, our successes and failures, and seeing how this is all part of the unfolding drama of being a child of God. It is the living out of our baptism;
- ☒ understanding that God lives in and through our lives just as he lived in and through the persons we find in the Bible, such as, Esther, Ruth, Joseph, Peter, Thomas and Paul.

The Church's Story centers on:

- ☒ being the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the way in which God now works in the world;
- ☒ understanding the church's history, examining how it has been the body of Christ, the mission it has pursued, the struggle it has had, the truth that it proclaims, the mistakes that it has made;
- ☒ understanding that "we are the church," that the church is around and within us. The church is not so much something "out there" to study as it is something "we are together;"
- ☒ learning in multiple settings, at home, in Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation, retreats, service projects, mission teams, intergenerational classes; what it means "to be the church;"
- ☒ allowing the story that gets into our heads to transform our hearts, so that it might be exercised in our hands no matter what our age might be.

The Story of God's World centers on:

- ☒ reframing the data we have learned "about God's world" through the lenses that "this is God's world;" to see it as part of God's unfolding mystery; to know that God is in the process of making a new heaven and new earth;
- ☒ participating in the life of the world, but doing more than maintaining what God has given us. We are to re-imagine, re-create, and help bring into reality the new world that God is creating.

The following are meant to illustrate how these four stories might be used in our approach:

☒ **Age 3.** Goal: to know that prayer is talking with God and telling God things. **God's Story** would look at the biblical references to prayer; share with children those stories where we find people praying to God; learn how God heard their prayers and then how God responded. **My Story** would help children learn how to pray simple prayers thanking God for people and things in their world, bringing to God their concerns, learning to trust that God hears their prayers much as parents hear their needs and take care of them. **The Church's Story** might focus on how the church uses prayer in its life in worship, at meetings, in prayer groups; how and why we pray for each other; invite the children to pray for our church. **The Story of God's World** might look at how the world is and how God wants it to be and to learn to pray that human beings would work together to make it that way, as well as looking for ways that age 3 children could be "living prayer answers" as they help make it the way God wants it to be.

☒ **Age 8.** Goal: to develop Christian attitudes of kindness, fairness, friendliness, helpfulness toward individuals who may not be included in his circle of friends. **God's Story** might look at the call to Abraham in Genesis 12 and understand God's desire to bless "all" the people of the world; to examine Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 28 to "make disciples of all people;" to look at other biblical references that help us to know that God wishes for all people to come into the embrace of his love and that God uses us to reach out to others; it might examine the biblical theme of welcoming the stranger, of what it means to live in community, examining how God wants us to live and relate. **My Story** would deal with their success and difficulty in reaching out to others, in treating those who differ from them kindly. It might focus on identifying barriers and discovering ways that God can help them overcome them. **The Church's Story** might examine the barriers we have created to avoid welcoming those who differ from us; examining from a historical approach the Church's mission to be inclusive, noting where it has succeeded and failed; look for ways in which God might call us to overcome those barriers today; and to develop personal goals for changing. **The Story of God's World** might examine both historically and currently how prejudice and hatred have led humankind into segregation, ethnic cleansing, and abuse; identify those barriers in our current society; choose a class or personal project that would seek to break down that barrier or change the way we relate.

☒ **Age 12.** Goal: to provide opportunities for youth to create worship experiences. **God's Story** might examine the role of worship in the life of the people of God, noting its evolution from simple, open forms in Genesis to the elaborate sacrificial system of later Judaism, to the "in house" worship of the early Christians. **My Story** would reflect on the experiences of youth in worship. What is worship for them? How do they experience God's presence? What leads them to praise? Help them develop a daily life of worship. **The Church's Story** might look at the history of worship in the church; understanding our Lutheran liturgical tradition, experiencing worship at different churches, experiencing worship of different styles; coming to an understanding of what we believe is happening in worship; designing their own service. **The Story of God's World** might examine what false gods people worship in our society; examine how that might have led to our abuse of the world; how caring for God's world, especially the environment, is an act of worship.

☒ **The Middle Adult.** Goal: to grow in Christian giving of time, talent, and treasure, as well as service within and beyond the congregation. **God's Story** might focus on looking at the biblical understanding of stewardship; to understand that everything belongs to God and that we are entrusted with its management; to understand that what we do is in response to God's grace; that we are called to live gratefully; to understand how the body of Christ is to function in the

world. **My Story** would look at how we, as individuals, use our time; examine the issues that confront us in priority setting; share our stories of where we are involved in the church and community and the joy that it has brought; invite us to a deeper level of response to God's grace. **The Church's Story** would examine the opportunities our church has for service; examine the involvement of members in the life of the congregation; formulate a plan to invite others to join us in deepening our participation. **The Story of God's World** would invite us to look at where we give our time and talent in the wider community; how do we serve God's mission through these activities; how might we, individually and collectively, better serve God's purpose.

