

The Principles of the Teaching/Learning Process Applied

By: David P. Kuske

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Selected Bibliography

Lecture 1: The Six Principles

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- Beechick, Ruth. *A Biblical Psychology of Learning* Accent Books: Denver, 1982. 159pp pb The author looks at contemporary theories of how people learn and allows Scripture to judge them. Then a biblical model of learning is proposed which has a Christian perspective of man's ability to learn, man's conscience, creativity, motivation and will.
- Benson, Clarence. *Teaching Techniques: Guiding Principles* Ev. Teacher Training Assoc., Wheaton, IL. 95pp A good teacher not only knows his subject but also knows how to go about imparting his knowledge to others in a way that enables his students to appropriate for themselves the truths he wishes to convey to them. Current educational emphases are incorporated into a Christian viewpoint.
- Gregory, John Milton. *The Seven Laws of Teaching* Baker: Grand Rapids, 1884 (revised 1917). 128 pp Although this book is a general approach to teaching any subject, its popular presentation of the laws of nature which apply to teaching make it an old gem which pastors might read with profit at least once a year.
- Richards, Lawrence. *A Theology of Christian Education* Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1975. 324 pp A good overview of the theological concepts that form the content and methods of truly Christian education. The author's emphasis on affective as well as cognitive teaching is particularly noteworthy.

Lectures 2 and 3: Sunday School and Catechism Class

- Isch, John. *How a Child Learns* NPH: Milwaukee, 1978. 78pp A DMLC education professor views educational psychology in the light of what Scripture says about the nature of a child.
- Zuch, Roy and Clark., R. *Childhood Education in the Church* Moody, Chicago, 1975. 500pp Over 25 authors combine to give a good overview of the nature of children, methodology to use in teaching children etc. (numerous authors). *Insights - Teachers Series* Scripture Press, Glen Ellyn (IL). 17 four page pamphlets. Each pamphlet takes up one phase of Christian education: different age levels of children, using visual aids, discipline, evaluation etc.

Lectures 4 and 5: Teenage and Adult Classes

- Peterson, Gilbert ed. *The Christian Education of Adults* Moody: Chicago, 1984. 302pp Instead of treating adults like children, Bible class teachers must consider the special spiritual needs of adults. Teaching adults also means making use of the experience of mature people as well as their ability to think and learn for themselves.
- Richards, Lawrence. *Creative Bible Teaching* Moody: Chicago, 1970. 288pp An excellent look at how to communicate biblical content while at the same time getting a class active in the learning process. The Bible teacher learns how to put education principles into practice in a simple to use format.
- Wilbert, Warren. *Teaching Christian Adults* Baker: Grand Rapids, 1980. 234pp A Concordia Seminary (lit. Wayne) education professor discusses how the teacher can apply the skills of the teaching art to involve adults in active learning in Bible study. (several authors). *Insights: Teachers Series* Scripture Press: Glen Ellyn (IL). Three four page pamphlets. Teaching older youth, young adults and older adults.

Introduction

The work Christ gave his church to do is to “make disciples of all nations.” In carrying out this work Christ wants us to bring the Gospel to others so that they can be made (or sealed as) children of God by the sacrament of Baptism. Christ also wants us to nurture people in faith by teaching them to obey everything he has commanded us.

Nurture, then, is a part of “making disciples.” If a church emphasizes outreach but does not couple this outreach with nurture, it is failing to do what Christ commanded. Or to put it another way, if a church states that its one purpose for existence is to bring the Gospel to people who do not know it, that church is only half right. Such a church may bring the Gospel to many people, but by failing to root and establish these people in the faith (Eph 3:17) by nurture, it leaves them an easy prey for Satan to lead astray by his cunning. (2 Co 11:3)

Nurture is the church’s second reason for existence. The church’s task of nurture has two main objectives:

1. To bring Christians to maturity in faith (Eph 1:17ff, 4:12-13, 4:14-15, Col 1 9, 1:10-11, 2:2, 1 Th 5:21, Heb 13:9).
2. To enable mature Christians to be “teachers” of the Word (Heb 5:12, Ro 15:14, Col 3:16, Eph 4:12f).

Nurture is accomplished by the teaching/learning process. In these five lectures we will be focusing on six principles which govern this process and on the practical application of these principles in various phases of a congregation’s program of education.

These six principles are based either on truths revealed in Scripture or on truths of God’s creation which we learn by observation. God created human beings with the capability of learning, and the way each human being learns is essentially the same. Thus we can speak of laws or principles of human learning. It would be the height of foolishness for a teacher to ignore these principles as he goes about his work.

But must a teacher observe these principles also in the teaching of God’s Word? Isn’t the word of God powerful in and of itself? Perhaps the analogy of a gardener or farmer planting seeds can help us answer this important question.

Planting a seed is in itself a simple thing to do. You place the seed in some soil and wait for it to grow. But the gardener knows, as does the farmer, that it is not all that simple. If the seed is going to have chance to grow it needs to be planted: at the right time - not in November in Wisconsin; in soil that is properly prepared - not just tossed on the top of a hard path; at the right depth - not a foot deep for carrots. The sower also knows that he may have to do some fertilizing and weeding. ,J

All these things have an effect on how the seed will grow. None makes the power of the seed any greater; they merely allow the seed to have the best growth possible. Conversely, the gardener who ignores all these things which he has learned from observation can by his carelessness or inaction stunt or even destroy the potential of the seed he sows.

The same is true of the teaching of the Word. By observing the principles of the teaching/learning process, the teacher is not adding to the power of the Word. He is merely allowing the power of the Word to have full sway in the heart of the learner. On the other hand, failing to observe these principles can put some very serious obstacles in the way of what people learn from God’s Word as well as affecting negatively the way they receive what they learn.

Therefore, we approach the study of the principles of the teaching/learning process with two thoughts in mind:

1. What does God’s Word, or our observation of human learning as God has created it, tell us about the teaching/learning process?
2. How can we use these principles (as teachers who are tools in God’s hand) to allow his Word to have full sway in our work?

Today we will concentrate on #1. In the next four weeks we will be dealing with #2 as we look at the various phases of nurture in our congregations and seek to apply the principles accordingly.

Principle 1: The best learning takes place when the learner is interested.

- Less time, better understanding and retention.
- Not forced interest (test, not confirmed).
- Once the threat is removed?
- Not rote learning
- Observe God's creation:
 1. We record sensations & attach abstract symbols = conceptions
 2. If appropriate emotions are attached = better interest, lively conceptions, strong desires (e.g. rose, ice cream, pickled pig's tongue)
- What is of value always stirs interest. -Teaching/learning process:
 1. Record conceptions with vivid, concrete illustrations. (e.g. "redemption" = terrible price, wonderful freedom)
 2. Constant stress of value (introduction, applications, memory work)

Principle 2: The best learning takes place when the learner is active.

