

YouthGuide

A guide to help your congregation nurture spiritual growth in high school youth

What is your congregation's plan to disciple high school youth?

Have you taken time to think through what faith themes you want your youth to explore during their critical teen years? Will they be exposed to the full range of the biblical story?

As a youth pastor, sponsor, or Sunday school teacher, don't leave your curriculum choices to chance. It's easy to "plan" on the basis of which curriculum looks the most exciting, or to choose topics a few people consider hot at the moment. But a more intentional plan will ensure a solid path of discovery that invites your youth to become committed followers of Jesus.

The purpose of this guide is to help you look at the big picture as you plan learning activities, whether in Sunday school or in other settings.

The first two charts inside, based on the four-year plan used in the *Gather 'Round* curriculum, will help you plan ahead so youth get a comprehensive grounding in Bible, Anabaptist/Mennonite theology and history, and habits of Christian living. A third chart allows you to keep track of studies for each class of youth in your congregation.

Faith formation during the high school years happens at church in a variety of settings, including mentoring, baptism classes, and congregational worship. *YouthGuide* focuses on the two primary settings where instruction is most regular and ongoing:

Sunday school, where the focus is on Bible study, and

Youth group, where the focus is on fellowship, service, and Christian practices.

The two charts inside correspond to these two learning environments, and can be used flexibly, according to your group's structure and meeting times. They cover a wide range of Scripture texts, introducing youth to most of the Bible, and recommending Mennonite Church resources. They encourage integration of youth ministries of the congregation, allow flexibility to include timely or new topics, and take into account the social, cognitive, and spiritual development of youth.

YouthGuide integrates four main categories of faith study during the high school years:

1. Bible study and theology from an Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective.
2. Christian practices, such as the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, and worship.
3. Mennonite Church history, theology, and practice.
4. Contemporary issues such as sex and dating, relationships, peace, politics, justice, stewardship, and service and witness.

YouthGuide will help you think through each of these important categories of faith formation for youth. Use the charts and suggestions inside to be sure you are including all of them during the teenage years. Work with others in your congregation to decide how often you will review your plan, or how you can share it with everyone involved with youth.

For an electronic version of *YouthGuide*, go to www.mpn.net.
Permission is granted to photocopy *YouthGuide* freely.

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Sunday School: Cover the Bible in Four Years

This chart shows the four-year cycle that *Gather 'Round* follows for all age levels, including high school youth. During the summer quarter, use the Youth/Junior Youth Supplement from *Gather 'Round* or other Bible studies that fit the *Gather 'Round* theme. For a full listing of Bible texts and more about *Gather 'Round* curriculum, go to www.gatherround.org

Year	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
One (2006/2007) and 2010/2011	Creation and Covenant Genesis	Promise and Fulfillment Luke	Living the Good News Together Luke and Acts	Parables of Jesus Matthew and Luke <i>The Radical Reign: Parables of Jesus*</i> <i>Who is Jesus?*</i>
Two (2007/2008) and 2011/2012	Becoming a people of God Exodus through Judges	Salt and Light Matthew	Living the Good News Together Matthew, Acts, Corinthians	The Things That Make for Peace Thirteen stories from the Old and New Testaments <i>Does God Fight? Violence in the Bible*</i> <i>Fight Right: A Christian Approach to Conflict*</i>
Three 2008/2009 and 2012/2013	Judgment and Hope Samuel, Kings, Amos, Isaiah, Micah	Take up the Cross Mark	Living the Good News Together Mark and Acts	Letters to the Early Churches <i>Testing the Waters: Basic Tenets of Faith*</i> <i>Hangin' Loose, Holdin' Tight: Paul's Epistles*</i>
Four 2009/2010 and 2013/2014	Exile and restoration Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel	The Word Among Us John	Living the Good News Together John, I John, Revelation	Stories of God's People Thirteen stories from the Old and New Testaments <i>Maxed Out! How Old Testament Personalities Handled the Stress*</i> <i>Close Encounters: New Testament Personalities*</i>

Other recommended Bible studies on issues youth face:




Peace: Just Live It! A Challenge to Youth for the 21st Century
Being There: The Bible Through Simulation: Books 1, 2, 3
*Relatively Loving: Family Dynamics in the Bible**
*How to be a True Friend**
*Living Beyond Our Means: The Extravagance of Biblical Stewardship**
*Deal With It: The Bible on Death and Dying**
*The Place Just Right: Biblical Teachings on Simplicity**
*Reconcilable Differences: Biblical Insights for Repairing Relationships**
*Singing in the Reign: Joy and Celebration in the Bible**
*Do the Right Thing: Ethics Shaped by Faith**
*A Speck in the Universe: The Bible on Self-Esteem and Peer Relationships**
*Go for Broke: Using the Gifts God Gave You**



* Generation Why Bible Studies titles
 Find more information and order these titles
 at www.mpn.net.

Youth Group: Explore Topics/Themes

This chart lists recommended resources that complement the *Gather'Round* Bible curriculum. It is designed so you can interchange or replace units to suit the needs of your youth group. For example, you may wish to plan a faith exploration class one quarter each year. For more information on each title, go to www.mpn.net

Year	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
One	Earth Trek: Celebrating and Sustaining God's Creation, Joanne Moyer	Sacred Search: Encountering God during Advent, Carol Duerksen	Dating: The Art of Respect*	Pre-convention Bible study Contemporary issues**
Two	Adventures with the Anabaptists, Jeanne Greiser and Carol Duerksen On Fire for Christ: Stories of Anabaptist Martyrs, Dave and Neta Jackson	Tent of Meeting: A 25-Day Adventure with God, Julie Ellison White 	Faith for the Journey: Youth Explore the Confession of Faith, Ann Weber Becker Being God's People: Embracing Christian Faith from a Mennonite Perspective, Ervin Stutzman	Let's Talk: Communication Skills and Conflict Transformation, Barry C. Bartel Contemporary issues**
Three	Decide for Peace: A Guide for Personal Bible Study and Reflection on Conscientious Objection, Eddy Hall Thermostat (sessions on war, peace, and Christian conscience), MCC	Moneytalk: Living Generously* Don't Sit on your Stuff, Mennonite Media	Sacred Search: Encountering God during Lent, Angela Reed 	Pre-convention Bible study Contemporary issues**
Four	The Mennonite Handbook 	How to Read the Bible: Building Skills for Bible Study* How to Understand the Bible, David Ewert Read the Book: A Bible reading record chart for youth	Service/mission study guide (2009 publication date) God's Story, Our Story: Exploring Christian faith & life, Michele Hershberger	Youth Worship Sourcebook, Sarah Johnson (2008 publication date) Contemporary issues**

**Contemporary Issues

Check these websites for resources on the contemporary issue you choose to study:

Close to Home pamphlet series: mental health, abuse, addictions—mpn.net/closetohome

Mennonite Publishing Network: further topics—www.mpn.net

Mennonite Media: *Beyond the News* (current events) and *Ted and Lee* DVDs—www.mennomedia.org

Mennonite Mutual Aid: stewardship resources—www.mmapraxis.com

Mennonite Central Committee: peace, development, global issues—www.mcc.org

Single-session Bible studies—ymroadtrip.org

TIP

New book for youth pastors and leaders: *Beyond Me: Grounding Youth Ministry in God's Story*, Wendell Loewen (Faith & Life Resources, 2008).

TIP

Subscribe to *With*, the magazine for radical Christian youth for current topics for Mennonite youth.

Our Curriculum Planner

Use this chart to keep track of what resources are being/will be used in Sunday school and youth group. Photocopy and fill out one chart per class of youth in your congregation. Work with others in your congregation to decide how you will regularly review this plan, and how you might share it with new teachers, pastors, or youth leaders.

Youth class _____

Year	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
One Sunday school Youth group	-----	-----	-----	-----
Two Sunday school Youth group	-----	-----	-----	-----
Three Sunday school Youth group	-----	-----	-----	-----
Four Sunday school Youth group	-----	-----	-----	-----