THE FIRST YEARS OF LIFE

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ a period of very rapid and significant development of learning
- ☐ first experience with the orderliness of the world is the regularity of his schedule
- ☐ basic trust in fellow men is developed through his parents' ministrations; this reliance is also basic to his later trust in God

GOALS

The following goals are applicable to all areas:

- ☐ to become aware of belonging to a family
- ☐ to sense that he is an individual who is loved by others who care about him and provide for his needs

AGE ONE

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ egocentric
- ☐ emotions begin to develop
- ☐ rapid language development
- ☐ rapid growth and physical capability

GOALS

Education

- ☐ to recognize the words "God" and "Jesus" as the names of "significant persons"
- ☐ to associate "God" and "Jesus" with the word "love"

Worship

- ☐ to identify the church building as a special place where his parents go and sometimes take him

Caregiving

- ☐ to lay the foundation for a conscious trust in God by helping the child experience a relationship of trust with key adults, through growing in his trust in others, in self-confidence of trust with key adults, through growing in his trust in others, in self-confidence, and in willingness to adjust acceptably to the demands of his environment
- ☐ to understand that he is a part of a group (his family)

Service

- ☐ to understand in an elementary way that love is a two-way relationship in which he has a function

AGE TWO

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ age of curiosity
- ☐ wants to “belong”
- ☐ anger is the child’s first aggressive response

GOALS

Education

- ☐ to pray simple, familiar prayers
- ☐ to identify the church building as a special place where people learn about God and Jesus
- ☐ to be aware of God, the creator

Worship

- ☐ to begin to recognize some of the elements of worship, such as singing and praying

Caregiving

- ☐ to understand that God loves her and that God loves other individuals as well

Service

- ☐ to begin to develop Christian attitudes of kindness and helpfulness toward other individuals as expressions of her love for or interest in them

AGE THREE

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ conformity is the chief characteristic
- ☐ becoming more self-controlled and independent
- ☐ becomes more sociable
- ☐ has a great desire to please

GOALS

Education

- ☐ to know that prayer is talking with God and to begin to tell God things in prayer
- ☐ to express praise to God in song
- ☐ to recognize the Bible as the book from which we learn about God and Jesus and to begin to understand a few simple Bible stories
- ☐ to begin to participate in and enjoy cooperative play and simple group activities
- ☐ to become better acquainted with some of the wonders in God’s world, such as flowers, stars, rainbows, butterflies

Worship

- ☐ to participate in worship and to express praise to God in song

Caregiving

- ☐ to develop Christian attitudes toward individuals which are a reflection of the love he has experienced in his relationships with those who love him
- ☐ to feel secure in church because of love and understanding on the part of the teachers

- ☐ to begin to show respect for the rights of others in what he does
- ☐ to begin to grasp that there are times when he should say “I’m sorry” to others
- ☐ to carry over into any society with which he is identified the Christian attitudes which he is beginning to show toward individuals (kindness, helpfulness, sympathy)

Service

- ☐ to have experiences in the responsible care of living things including our bodies, recognizing them and ourselves as a gift from God

AGE FOUR

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ described as “out of bounds” in almost every direction; motor, emotions, language, imagination and interpersonal relationships
- ☐ age of speed
- ☐ not too concerned about the feelings of others
- ☐ has an inquiring mind
- ☐ popular question is “Is it real?”

GOALS

Education

- ☐ to grow in her recognition of the Bible as a special book which tells her how God wants her to live
- ☐ to develop habits of regular attendance, participation and proper conduct at church and church school
- ☐ to understand that she can pray to God at any time and at any place
- ☐ to know about Jesus as the baby who grew into the youth in the temple, who loved and served God the Father
- ☐ to know about Jesus the man who taught about God his Father
- ☐ to begin to understand that she is capable of wrong-doing that she acknowledges and that is sorry for and that God forgives her

Worship

- ☐ to participate more meaningfully in worship by learning parts of the liturgy
- ☐ to associate the Bible with worship activities

Caregiving/Service

- ☐ to feel sympathy for one who is unhappy or in trouble and respond with acts of love and kindness
- ☐ to know that she is not only a part of her own family, but is also part of a larger family which we know as the “church family”
- ☐ to feel sympathy because God’s love includes both herself and others

AGE FIVE

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ a comfortable age
- ☐ would rather stay near home
- ☐ vivid sense of his own identity