- Teaching does not equal telling (but exciting and guiding),
- Learning does not equal listening (but thinking and doing). (e.g. leaning how to tune a car engine)
- "Tell me, I'll forget. Show me, I may remember. Involve me, I'll understand and retain."
- Temptation for the "expert" to "unload" his knowledge on others.
- "I've told them a dozen times!"
- Observe God's creation: God made us capable of thinking and doing. Understanding and retention increase in proportion to thinking and doing. (cf. Hoag's "learning ladder")
- Teaching/learning process:
 1. Use three techniques equally (one third each in a lesson)
 - a. Tell (TTTTT) = cover minor points quickly guide with transitions touch emotions with illustrations (but no check on understanding, poor retention)
 - b. Question (TSTST) = think through the major points (but mentally exhausting, only 2 or 3 in sequence)
 - c. Discuss (TSSST) = review and test the understanding of the major points (but go in circles or on tangents)
 2. Know a taxonomy of questions and consciously use questions of the higher types (instead of only type one and two questions which are really telling.)

Principle 3: The best learning takes place when it progresses

- A. From the known to the unknown
 - Going over old ground is usually boring to the learner.
 - Failing to start where the learner is at will lose him. (e.g. confirmation class differs from year to year)
- B. From the simple to the complex
 - Most people need to have things developed logically in order for them to understand. In studying God's Word it is essential that people see that the truths they are learning are derived from Scripture.
 - The teacher needs to know the taxonomy of questions and use types 1,2, and 3 in sequence.
- C. From the concrete to the abstract

- First grade teacher “1 + 1 = 2”
- Catechism without Bible History foundation

Principle 4: Some of the best learning takes place when peers teach each other

- God encourages Christians to teach one another. (admonish, correct, strengthen, encourage, comfort)
- Christians need practice to develop the ability and the confidence to teach one another.
- When people see that their peers are able to do something (understand and explain God’s Word) they begin to realize that this is not only the province of the “expert.”
- People can often help understanding by expressing things in terms or experiences of their peers.
- Talking about their faith with fellow believers makes it easier (confidence, expressing Scriptural truths) for people to share their faith with unbelievers (evangelism training).
- Teaching/learning process:
 1. Use discussion technique (heresy? circles and tangents?)
 2. Well thought out discussion starters; well planned discussion development.

Principle 5: Visual aids help in learning by aiding understanding and retention

- Observe God’s creation: We have more than one sense (hearing) which we use in learning.
- “A picture is worth a thousand words.” ‘
- Television has greatly influenced how learning takes place in children and adults who watch it often.
- The low cost and simplicity of modern equipment makes it readily available and easy to use.

Principle 6: Learning is not complete until it has gone through four stages

- Rote, restate, relate, realize (do).
- The measure of learning is not what was “gone through” in class, but what is understood, retained and put into practice. (Matthew 28:19)
- Observe God’s creation:
 1. Human memory (recall) is of two types: mediate (recognize when something is mentioned again) and immediate (fixed in the memory in such a way that it is conscious and affects one’s behavior.)
 2. We retain something only for a matter of seconds if we do not take steps to fix it in our memory by encoding and repetition..
 3. Though the amount of material the human mind can learn is astonishing, we can learn (record) only a few items at a time.
 4. The ability to memorize word for word reaches a peak at about 15 years of age and tends to go downhill from then on; thereafter memory tends to focus more on content than on exact wording.
- Teaching/learning process:
 1. Constant review of truths from new viewpoints = encode
 2. Applications which test (so we can fill in gaps left in the understanding) and review (recall and use knowledge).
- Luke 6:40 “Everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.”

Conclusion

Six principles; nothing very profound. All are common senses data learned about the process of human learning from observation. But all are important to remember if our teaching is going to assist rather than hinder the growth of God’s Word in the hearts and lives of his people.

Principles of the Teaching-Learning Process Applied in the Sunday School and Vacation Bible School

In the congregational program of education, we commonly begin with the study of Bible history. There are a number of good reasons for this:

1. As we noted in last's weeks lecture, the best learning takes place when we progress from the concrete to the abstract (principle #3). Bible history is the most concrete material we have for religious instruction.
2. God has created the human being in such a way that he does not develop the mental ability to handle abstract material until he is 12 to 14 years old;. and even then many children are able to do so only in a limited way. So Bible history is really the only material which can be used at this level.
3. It is vital in teaching confirmation class and a doctrinal topic in a teenage or adult Bible class to be able to progress from the concrete Bible history knowledge of the learner to the teaching of abstract doctrinal truths.
4. In teenage or adult Bible class it is vital that the learner have a good overview of God's plan of salvation before he is asked to study any given book of the Bible where he will be focusing in detail on one small phase of this plan.

The goal of the study of Bible history in Sunday School, then, is obvious. We want to take some of the key events in God's plan of salvation which present this plan in a simple, concrete way. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, the judges, the kings, the people of Judah in exile and their return, the birth of Christ, his public ministry, his passion and his exaltation provide the outline of the course. The present Sunday School course which spends one year on the OT and the next on the NT allows the course to include more stories in the course as well as keeping them in exact sequence.

The new Vacation Bible School courses seem to reflect a growing use of this agency for mission outreach. The Bible history study in these courses seeks to give the students a simple presentation of law and gospel. While this is a wonderful use of this agency, still it would be a real loss if the old purpose of VBS were lost, especially for those children of the congregation who do not have the advantage of the training provided in a parochial school. The old courses took a portion of the catechism each year and studied it on the basis of Bible history stories. This study of catechism material on the basis of a Bible story provided a natural and necessary bridge for the student from the study of Bible history in Sunday School to the study of doctrine in catechism class. Hopefully, this old purpose can be restored alongside the new because it should not be a case of either/or but of both/and.

Because the Bible history taught in Sunday School is the foundation on which the child's catechism study will be built, parents need to be made aware of the fact that confirmation study does not begin in the sixth or seventh grade, but with the first day of Sunday School. For the same reason, it seems only natural and necessary that the pastor would be deeply concerned that the congregation's Sunday School be the very best that it can be. Time and circumstances will dictate to what degree a pastor will be involved in the training of the Sunday School teachers, but the rationale for the inclusion of Sunday School and Vacation Bible School in this series of lectures is that every pastor will be concerned how well these agencies are functioning to fulfill their purpose. Whether he is the trainer or only the overseer, he will want to encourage the best learning possible by the application of the principles of the teaching-learning process both in Sunday School and in Vacation Bible School.