- ☒ displays many attractive emotional traits, such as seriousness, patience, persistence, generosity, friendliness and pride in accomplishment
- ☒ his fears are concrete, down-to-earth ones usually relating to bodily harm
- ☒ still factual and literal
- ☒ likes stories to relate to the here and now to answer his questions about the things around him
- ☒ is ready for larger group experiences, such as found in kindergarten
- ☒ wants to be good in order to please
- ☒ cannot always differentiate right from wrong, but when he does something wrong, he is apt to blame the nearest person
- ☒ is apt to confuse the names of God and Jesus

GOALS

Education

- ☒ to begin to develop any special God-given talents, such as singing or drawing
- ☒ to distinguish Bible stories from stories of imagination and fantasy
- ☒ to begin to understand God's loving plan for his people through additional Bible stories which will contribute to a better understanding of God's goodness
- ☒ to improve his understanding of the fact that he can control the verbal as well as the physical expressions of his impulses
- ☒ to try to be honest with himself regarding wrongs he has done

Worship

- ☒ to participate, where it is meaningful, in worship

Caregiving

- ☒ to understand that God's love includes not only him and his acquaintances, but all people
- ☒ to participate, where it is meaningful, with the church family

Service

- ☒ to feel a personal response to God, the Father, who asks that the child love and serve Him through others
- ☒ to share, according to his understanding and ability, in the work of the church out of his understanding that he is God's helper

AGE SIX

DEVELOPMENT

- ☒ activity is the keynote of this age
- ☒ unavoidable tensions, both at home and at school
- ☒ wider relationships outside her home
- ☒ it is the "why" age, indicating an eagerness to learn
- ☒ little concept of time and space
- ☒ time for broad learning
- ☒ enjoys stories which are read or told over and over again
- ☒ enjoys acting out stories
- ☒ because of tremendous power of imagination, can easily identify with one or more characters in the story
- ☒ social consciousness develops rapidly

- ☒ beginning of the “gang age”
- ☒ likes to play on a team, but is not capable of teamwork
- ☒ only beginning to acquire a sense of values
- ☒ wants to be honest, but often finds it difficult
- ☒ asks questions which challenge an adult Christian to give her the clear, honest, straightforward answers which she deserves

GOALS

Education

- ☒ to begin to understand that the term “Holy Spirit” is the name applied to God in His loving guidance of all persons
- ☒ to begin to be acquainted with the names and significance of various parts of the Worship Room
- ☒ to become acquainted with more of the Old Testament stories
- ☒ to increase her understanding of the saving purpose and love of God as revealed in the Bible stories about Jesus
- ☒ to deepen her understanding that God speaks to us in the Bible
- ☒ to begin to appreciate the significance of group goals, strivings, achievements, failures and sacrifices

Worship

- ☒ to think of herself as one who became God’s child through the sacrament of baptism

Caregiving/Service

- ☒ to understand that there are many churches all over the world where the good news of God’s love is taught
- ☒ to think of the church as a group of adults and children who learn about God, and who work and worship together

AGE SEVEN

DEVELOPMENT

- ☒ seven is a comfortable year
- ☒ general need for activity continues and carries over into all of his behavior
- ☒ more likely to balance physical activity with relatively quiet play
- ☒ period of withdrawal
- ☒ daydreams and procrastinates
- ☒ hypersensitive
- ☒ does not like to be singled out for either praise or reproof before a group
- ☒ picks his heroes: teacher, some of the persons he meets on television and in books become models
- ☒ language development is noticeably rapid from seven to eight
- ☒ storybooks open up a new and wider world
- ☒ fairy tales and myths are his favorite stories
- ☒ prefers being read to
- ☒ asks “how” and “why” questions
- ☒ interest in stories no longer confined to the short story that must be completed in one sitting; enjoys listening to a book-length story, chapter by chapter
- ☒ serial-type television programs become his favorite

- ☐ evidence of reasonableness
- ☐ community of play continues to be an important factor
- ☐ if he cannot win, is likely to withdraw from the game
- ☐ ethical sense begins to take in more abstract relationships
- ☐ interested in the omniscience of God
- ☐ wants to know about heaven
- ☐ interest in stories includes Bible stories, especially those with “heroes”
- ☐ is acquiring a sense of values, right and wrong

GOALS

Education

- ☐ to sense his need for repentance and forgiveness
- ☐ to have a growing confidence in the possibilities of prayer
- ☐ to appreciate the Bible as God’s message to us and to enjoy its stories

Worship

- ☐ to participate in church worship as well as other worship experiences
- ☐ to begin to look at the various aspects of worship; e.g. praise, prayers, confession

Caregiving

- ☐ to deepen his trust and appreciation toward those who have proved themselves his friends (parents, pastor, teachers and others)