Perhaps it should be stated, because it seems not everyone is aware of it, that the new catechism is correlated in a sense with the new Sunday School course. The catechism includes most of the stories of the Sunday School course. A small number were not included only because their applications did not fit naturally into one of the six chief parts. Pastors might tell their Sunday School teachers how they use each Sunday School story in teaching confirmation class. This not only would make the SS teachers aware that their teaching is providing a base for the pastor's work in catechism class, but it would also help to tie the SS and the catechism class more closely together into a unified program of religious instruction.

The Basic Parts of A SS or VBS Lesson

The aim, the key points and the truth are the framework on which the four basic parts of the lesson are built:

1. The introduction = The aim of the lesson is introduced in a way which stirs interest in the study of a Bible event.
2. The facts = Who? (did) What? Where? (and) When?
3. The penetration = Why? The key events in the story are penetrated to establish the spiritual truth learned (or demonstrated by) the person in primary focus in this Bible event.
4. The application = The spiritual truth learned (or demonstrated by) the person in the lesson is applied to the children in the contemporary situation.

As we proceed with this study, what is already apparent will become even more noticeable. Perhaps the most difficult part to teach of the four parts is the penetration. At the same time, it is the most important part of the four because it is bridge which moves from the facts of the story to the application. If the penetration limps, so will the application.

Observing the 6 Teaching/Learning Principles In Teaching the Parts of the SS or VBS Lesson

1. To stir interest the teacher needs to:
 - a. Establish value
 - The introduction should lead the child to realize how important this Bible lesson is for his faith and life. (cf. p9) It should not be a review of the previous lesson or simply the background for the new lesson.
 - The application should not be a general restatement of the truth of the lesson, but the carrying of this truth into situations which the child will meet in his life.
 - b. Attach emotions to conceptions
 - The penetration should probe the emotions, attitudes, motives, etc of the person in focus in the lesson.
2. To get the students active the teacher needs to:
 - a. Use the three techniques to the best advantage:
 - telling for the minor points and transitions in dealing with the facts
 - questioning for the major facts and the penetration
 - discussion for review and testing in the application
 - b. Use more than type 1 and 2 questions:
 - move from type 1 and 2 in facts to type 3 and 4 in the penetration to types 5 and 6 in the application

N.B. The type of activity needs to be geared to the mental, emotional, and volitional development of the child. In grades K-2 the facts of the story will be the primary focus of activity because:

- It is the child's first time through the story.
- The child can grasp the facts but cannot penetrate by analysis, comparison and evaluation.
- The child at this age has a vivid imagination and so loves to have stories told over and over again.
- The child's emotions and desires are basically an imitation of a trusted older person.

In grades 3-5 the penetration will be the primary focus of activity because:

- It is the second time through the story.
- The child can penetrate because he can do simple analysis, comparison, and evaluation.

-The child's emotions and desires are beginning to be independent as well as imitative.

In grades 6-8 the application will be the primary focus of activity because:

-It is the child's third time through the story and the second time through the penetration.

-The child is capable of some abstract thinking .3- his imagination is tied to reality.

-The child's emotions and attitudes tend to be more his own than imitative.

3. To have progress to a goal the teacher needs to:

a. Set a goal which is the development of one spiritual truth about one person (rather than just "going through" the story or trying to teach two or three truths.)

b. Proceed from the known to the unknown

-In K-2 ask fact questions on most of the events in the story.

-In 3-5 ask fact questions only on the major events in the story and then penetrate them with questions.

-In 6-8 ask only a couple fact and penetration questions and spend one-half of the time in application (or assign the story for home reading, have the students tell the story and the truth we learn from the story, and then use discussion/questions for application.)

c. Proceed from the use of simple to complex questions (cf 2b)

d. Proceed from the concrete to the abstract (fact to penetration)

4. To have peers teach one another the teacher needs to:

a. Use questions rather than telling in the penetration so that the students help one another discover the truth learned (or demonstrated by) the person in focus in the Bible lesson.

b. Involve the students in comforting, admonishing, correcting and strengthening one another in the application.

5. To get the children to see as well as hear the teacher can use pictures, flannel-graph, slides and video.

6. To make sure the learning goes through all four stages the teacher needs to:

a. Use applications which review the truth of the lesson to fix it in the memory.

b. Have the children evaluate religious matters or bring life situations into the classroom with type 5 and 6 questions to get beyond rote and restatement to relation and realization.

Preparing a SS or VBS Lesson Which Makes Use of the Six Principles

The charts attached are one way which the six principles of the teaching-learning process may be incorporated in preparing a Sunday School or Vacation Bible School lesson. It is not meant to be a sample of the only way a SS or VBS lesson may be taught properly. Rather, it is a way that this Seminary instructor has found to get students to put into practice the educational theory they have learned (i.e. the 6 principles).

At first glance it might seem to complicate the process of preparation, but in reality it is a simple, organized way to put together a good lesson in a minimum of time. Experience has shown that after going through the process only twice, all the students of a class from the highly gifted to the less gifted are able to write a lesson from scratch within a 50 minute class period. It has also been presented to more than a few Sunday School teachers conferences and has been welcomed by many SS teachers as a way to organize their preparation. They knew they should ask questions, but they did not always know how to use questions to get beyond simply reviewing the facts of the story. These things are mentioned only to obviate the response that this is an egghead scheme concocted by an ivory-tower professors. Something similar to this chart also will be the basic approach used in a new set of video tapes being prepared by the Synod's BPE to assist pastors in the training of their SS teachers.

This chart not only helps the teacher prepare the lesson, but it can also be used by teachers, especially less experienced teachers, to teach the lesson in class. It has everything the teacher needs to tell the story, to penetrate the story, and to apply the story. In other words with this tool in hand the teacher will be able to develop a much more direct rapport with the class than is possible if he (she) is reading either the story or the questions on the story from a book.

Using this chart in the SS teachers meeting, might enable the pastor to have a much more interesting meeting than just having him lecture on the Bible stories for an hour or an hour and a half. By using a chart of the story to teach a lesson to the SS school staff, he would be accomplishing a number of things:

- He would be giving the teachers an example of how the story could be taught effectively.
- He would get a better idea of just where the teachers lack understanding about the lesson or where they might have trouble getting something across in the lesson.
- He would be getting the teachers involved in active learning by having them answer questions and discuss applications.
- He would lead the teachers to realize where the students might have trouble understanding the lesson if they themselves have trouble answering several of the questions.
- He would be teaching the teachers good methods by osmosis.
- He would be helping the teachers in their preparation by giving them a chart which they can simply adapt to the age level of their classes.

What follows is a brief explanation of how the chart is used to prepare a lesson.

1. Select a truth which expresses the spiritual lesson learned (or demonstrated by) one person or a group of people in the Bible story. Write it on the chart in the place indicated for the truth. N.B. The truth selected may be the one indicated in the teacher's manual, or a revised or totally different one of your own which will teach a spiritual lesson more pertinent to the children in your class.
2. Write two or three statements which are subpoints needed to develop the spiritual lesson learned by the person in focus. Write them in the lower portion of each section of the right hand column.
3. Condense each event in the story to one or two words; write these words vertically in the left hand column.
4. Circle each event which is a major one (i.e. something the person in focus thought, said or did which will be used to develop the statement in the right hand column.)
5. Write a fact question in the second column after each circled word which asks what the person thought, said or did.
6. Write a penetration question in the third column after each fact question. The penetration question is a follow-up question which "gets behind the event" to have the children explain the emotions, attitudes, motives etc. of what the person thought, said or did.
7. Write a question (if needed) in the top of each section of the right hand column which bridges from the penetration questions to each statement.
8. Use each of the two or three statements to think of parallels in contemporary life, and then write a type 5 or 6 discussion question to review, test and apply the truth of the lesson and its subpoints.

Conclusion

Is it necessary to organize a lesson in some way like this? A number of things would suggest a positive answer. Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teachers often are willing workers, but they have little or no training for the important work they are to do; so they appreciate all the help they can get in feeding Jesus' lambs. Pastors often have little time and perhaps may also lack the expertise to train teachers in educational psychology and methodology. The next best thing to do is to use a "method" which incorporates the principles of the teaching-learning process and teach it to the SS staff by osmosis. Hopefully, this presentation has aided you in some small way not only to help your teachers improve their methods, but also to explain to them how the observation of the six principles of the teaching-learning process will allow their sowing of God's Word to reap the best harvest possible.

Introductions

After taking care of any necessary background (map work, customs, special terms, etc.), the introduction gets the children to start thinking about the lesson they will learn for their lives in the new lesson. Obviously if a person feels he/she really doesn't need to learn a particular lesson, he/she won't have a great deal of interest in what is being taught. The introduction does not teach the lesson; rather, it establishes why a certain lesson needs to be learned. This can be done in a number of ways:

- a) The teacher might ask the class to think about a situation in their lives where the lesson to be taught in the new story might apply (e.g. In the lesson on Hannah and Eli and the role of Christian parents, the teacher might set a scene where a child refuses to listen to a parent's admonition about not staying out late at night. The class might be asked, "What would you do if you were the parent, and your child refused to be home by a certain time at night? Why would you do this?")
- b) The teacher might use role play to set the same scene as the one described in a). The teacher or one of the students might play the role of the parent and one of the students the part of the child. At the point when the child tells the parent that he refuses to come in at a certain time, the role play might be broken off and the class asked, "What does the parent do now? Why?"
- c) The teacher might ask each member of the class to think about the two most important things their parents do for them. After giving the class a few seconds to think about this point, the teacher might ask various members of the class to share what each considered the two most important things. Or the class might be given a minute to write two things down on a slip of paper, and then the teacher might collect the slips and begin to read some of the answers. Or, the teacher might put the class into break-out groups of three persons each and give each group two minutes to agree as a group on the two most important things parents do for their children.
- d) The teacher might give the class a list of things parents do for their children and then ask the children individually or in break out groups to select the two most important.
- e) The teacher might give the class an agree/disagree statement to discuss for a few minutes. Some sample statements might be: 1) The most important thing parents do for a child is to provide food for them to eat: or 2) When a child refuses to come in at a certain time at night, the parents will have to punish that child to make him/her obey.

The Principles Of the Teaching-Learning Process Applied in the Catechism Class

The Catechism Exposition and the Principles of Learning

Let's begin by taking a look at the book which we use in teaching catechism. What purpose or purposes is *Luther's Catechism* (1982 ed.) to serve? In considering that question the committee which worked on the catechism exposition decided it would poll the pastors and teachers in our synod to find out how they felt. The questionnaire asked whether the new catechism exposition should serve the single purpose of being a book for

teaching doctrine to children, or whether it should also serve as a book of doctrine for Christians to continue to use when they became adults. The overwhelming response was that it should serve both purposes.

As a result, the format of *Luther's Catechism* is different from what it should have been if this book were to serve only as a book for confirmation instruction. The principles of the teaching/learning process would have required a book:

1. With answers that would have been both cognitive and affective rather than mainly cognitive. (Principle 1 : interest is stirred by touching the emotions.)
2. With illustrations from life today to accompany each answer. (Principle 1: interest is stirred by touching the emotions when teaching conceptions; and principle 6: learning is not complete without reaching the stages of relating and realizing.)
3. With no answers written in the catechism. The children would have to develop the answers from the passages and write them in. (Principle 2: student activity in the higher forms of thinking increases understanding and retention; principle 4: peer learning is often the best kind of learning.)
4. With a two year course. The large number of passages used to develop many of the answers in the present catechism would be divided between the two courses. (Principle 3: progress from the known to the unknown to avoid boring the students; principle 6: the human memory gets overloaded if it has to handle too many items at one time.)
5. With less material. (cf. Luther's admonition in his preface to the Small Catechism to teach the children the basics and then add on to this base as they grow older.)
6. With a more visual impact than just a few pictures and some abstract doctrinal diagrams. (Principle 5: seeing pictures aids understanding and retention.)

Perhaps we should also take the time to take up several problems which we have to wrestle with because of the format of *Luther's Catechism*. Should we teach one half of the catechism (e.g. the Commandments and the 2nd Article) one year and the other half the following year since the catechism contains so much material? The principle of progress which says go from the known to the unknown might at first seem to suggest that this would be the best thing to do. But the principle that review is necessary for the human memory to retain knowledge (cf. the old adage: *repetitio est mater studiorum* suggests otherwise. The better approach would be to go through the content of the encheiridion at least twice, using some of the material (some passages, questions and answers) one year and other passages and rephrased questions and answers the next. This gives variety to sustain interest. It avoids choking the children by trying to take all the material in the exposition in one year. It takes the children through these basic truths twice to help increase retention.

If one has the advantage of having separate 7th and 8th grade classes, another approach would be to take the Commandments and the Articles in 7th grade (which would be about two-thirds of the catechism.) Then these two chief parts could be reviewed in the first half of the 8th grade with the last half of the year given to the last four chief parts.