Service

- ☐ to begin to understand the work of the local church and his part in it

AGE EIGHT

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ has reached the dividing line between early childhood and middle childhood years
- ☐ an eager year, a year of reaching out to new experiences
- ☐ her tempo has increased, wants to get things done
- ☐ wants new experiences
- ☐ year of hazards
- ☐ cannot take much criticism from adults, but is able to take and give severe criticism with his peer group
- ☐ increasingly centers her interest in things and people other than herself
- ☐ wants others to be aware of herself as a person
- ☐ has a tendency to evaluate what happens to her and what causes it to happen
- ☐ is developing a silent reading skill, and greater reading differences become evident
- ☐ money becomes important
- ☐ is a collector
- ☐ changes collections often and may be collecting several things at one time
- ☐ has a strong interest in dramatic play
- ☐ enjoys creative art
- ☐ develops interest in activities requiring mental skill
- ☐ time, space and distance take on new meaning
- ☐ belonging is the important thing
- ☐ in group behavior, is a stickler for rules; but often improvises them as occasion arises

- ☐ inclined to be bossy, particularly with younger children
- ☐ the sexes pull apart in interests and activities
- ☐ begins to understand herself and her relationship to others of her own age
- ☐ is beginning to be aware of her own abilities and limitations
- ☐ realizes that some children can do some things better than she, some not as well
- ☐ can be guided into a feeling of self-respect and respect for other persons
- ☐ show a readiness to learn that there are some things we cannot explain or understand, but which we accept on faith
- ☐ is ready for more extensive missionary education and greater participation in extra-curricular activities because of her growing independence
- ☐ ability in silent reading makes it possible for independent Bible study and the use of a personal copy of the Bible

GOALS

Education

- ☐ to expand her concept of church beyond the local congregation
- ☐ to become familiar with the way material is arranged in the Bible and see a relationship between the Old and the New Testament in the working out of God's saving purpose
- ☐ to be aware of the use of the Bible in solving group or personal problems
- ☐ to accept failures and limitations with a wholesome attitude

Worship

- ☐ to feel personally God's grace and forgiveness in connection with the guilty feelings which stem from her inability to live up to the dictates of her conscience

Caregiving

- ☐ to begin to understand, in the light of her increased comprehension of other parts of the world and other cultures, that God loves and is concerned about all people in all places
- ☐ to develop Christian attitudes of kindness, fairness, friendliness, helpfulness toward individuals who may not be included in her circle of friends

Service

- ☐ to have a growing insight into the meaning of selfishness and unselfishness
- ☐ to participate in the church-at-large

AGE NINE

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ looking for real heroes (an ideal person of action); people more important than ideas; also beginning a sense of who they want to become
- ☐ likes collecting facts and looking up information
- ☐ memorization
- ☐ sexual curiosity, ready for factual information
- ☐ enthusiastic, self-confident and active
- ☐ interested in maps, charts and dictionaries
- ☐ concerned with right and wrong

GOALS

Education

- ☐ to continue a sense of the Bible as a whole, including God's plan and saving purpose for his people
- ☐ to learn the chronological story of Jesus
- ☐ to begin understanding the characteristics of God, merciful, holy, righteous, just, all powerful, saving, gracious
- ☐ to learn in a Christian setting factual sex information in order to begin to answer some questions about the physical world

Worship

- ☐ to begin to understand the church liturgy

Caregiving/Service

- ☐ to begin to understand the value of money and the implications of proportionate giving (time and talents also) for the church
- ☐ to begin to understand serving aspect of Christian life (there are those that need his help/protection)

AGE TEN

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ likes visual and oral work, talking, discussion
- ☐ also likes creative work; poetry, music, drawing and writing
- ☐ wants to be a part of the group; makes friends easily
- ☐ understands importance of the family
- ☐ is more aware of what is wrong than what is right

GOALS

Education

- ☐ to develop a wholesome attitude toward other denominations as well as the Lutheran Church
- ☐ to understand the history of the Christian Church
- ☐ to develop a concept of God as invisible spirit
- ☐ to understand the place of the sacraments in the church
- ☐ to begin to develop the ability to express their faith
- ☐ to grasp significant gender differences and see reproduction as an integral part of God's plan of creation

Worship

- ☐ to begin to feel kinship with the communion of saints
- ☐ to understand the role and function of the sacraments in the church
- ☐ to work on expressing their personal faith

Caregiving

- ☐ to develop a healthy attitude toward persons of other faith
- ☐ to begin inviting friends to church activities

Service

- ☐ to have an appreciation for the work of the Lutheran church and the church-at-large

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS

AGE ELEVEN

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ learning to cooperate with others of opposite sex
- ☐ has mood swings from one extreme to the other and is sensitive to criticism
- ☐ fears being alone
- ☐ greater independence; motivated from within to figure things out for himself
- ☐ puzzled by distinction between right and wrong; tries to do right and is conscious of failures
- ☐ acceptance by peers beginning to become very important
- ☐ beginning to understand Bible as an important tool in making life decisions; as a study tool; as a creative resource in worship, projects, and activities
- ☐ beginning to deepen understanding of God's plan for self and world