A second problem the format of the exposition poses is: Do we have to cover all the material included in the exposition? The fact that the catechism has some material which serves a second purpose tells us that this is not necessary. But won't the children be disturbed if we don't teach everything written in the catechism? Not if we explain to them that this book is meant to be one that they can also use when they become adults. In fact, it might be a healthy thing for them to realize that there still is much for them to learn about God after confirmation.

A third problem the format poses is: Would it be better to teach out of the Bible instead of out of the catechism in confirmation class? Yes, for a number of reasons:

1. Since the answers to the questions are written into the catechism, the children aren't really required to think much at all in order to answer the questions. We can hardly imagine a math or science or English or history teacher using this kind of text to teach his class. When children do not have to

think of the answers to questions but can read them off the page in front of them, their retention of what they “learn” is greatly reduced.

2. The catechism is a book written by one person and edited by a small committee. The way questions and answers are worded should be adapted by pastors to their own individual situation and the needs and talents of their classes (which may even vary greatly from year to year). When one is tied to the wording of the catechism, it usually does not give the pastor enough room to really adapt his teaching to the class he has in front of him. Using the Bible also allows the pastor to vary the number of passages he uses according to the ability of the class he is teaching. It also allows him to put the doctrinal truths into his own words or into more simple and concrete terms if that is what is required by the group he is teaching.
3. We want our children to come out of the confirmation class with the impression fixed deeply in their hearts that the Lutheran church is a Bible church. Using the Bible instead of the catechism will lead them to say later, “We did not just study a Lutheran catechism; we learned everything right out of the Bible.” In addition, children who do not learn to use the Bible in confirmation class will be less likely to pick it up and use it later since they often are unable to find their way around in the Bible.
4. Because the catechism questions and answers are all cognitive in nature, there is the real danger that teaching out of the catechism will result in mostly cognitive teaching unless the pastor consciously works hard in every lesson to include the affective. But even then, since the wording in the catechism is cognitive, the children will be more likely to retain the wording they see than the one they hear. Without the affective, the understanding and retention will suffer (Principle 2), and it would seem that we would want to do anything necessary to avoid having this happen.

The objection might be raised that if one does not use the catechism in class, the children will not use it later in life. But using the Bible in class does not mean that one does not use the catechism. The pastor can use it as a workbook, making assignments in it after every lesson. For example, the pastor can require the children to underline one key word in each answer for the five or six questions he taught in that lesson. At the beginning of the next lesson, he can quickly review the previous lesson by asking the children to indicate which was the one word they underlined in each answer. It will require some careful thought on the part of a child to choose one word and then be able to explain why he thought that particular word was the key one. Or, if a pastor purposely uses a different wording from that in the catechism’s answers (more simple, concrete or in-depth), he can ask the children to take the statements developed in the lesson and write them into the catechism alongside each answer which deals with the same point. This assignment has the advantage that later in life the person will have two different wordings for the same truth to help him understand it. In either of these assignments (underline one word, or write statements alongside), the children are getting as acquainted with the catechism as they would be if they had worked with the answer in class; either home assignment requires that they think carefully about the content of the answers.

Using the Taxonomy of Questions in Teaching Catechism

In lecture 1 the taxonomy of questions was briefly introduced as a way to make sure that a person is really getting the students active by getting them to do more thinking than is required by type one and two questions. Let’s take a closer look at each type of question and demonstrate how each can be used in teaching a catechism lesson. (cf. also pages 10 to 12)

Type 1

Asks students to recall something presented to them previously. In a catechism lesson this will be the first question asked after reading a passage. It will be framed in such a way as to require the students to repeat some words from the passage on which you wish to focus their attention. (e.g. Jn 3:16 “What does Jesus say will not happen to those who believe in him?”)

Type 2

Asks students to restate the same idea in a different way. In a catechism class this will be the follow-up question to almost every type one question to make sure that everybody (especially the slower children) understands what the words mean. (e.g. “What does Jesus mean when he says they will not perish?”)

Type 3

Asks the student to compare ideas, combine ideas into one idea, or use one idea to explain another. In a catechism class this type of question will be used as a follow-up to a type two question to get the child to show how the idea expressed in the words of the passage relates to the truth being developed at the time. (e.g. “We have been looking at things which Jesus rescues us from. What new point have we seen in this passage!) This type of question will also be used to ask the children to put together in a sentence all the points that have been learned from the two, three, or four passages which were just studied. (e.g. “What, then, are all the things we are rescued from by faith in Jesus?”)

Asks the students to use ideas learned previously in a problem which is new to the student. Examples in a catechism lesson would be to ask the students to recall and use a passage to support a truth or explain a difficulty, or to improve or correct another student’s answer.

Types 5 and 6

Asks the student to prove a value judgment made by the teacher (type 5), or to make a value judgment on his own and then tell what considerations led him to make that judgment. In a catechism class this type of question will be used almost exclusively for application. An example (or two or three) for every question in the catechism is given in the handbook. The examples range from value judgments about the doctrine of another church, to an attitude of society, to a life situation etc. One of the most common and effective forms is an ambiguous agree-disagree statement. More will be said later in this lecture about how to use this type of question to bring about a purposeful discussion.

Applying the Six Principles in the Teaching of the Individual Parts of a Catechism Lesson

The Introduction

The introduction should not be a review of the previous lesson nor a matter of giving some background for the new lesson. Both of these may be necessary, but they should precede the introduction. The introduction should establish value (Principle 1: interest is stirred by establishing the value of a lesson). The introduction should not use lecture; instead it should be questions of type 3-6 (Principle 2: activity, especially thinking of the higher types, promotes better learning.) Both of these points were developed fully in lecture two on the Sunday School lesson (cf. page 9 of lecture 2). Since what was said there is equally applicable in a catechism lesson, no more will be said on this today.

The Lesson Outline: The Aims and Inferences (cf. p.13)

The stated aim, the inferences (key truths to be developed in the lesson) and the fulfilled aim (the summary point of the lesson) should have a single focus (Principle 3: progress toward a single, clear goal produces the best learning.) Without a single goal around which the whole lesson centers, the slower children in the class may never grasp how the various points of the lesson are related. In addition, the statements which make up the outline of the lesson should not only present the theological conceptions to be developed (as the catechism does), but they should also tie an appropriate emotion to each conception (Principle 1: interest, understanding and retention are increased when conceptions are made vivid by recording them with the appropriate emotions attached.) For example, instead of lesson outline such as this:

What does God teach us about life in the 5th Commandment?

1. Our life is a gift of God.

2. Our life is a time of grace.
3. Only God has the right to take a person's life. God teaches us that only he has the right to take away his gift of life and so end a person's time of grace.

A better outline such as this should be developed which ties an appropriate emotion to each fact being taught:

Why does God impress on us that life is precious?