GOALS

Education

- ☐ study and discuss important stories and persons in the Bible
- ☐ create and use biblical time lines when studying historical biblical events
- ☐ help youth discover resources and experience methods for Bible study
- ☐ provide opportunities for youth to give personal expression to their faith through individual projects
- ☐ begin opportunities to discuss God as real, present and personal

Worship

- ☐ participate in creative worship experiences
- ☐ provide leadership opportunities for youth to create worship experiences
- ☐ use the Bible as a tool for devotional experiences

Caregiving

- ☐ relate Christian faith to life decisions
- ☐ provide opportunities for fellowship at various times and settings
- ☐ begin understanding what it means to belong to a group and relate to each other in a healthy manner

Service

- ☐ provide opportunities to understand the consequences of doing wrong (sin)
- ☐ begin to deepen understanding that God has a plan for self and world
- ☐ provide opportunities for youth to do servant projects

AGE TWELVE

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ learning to handle difficult situations; stands up for friends, when parent becomes ill takes over some responsibilities

- ☐ interest in opposite sex developing
- ☐ moving from cataloguing concrete facts to thinking in abstracts
- ☐ bored with repetitive activities, enjoys activities that give a sense of achievement/self-improvement, like to work on their own to develop basic skills
- ☐ likes to discuss, debate, plan group projects, may begin to doubt previously accepted norms
- ☐ enthusiasm may lead to fatigue which adults often see as laziness
- ☐ fluctuates between “grownup” and “childish” behaviors
- ☐ new image of self; not always ready to comply with emotional demands of maturing and tends to revert back to safety of childhood emotions

GOALS

Education

- ☐ study biblical account of Jesus’ life
- ☐ provide understanding that the Bible is a tool for making life decisions
- ☐ provide a variety of styles for learning and study
- ☐ encourage youth to ask probing questions

Worship

- ☐ provide creative worship experiences in which students can participate; the Bible is used as a tool for creation of worship experiences and understand that their lives can be changed
- ☐ provide leadership opportunities for youth to create worship experiences
- ☐ provide leadership opportunities for youth to participate in Sunday morning worship

Caregiving

- ☐ relate Christian faith to life decisions; such as acceptance of those younger or different
- ☐ provide opportunities for youth fellowship at various times and settings
- ☐ learning to care for self as a gift of God

Service

- ☐ continue to deepen understanding that God has a plan for self and world and see the consequences of doing wrong (sin) and how the church reacts to trying to correct injustice in the world
- ☐ provide opportunities for youth to do servant projects as a group and understand them as a way to live out their Christian faith

AGE THIRTEEN

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ emotional ups and downs; absorption with “one’s own thoughts,” and a sensitivity to criticism, tend to be introspective and reflective
- ☐ often confused as they try to form a new picture of self; new feelings about their own sexuality can cause loss of self-confidence which has a significant emotional effect on them causing shyness and modesty about sex and own sexual feelings
- ☐ frustrated and confused by adult expectations that they should act more mature; are suspicious of adult world and adult ideals; feel adults don’t understand them (or have it in for them)
- ☐ learning to control their feelings and how to act on them appropriately
- ☐ tend to be over-critical of others

- ☒ desire for adventure can lead them to try things beyond their abilities
- ☒ may feel ashamed of their home or rebel against the criticism and authority of parents or fight with siblings near own age
- ☒ relations to peers are of highest importance; seek security of group as they become more independent of home and parents, which can cause problems of getting along with family and friends

GOALS

Education

- ☒ learn how the Bible was written and put together; Old Testament chronology and people showing God's redemptive work in the world
- ☒ begin to imagine themselves in Bible events and identifying with persons in the Bible
- ☒ encourage youth to begin reading the Bible on a daily basis and to provide resources to assist them
- ☒ create a safe environment for youth to ask questions which express doubt about God or God's plan
- ☒ give practical evidence that God exists and give validation to Christian beliefs

Worship

- ☒ continue to provide creative worship experiences in which youth can participate
- ☒ encourage youth to use the Bible as a tool for their devotional life as well as to discover other devotional material
- ☒ help youth to experience the implications that the Cross of Christ has on their lives
- ☒ to encourage youth to participate in Sunday worship

Caregiving

- ☒ relate Christian faith to life decisions; being inclusive and resisting peer pressure
- ☒ provide opportunities for youth fellowship at various times and settings
- ☒ learn ways to live out their Christian faith and to develop a sense of community among the group including adults as well as a sense of belonging to the wider congregations
- ☒ begin working on age-appropriate communication skills to express opinions and feelings

Service

- ☒ provide opportunities for youth to do servant projects that help in relating biblical learnings to real life; to deepen understanding of what God wants and how they can participate in it

THE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

AGE FOURTEEN

DEVELOPMENT

- ☒ beginning to experience same drives as adults in areas of emotions, insights, and understandings and ready to experiment with their sexuality
- ☒ personal boundaries still set by parents and adults with increased feelings of need for independence from parents, but will count on parents to bail them out when they step over the line
- ☒ need to feel loved by parents, strengthened by willingness of parents to have a give and take attitude when discussing important personal issues

- ☒ will over-commit to many different areas of interest
- ☒ able to grasp abstract thought more easily

GOALS

Education

- ☒ to develop Christian understanding of proper use of sexuality
- ☒ to provide opportunities to develop fuller understanding of dependence on God for well-being and direction in life
- ☒ to relate Biblical knowledge to events in history to broaden understanding of New Testament letters, Acts of Apostles and provide opportunities to learn about agencies of church
- ☒ to gain overview of Christian Church seeing its continuity with the past and present and understand history and mission of Lutheran Church
- ☒ to help them experience a relationship to God that reinforces the use of terms: faith, grace, sin, repentance, redemption, sanctification, regeneration, revelation, atonement, incarnation, Trinity, and justification

Worship

- ☒ provide opportunities to experience classical liturgical prayers and use them
- ☒ allow for exploration of new and personal ways to worship and praise God
- ☒ use creative arts to allow them to express their understanding of how to respond to God's activity in their lives
- ☒ encourage participation in Sunday worship

Caregiving

- ☒ provide opportunities to appraise own status in light of God's love
- ☒ provide guidance to develop personal habits and lifestyles according to Christian standards and appreciation of significance and importance of life given to Christ in relation to church membership
- ☒ assist in development of acceptable self-image through good adult role models

Service

- ☒ provide opportunities to share time, talent, and money to further program of own church and world-wide church
- ☒ provide missionary/service opportunities that allow them to express their faith to the world
- ☒ offer opportunities to see their Christian family as an institution created by God
- ☒ to see exclusiveness as a violation of Christian love

AGE FIFTEEN

DEVELOPMENT

- ☒ beginning to actively assert their independence
- ☒ wavers between adult and childish behaviors
- ☒ keenly aware of importance of making decisions concerning what they will become as a person and what they will do as their life's work
- ☒ still influenced by parent's ideas and decisions, but not willing to blindly accept them without first examining them
- ☒ new self-awareness beginning, wavers between exhilaration and despondency when looking at self image, resents prying questions

- ☐ concern with education, dependent upon community attitude toward importance of it, and concerned with being popular among their peers
- ☐ prefers to cover up feelings
- ☐ some express a disbelief regarding heaven and have a dread of death even though they try to accept it
- ☐ concepts of sin, heaven, hell and prayer often undergoing reorganization

GOALS

Education

- ☐ help them to objectively look at the doctrine of this and other faiths to develop their own understanding of what it means to be a Christian/Lutheran in relation to other theologies
- ☐ assist them in discussing and thinking more deeply about social issues
- ☐ allow for questioning of established doctrines and traditions
- ☐ provide structure which allows freedom to determine direction of study and activity that helps them discover who and whose they are
- ☐ give guidance in ways to study and implement Christian living through a more deliberate prayer life and personal Bible study

Worship

- ☐ provide opportunities for new ways of experiencing the presence of God in liturgy and prayer life
- ☐ promote importance of active participation with a community of faith
- ☐ incorporate them in various areas of worship leadership

Caregiving

- ☐ give reassurance concerning emotional and physical responses and guidance in learning to control them
- ☐ need adults who respect them and do not pressure them to conform to adult ideas of what they should become
- ☐ instill a sense that adults are concerned with their development
- ☐ provide a listening ear for questions and frustrations in moving from childhood to adulthood

Service

- ☐ encourage brainstorming for ways to serve others and God in their daily life
- ☐ encourage standing up for those who are unjustly treated by society
- ☐ use servant projects as a way of building a sense of community among the participants

AGE SIXTEEN

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ growth toward maturity now slowing with fewer dramatic changes of moods
- ☐ greater sense of their emotional perspective
- ☐ more willing to listen to other's points of views
- ☐ more concerned with immediate issues rather than long-term
- ☐ fear of being rejected by opposite sex, as they develop dating relationships
- ☐ levels of thinking and reasoning reaching new heights; better able to plan and follow-through
- ☐ doesn't want parental advice when making decisions

- ☐ interested in developing a personal faith and prayer life
- ☐ concept of God as parent can be negative; would rather see him as a friend
- ☐ some loss of interest in church activities because of competing interests and perception that church is not meeting their needs