1. Life is precious because it is God's gift to each of us.
2. Life is precious because it is the time God gives us to learn to know our Savior (our time of grace).
3. God tells us to keep our hands off our neighbor's life. God impresses on us that life is precious so that we never do anything to harm our neighbor's life.

The Inferences

There should only be three or four inferences (Principle 6: human memory can process only a few items at one time.) The inferences may be developed in a written form; or a better way might be to develop them in the form of a diagram (Principle 5: seeing things in a picture form helps understanding and retention, especially in the visual age we live in.) An example of a whole lesson outline in this form is given on page 1q . The words circled on the diagram would be blotted out and a semi-blank sheet would be handed out to the class. The children would fill in the diagram as each point is developed. The teacher could do the same on the overhead projector or on the blackboard.

Developing the Inferences

Only two or three passages should be used to develop each of the inferences (Principle 6: the human mind can work with only a few items at one time.) The first passage to use would preferably be a Bible history event (Principle 3: progress from the concrete to the abstract.)

Using a regular pattern for the development of each passage is quite important for a number of reasons:

- If every passage is developed the same way it is easier for the pastor -to teach since he does not have to memorize a bunch of questions in order to remember how he was going to develop a point. Using the same pattern to develop each passage allows him to teach from a lesson plan (page 13) or even more simply from a "teaching card" (page 15).
- Using the same pattern allows the children to be used to a routine which enables them to think their way through each development quickly and successfully (i.e. not a lot of wrong answers to the questions the pastor asks). At the same time using a pattern which follows the laws of the principle of progress (simple to complex, concrete to abstract) will be teaching them how to read a passage with understanding. This skill will serve them their whole life long because it enables them to read their Bible with greater profit.
- It will allow the pastor to bet the children to think more deeply about what they are learning by enabling him to introduce type 3 and 4 questions after preparing the way with a type 1 and a type 2 question (cf. above under types of questions or the sample pattern on page 16). This, of course, is an application of the second principle of learning (activity). It also keeps the number of questions asked in a row to a proper number (three) before mental relief is given by a return to telling for a brief time.
- A pattern allows the pastor to limit the use of telling to those areas of the lesson where its strengths can be used: transitioning, minor points and touching the emotions (cf. the sample pattern on page 16). This applies both principle 1 (appropriate emotions attached to the teaching of conceptions) and principle 2 (the proper use of telling.)

-It allows the children to discover the truth to be learned by having them search the meaning of the passage under the guidance of the pastor. This avoids having the pastor doing mostly lecturing about what the passage means and what we learn from it and then simply having the children repeat after him by the use of a type one or two question. This is the application of principle 4: people often learn better by discovering with their peers what the Bible says.

Application

The best type of application (though not the only kind) is a type 5 or 6 discussion question. By placing something before the students which they have to evaluate in the light of the lesson just taught, the pastor is making the students think through the whole lesson again instead of lecturing about how the lesson applies to their lives (Principle 2: active learning in the form of discussion leads to better retention than hearing someone talk about something; and principle 6: looking at a truth from a number of new viewpoints makes review interesting and helps fix the truth in the memory.)

Also, when the students are required to tell what considerations led them to the judgment which they made, the pastor has a chance to lead the students to form their judgments on the basis of what God says in his word rather than on their own feelings or the majority opinion of the people around them in the world. When the pastor leads children over and over again to approach things in this way, an important attitude is being formed, namely, that the only thing that really matters is what God says about something.

Guiding a Discussion

The discussion technique has some excellent strengths. It gets the students more active than simple questioning does. The students have to speak in full sentences, and they have to be very clear in what they are saying if they want others to understand the point which they are trying to make. Good discussion technique means that the teacher will allow three or four members of the class to speak before he enters the discussion again. This allows the pastor to “sit back” for a brief time and listen. As he listens to the students he can begin to see whether the class has understood the inferences which were developed in the lesson or whether there are still some misunderstandings or gaps in their learning.

Discussion also allows the students to begin to use the lesson to comfort, admonish, strengthen, correct and teach one another. God wants them to be doing these things all their lives. One way they can begin to practice them is if the pastor has them do these things in confirmation class.

Discussion also has some serious weaknesses. It can degenerate into bickering. It can go off on tangents which have nothing to do with the lesson that was studied. It can become boring because it makes little or no progress and keeps going round and round on the same thing three and four times.

To avoid its weaknesses and to make use of its strengths, a discussion needs to be guided by a leader who knows how to lead from behind, a leader who can keep the discussion on track without dominating it or giving everything away that he wants the class to discuss among themselves. A good discussion, then, will be guided discussion. A guided discussion will have these characteristics:

- a carefully formulated “problem” which cannot be fully answered with one word nor even with one sentence;
- a leader who will let at least two or three people. talk-.at the beginning of the discussion before he says anything again;
- a leader who has tried to anticipate all the points the.. discussion must cover before it is complete (N.B. this will be essential to the next two points which follow);
- a leader who is adept at knowing when to enter the discussion to get it back on track (“That is an interesting point; the answer to that point is...; but let’s get back to the “problem” we were discussing.) or how to move the discussion ahead once it gets stalled or is merely circling;
- a leader who will have a way to get one of the class members to sum up the discussion when everything that needs to be said has been said,

-a “wrapup” spoken by the discussion leader which ties up all the loose ends and attaches the appropriate emotion to the point of the discussion.

The chart on page 15 (top) outlines the preparation which the discussion leader needs to make when he first begins to use this technique. As he grows in his ability to guide a discussion, he could reduce his preparation to the “problem” and the “wrap-up.” Take particular note of the suggestion at the bottom of the page to have the class exhaust their discussion of the pros (or cons) before they move on to the other side of the “problem.” This will not only help the teacher who is beginning to use this technique to be able to guide the discussion better, but it may also help the class members work into discussion by doing it in a simple form before getting into a more wide open type of discussion.

One other form of discussion which can be used successfully in confirmation class is break-out groups. It is the most active kind of discussion because it gets virtually everybody in the room involved in the discussion at the same time instead of having only one person talk at a time. For break-out groups to be useful, four rules must be observed:

- Each group should consist of no less than three and no more than four people (in a group of five, three tend to take over the discussion and the other two tend to sit and listen).
- Each group must be given a specific assignment (if the assignment is vague some groups will get way off the track).
- One person must be chosen as a “leader” of each group (otherwise the people in the group may flounder at first because nobody is willing to begin to talk about how they can go about carrying out the assignment).
- The breakout groups should have only one assignment (not two or three) and should be given a specified amount of time to complete the assignment (not to exceed a few minutes so that the group will enjoy the exchange of thoughts but then have the chance to compare their conclusion with those of other groups and so get immediate feedback).

Usually it is best if all the break-out groups have the same assignment. Otherwise, only the group that discusses an item really gains something: the other people in the class only hear a brief report of what a group discussed and get little benefit from such a report because a conclusion is being presented to them without their having a chance to think it through for themselves.

Memory Work

We will address this subject briefly because several of the principles of learning are pertinent:

1. The principle of interest reminds us that we need to establish the value of every piece of memory work for the students if we want them to do a good job at it. If we can’t think of a good reason to assign a Bible passage other than giving the children something to learn, it might be better not to assign it.
2. The principle of review reminds us that if we want the children to retain a piece of memory work beyond a couple days or a week, we need to review it often with them. Passages that are, not reviewed will be retained in the child’s memory only in the form of recognition (i.e. they will recognize the words as coming from the Bible). Recognition memory will be very useful for the children in listening to sermons, singing hymns etc. But passages and portions of the catechism which we want to fix in recall memory will have to be reviewed and reviewed again. To accomplish this a pastor needs to establish for himself a core number of passages (cf. examples in the appendices of the handbook, cf. page 17) and then work on them regularly with the children. One fun way of doing this is to use the closing or opening minutes of a class to do a “team spelldown” or a

“wandering pointer” exercise which involves all the children in the class in the review of memory work rather than having only one child recite at a time.

3. The fact that God gives children different levels of ability in memorizing suggests that we do not have to give every child the exact same memory assignment. No one is more aware of these differing abilities than the children themselves. If different assignments are made by a pastor as an application of Jesus’ parable of the talents, not only will the children understand, but this could also be a way of letting them begin to put the parable into practice in their lives.

Several other facets of memory work are outlined on page 13. Time does not permit us to go into them, but they are included for you to look at if you so desire.

Using Workbooks in Teaching the Catechism

The main value of workbooks is that they provide drill work to hone a particular skill one wants the children to learn. Studies have shown that their value for teaching content is minimal since the type of thinking a workbook exercise requires is mostly of the lower type (repeat, restate, matching). Another negative factor is that in some grade schools in our day, children are “workbooked” to death.

If one feels that the children in confirmation class need some drill work on the facts, and if the pastor can overcome a negative reaction of students to having “another workbook”, a workbook might be used. However, principles 1 (interest), 2 (activity) and 6 (four stages) would suggest that an even better piece of homework might be some type 5 and 6 questions which the students should wrestle with in preparation for a discussion at the beginning of the next class. This assignment would get them to think more deeply about the truths of the lesson as a whole, and it would also require that the children look at the “facts” of the lesson in relationship to their own faith or life.

Conclusion

The applications of the teaching - learning process in catechism class are many. Using them will make the teacher’s work a bit easier and, under God’s blessing, also more successful.

Type 1: Memory Questions

A memory question asks students to recall or recognize ideas presented to them previously in reading or listening. Memory questions can require the student to recall a single fact or a much more involved idea (to fix in memory, or for use in the present lesson).

Examples of Memory Questions

1. Conditions for this question: The students have read a current events newspaper on present-day conditions in India. Question: What are the main problems facing India today?
2. Conditions for this question: The teacher gave a lecture on Karl Marx’s life and made the point that he did not originate from the working classes. Question: True or False: Karl Marx learned the working man’s view of life during his early life as a factory laborer.

Religion Class

1. “Recite...” (a passage, portion of catechism, hymn stanza)
2. “Define...” (terms such as grace, justification)
3. Simple fact questions on what a passage says or about what someone said or did in a Biblical narrative.

Type 2: Translation Questions

In translation the student is presented an idea and then is asked to restate the same idea in a different way.

Example of Translation Questions

1. Conditions for this question: The student has read a paragraph in the textbook. Question: Now tell me in your own words what you read.
2. Conditions for this question: The students have read the book *The Jungle*. This question asks only for the sequence of the story - not an interpretation of its significance. Question: write a summary of the story in *The Jungle*.
3. Conditions for this question: The world history students era shown a picture of Delacroix's "Liberty Leading the People." By this translation question, the teacher rakes sure that students perceive the literal message of the painting as preparation for the next step beyond translation in which the students will be asked to interpret the symbolism. Question: Describe what you see in this picture in sufficient detail so that it could be envisioned by someone who has not seen it.

Religion Class

1. "Put that in your own words!" (as a follow-up to Type 1)
2. "Summarize..." (as a follow-up to several Type 1)
3. "Explain..." (after reading a passage or as a follow-up to a Type 1 on a portion of a passage)

Interpretation Questions

The interpretation question asks the student to compare certain ideas or to use an idea that he studied previously to solve a problem new to him. The idea may be in the form of a skill, definition, law, rule, or generalization. The student doesn't have to figure out which idea is to be used in interpretation because the question or the classroom context tells this. The question can be in short-answer or discussion form. Usually the answer is quite objective. In other words, there is usually a right answer which the teacher expects students to reason out.

Examples of Interpretation Questions

1. Conditions for this question: After seeing a film on customs of marriage and bringing up a family in an African society, the students are asked: Question: In what ways are the marriage and family customs in the movie similar to those in our society and in what ways different?
2. Conditions for this question: The students have studied temperature, rainfall, and topography maps of the United States. They may use these maps in answering the question. In addition they are given a dot map showing where cotton is grown in the United States. Question: In what range of temperature, rainfall, and topography is cotton grown in the United States?
3. Conditions for this question: The students have studied the following rights of citizens under U.S. capitalism. (A) Private ownership of capital and consumer goods; (B) Right to initiate a business or choose an occupation; (C) Right to profit in a competitive economy; (D) Collective bargaining between management and labor; (E) Protection against destitution. The class learned that none of these rights of citizens were absolute. Question: Bring in news clippings showing the operation of the characteristics of U.S. capitalism. Label which right is involved and indicate whether it has been observed or violated in the particular situation in the clipping.

Religion Class

1. Use simple passage to explain a difficult passage.

2. Show the progression from one passage to a second.
3. Compare two terms (e.g. justification and redemption).
4. Combine subpoints into a single statement of doctrine.
5. Compare the actions (words) of two people in a Bible narrative.
6. Formulate a statement of doctrine from a number of given passages (e.g. abortion).
7. Apply doctrine to a given example from life.

Type 4: Application Questions

Application questions are similar to interpretation questions in that students are to use ideas learned previously in problems new to the students. However, application goes one step further. In an interpretation question the student must show that he can use an idea when he is told specifically to do so. In an application question the student must show that he can use an idea when he is not told to do so but when the problem calls for it. In other words, application requires the transfer of training to new situations.