GOALS

Education

- ☐ encourage them to question and seek answers to questions about the Bible, its authority, origin, and meaning; assist in dealing with the doubts that arise
- ☐ supply them with resources to develop a more intensive study of selected books of the Bible
- ☐ make connections between what the Bible says and its relevance to their daily lives
- ☐ provide training events to provide them for fuller service

Worship

- ☐ provide a variety of worship experiences outside the “usual” traditional experience in which they can share their own talents and creative abilities to express their understanding of God and thankfulness for what God has done for them in their lives
- ☐ continue to encourage participation and leadership in community of faith

Caregiving

- ☐ support emotional and intellectual growth by treating their concerns with respect and understanding
- ☐ provide opportunities for fellowship with others of same and opposite sex in a safe environment

Service

- ☐ enable them to see that the safety and welfare of others are in their hands and to respond to those issues according to their faith convictions
- ☐ promote a desire to be identified with positive action groups such as scouting, DARE, Youth Council, Habitat for Humanity

AGE SEVENTEEN

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ self-control of emotions becoming evident; shows sympathy and good will even when it doesn't benefit them
- ☐ self-confidence, poise, tolerance and self-assurance are greater
- ☐ for some a definite choice of occupation has been made
- ☐ still very concerned with physical appearance
- ☐ continues to go to great lengths to cover up feelings, although has become more tolerant of criticism
- ☐ fear of being unpopular still very strong, friendships take on a more personal meaning
- ☐ capable of thinking their way through complex intellectual problems and generalizing abstract concepts from concrete
- ☐ falls in and out of love often

GOALS

Education

- ☒ provide opportunities to look at the ambiguous nature of some ethical issues
- ☒ encourage intellectual development and questions about the faith, explore what it means to “lose oneself for Christ”
- ☒ offer opportunities to deepen their personal relationship with Christ and understand what it truly means to be saved by grace

Worship

- ☒ offer them more responsible leadership positions in worship services
- ☒ encourage them to create a worship service that expresses how they see God reaching out to them in love

Caregiving

- ☒ underscore the connection between their choice of occupation and Christian vocation
- ☒ help them to see what a loving relationship means before considering a long-term commitment or marriage to another person
- ☒ continue to support positive self-image and self-confidence as God’s child

Service

- ☒ help youth find a niche in which they can share their gifts in leadership areas of the congregation
- ☒ invite them to participate in adult servant projects

THE OLDER YOUTH (18-24)

DEVELOPMENT

- ☒ nearly reached physical maturity
- ☒ shows a variety of tensions and moral laxity caused by leaving home, frequent changes of residence, class consciousness, inadequate ministry of the church, mass media
- ☒ highly exploitable
- ☒ emotional maturity variable; may be well-adjusted (self-restraint, reliable) or may go through lapses (college antics, emotional outbursts in the family, destructively impulsive)
- ☒ initially characterized by eagerness, idealism and enthusiasm which may be replaced by mature idealism or insecurity and spiritual defeat
- ☒ rapid intellectual growth
- ☒ reinterprets and questions beliefs, standards and authorities
- ☒ needs to develop new insights
- ☒ older youth (early 20’s) apparently more concerned with security rather than with “risk” (pioneering)

OBJECTIVES

Education

- ☒ provide opportunities for the systematic study of the Bible
- ☒ help them develop skills for building healthy relationships
- ☒ show the Sunday to Monday connection of Christian values and morals

Worship

- ☒ encourage participation in worship in a variety of settings
- ☒ provide opportunities that build a sense of responsibility in worship
- ☒ build and maintain devotional traditions

Caregiving

- ☐ provide new social contexts to replace those left behind, particularly when they are leaving both the home and home church
- ☐ develop skills of sharing and cooperation
- ☐ develop habits of responsible care for their own bodies and the world

Service

- ☐ participate in various servant projects that increase awareness of the Church's responsibility in the world
- ☐ practice the practical steps for dealing with social problems in a Christian context

THE YOUNG ADULT (25-35)

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ peak period for robust physical condition
- ☐ period of stabilizing and settling down
- ☐ movement from bold, youthful world-views to more conservative and moderate viewpoints
- ☐ tend to be optimistic
- ☐ period of strong emotional and sexual desires
- ☐ interpersonal relationships are extremely important
- ☐ adjustments to jobs, marriage, and children
- ☐ need to develop a higher level of emotional maturity to appraise own actions/reactions
- ☐ social life revolves around informal groups and organized groups as opposed to family
- ☐ need for relationships as the young adult leaves home and family or returns home to live with family

GOALS

Education

- ☐ explore leadership gifts and potential and understand their limits
- ☐ develop a core set of beliefs to guide them in decision-making and facing life issues
- ☐ discover how the Bible speaks to their lives and how to face tensions and frustrations in a spirit of faith and trust
- ☐ develop stewardship of time, possessions, talents, creation and self

Worship

- ☐ participate creatively in the various worship opportunities provided through the church
- ☐ develop a living and creative relationship with God through prayer and spiritual discipline that will sustain people who are constantly on the go
- ☐ understand how the rhythm of the church year parallels the rhythm or seasons of life and integrate those movements into life of faith
- ☐ grow in appreciation of the liturgical arts of the church as dramatic, musical, and visual expressions of and witnesses to God's relationship with us

Caregiving

- ☐ create opportunities for belonging and developing friendships so that the young adult might sense the church as a "home away from home," a safe place to be and to associate
- ☐ develop an understanding of the needs of others within the extended family, church and

community

- ☐ cultivate ongoing groups for learning, caring, serving and fellowship

Service

- ☐ understand the concept of “servanthood” and how that leads us into serving others where we live and work
- ☐ invite them into meaningful servant projects where they can be challenged physically as well as experience community
- ☐ develop a spirit of forgiveness in the face of injustice and unfairness while working towards justice

THE MIDDLE ADULT (35-65)

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ period marked by capacity for maximum vocational achievement, emotional control, social, moral, and economic responsibility, for handling heavier family obligations, and a deeper sense of spiritual realities
- ☐ strong resistance to change may interfere with maturation of values, interest, and concepts
- ☐ first indications of chronic disease can appear in the period; sense of mortality, vulnerability, uncertainty about the future
- ☐ decline in active recreation and increase in sedentary uses of leisure time
- ☐ tend to be realistic and practical regarding life
- ☐ can find life to be most satisfying or can become disillusioned
- ☐ concern about quality of work and tasks in which they’re involved
- ☐ persons of this age occupy many positions of power and responsibility
- ☐ building and maintaining positive family relationships
- ☐ belonging is very important; civic clubs, political or social organizations
- ☐ look for volunteer activities that give life a sense of meaning and purpose, a deep fulfillment that what has been done has made a difference
- ☐ cultivating a strong sense of Christian vocation and meaningful work is important

GOALS

Education

- ☐ continue to learn how the Bible stories speak to our life situations and learn how to share those stories and faith with children, spouse, co-workers, and friends
- ☐ become aware of the cycle of death and resurrection throughout life’s transitions
- ☐ equip people for facing life issues, i.e., parenting, aging parents, ethics in the workplace, discrimination
- ☐ grow in understanding the mission of the church in the world

Worship

- ☐ continue to nurture meaningful expressions of corporate worship, including the use of the liturgical arts
- ☐ deepen experiences in prayer which lead to an awareness of its power and God’s closeness and care, and allow that to guide our daily decisions
- ☐ discover resources that help with family or personal devotional life

Caregiving

- ☐ understand their mission as that of “being Christ” to those with whom they live and work, as well as those who are in need of the community
- ☐ develop a concern for the unchurched and become involved in an outreach ministry
- ☐ nurture family relationships with spouse, children, and parents
- ☐ learn ways to care for self: physically, emotionally, spiritually and relationally

Service

- ☐ grow in Christian giving of time, talent, and treasure, as well as service within and beyond the congregation
- ☐ be involved in at least one community outreach program

THE OLDER ADULT (65+)

DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ continue to develop intellectual abilities
- ☐ social relationships are vital
- ☐ need for group life, being with others, community
- ☐ develop deeper sense of spirituality and connectedness with Christ
- ☐ stewardship of time and talent is perhaps their greatest resource
- ☐ anticipate a period of various losses including:
 - physical health
 - family and friends
 - prestige and purpose
 - independence
 - home

GOALS

Education

- ☐ revisit Bible stories, viewing them from this age perspective and seeing their own life as part of God’s story
- ☐ develop a sense of gratitude for those people and situations that have shaped their lives
- ☐ learn about the grieving process and deal openly and honestly with end of life issues such as a will, an estate and funeral planning
- ☐ examine faith and life issues at this stage of life including confidence in life after death

Worship

- ☐ continue to accept God’s power and sustaining strength through a deepening prayer life
- ☐ enjoy and find enrichment through a personal and devotional use of the Bible
- ☐ deepen their appreciation for the Sacrament of Holy Communion with its promise of Christ’s presence, love and sustaining power

Caregiving

- ☐ affirm the gifts and ministries they can still provide others
- ☐ help them see aging as part of God’s plan for all people
- ☐ appreciate the importance and value of their role as parents and grandparents
- ☐ look for and create a variety of ways of connecting them with others, including opportunities for being with children and youth

Service

☒ help them discover meaningful service projects appropriate to this stage of life, including that of praying for the work of the Church, reaching out to other older adults (forming care communities or teams)

☒ discover their role in the church's mission

from Heilig Resource Center, North Carolina