Examples of Application Questions

1. Conditions for this question: A class has studied the main regions of the United States. This included consideration of climate, topography, crops, population, vegetation, manufacturing, and agriculture. At the end of the year the teacher displays a half dozen big landscape pictures. Question: Study each picture carefully and then name a state in which you think the picture might have been taken. Give as many reasons as you can why you think your location might be in the state you name. Conditions for this question: The students have had instruction in language arts and social studies in defining a problem, locating data, taking research notes, organizing ideas, clear expression, writing footnotes and bibliography.

2. Conditions for this question: The students have had instruction in language arts and social studies in defining a problem, locating data, taking research notes, organizing ideas, clear expression, writing footnotes and bibliography. Question: Choose one of the most pressing social problems facing our nation today. Write a term paper on the problem.

Religion Class

1. Recall and use passages to support a truth or explain a difficulty.
2. Recall and use passages to improve or correct another person's answer.
3. Explain a concept with appropriate illustrations or examples.
4. Use a concordance to find passages for use in developing a doctrinal statement (e.g. fellowship).

Types 5 and 6: Evaluation Questions

The students are asked to make a value judgment of some product, communication, event, or situation. A value judgement is a rating of something as being good or bad, right or wrong, or perhaps beautiful or ugly. Part of the answer always requires the students to tell what considerations led him to make the judgement.

Examples of Evaluation Questions

1. Conditions for this question: The students have studied the colonial period of United States history. Question: did the colonists do right in throwing the tea overboard at the Boston Tea Party? Tell why.
2. Conditions for this question: A high school class is studying social class. Question: Classify the following occupations as being high, middle, or low in deserved prestige. Be ready to give reasons for your choice. Waitress, Policeman, Factory foreman, Federal judge, College professor, Taxi driver, Lawyer, Office Supervisor, High school teacher, Editor, Insurance salesman, Barber, Riveter, Truck driver, Railroad engineer, Bank cashier, Top business executive, Physician.

Religion Class

Have the student evaluate:

- the doctrine of another church (e.g. Holy Communion)
- an attitude of society (e.g. civil disobedience)
- a life situation (e.g. a child's reaction to discipline)
- an essay or paragraph (e.g. a good one or a bad one)
- a wrong or partially incorrect answer
- an ambiguous true or false statement

Type 7: Synthesis Questions

The synthesis question asks the student to create something. The product created may be a physical object, a communication, a plan of operations, or a set of abstract relations. In other kinds of thinking there may also be products but the distinctive thing about synthesis is the great freedom students have in deciding what is to be created and how it is to be created. A synthesis question never has one correct response. There are always many good answers which student may work out.

Examples of Synthesis Questions

1. Conditions for this question: A box is to be inserted into the cornerstone of a new school. The students in a class are in charge of filling a box with things showing what it is like to go to school during that time. Question: What do you think should go into the box?
2. Conditions for this question: A history teacher is leading his students to understand some of the problems encountered by historians as they practice their profession. The students have not been given any special preparation for this question. Question: List as many questions as you can think of that might lead a historian to lose his objectivity or logical rigor in interpretation of evidence.

Religion Class

1. Do something artistic about the meaning of the lesson.
2. Write a poem, paragraph or prayer about the meaning of the lesson.
3. Create a diagram or outline on a given subject.
4. Do some research on a given problem or topic.

Principles of the Teaching-Learning Process Applied in the Teenage and Adult Bible Class

In the last two lectures it was obvious that the application of the principles of the teaching-learning process is greatly influenced by two things: the kind of material one is teaching, and the mental-emotional-volitional development of the students in the class.

In Sunday School and VBS the material is Bible history events taken in the sequence of God's carrying out his plan of salvation. The keys to applying the learning principles are: to teach one spiritual lesson by focusing on one person, to ask questions only on the major facts of the story which involve this one person, and then to use a higher type question to "penetrate" each major fact.

In confirmation class, the material is selected Bible history events and selected passages which teach a single doctrinal truth. The keys to applying the learning principles are: to ask a sequence of type 1,2,3 questions to get the children active in thinking through the abstract doctrinal truth being developed, and then to use a vivid illustration to attach the appropriate emotion to each conception.

In SS, VBS and catechism class, we are dealing with children who are at various stages of mental-emotional-volitional development. At the lower level the children are capable of handling only concrete facts. At the middle level the student can begin to handle some simple abstractions. At the upper level some simple logical thinking is possible and the children are beginning to be independent emotionally and volitionally rather than mostly imitative as they were in the lower and middle levels. Thus the kind of activity in

which we can involve children increases from level to level, but even in 7th and 8th grade we cannot go directly to the upper level of questions without preparing the way by the use of questions of types 1 and 2.

In Bible class there are no limits on the material we can use. We can use Bible history or portions of the Bible which are not historical. We can use selected passages to teach doctrinal truths. We can use a topical approach, or we can approach a study from a church history perspective. In Bible class there are no limits placed on us by the mental emotional-volitional development of the class. By the teenage years the mental development of the human being is complete; teenagers not only can handle abstract, logical thinking, but they enjoy doing it. The teenager is completely independent emotionally and volitionally as well. This independence is a problem, however, if it is not accompanied by a sense of responsibility which the teenager has learned from the role model of his parents and teachers. The only thing the maturing adult adds to the mental-emotional-volitional development of his teenage years is the tempering influence of experience.

These facts, namely, that there are no limits on the kind of material we can use in Bible class and no limits placed on us by the development of the class members, are some real pluses. There is one minus, however, when we compare Bible class to SS and catechism class. While there has been a general understanding among our people that children should attend SS and catechism class, the same attitude does not prevail in all our congregations about teenage or adult Bible class. While having a teenage Bible class goes back a generation or two, the adult Bible class is of more recent vintage in most congregations. But both are rather recent developments in comparison to the history of Christian education agencies for children in our Synod.

Time does not permit us to address the matter of how to get teenagers and adults to attend Bible class. A number of barriers need to be broken down: "boring", "difficult and hard to understand", "not needed", "doesn't really help", "I know it all", "doesn't challenge me", "too much work." A summer quarter course here at the Seminary this year gave pastors a chance to develop a strategy for improving Bible class attendance. Two of the principles of the teaching-learning process are basic to such a strategy: the principle of interest and the principle of progress. People will not be interested in attending Bible class unless they clearly perceive that it will meet their needs. People will not continue to attend unless they see that the Bible class helps them to make progress in meeting their needs.

Note the emphasis on meeting the spiritual needs of teenagers and adults. This is a point which deserves special attention.

Life-Related Bible Classes

By the time teenagers reach the sophomore year in high school, they are urged to begin to think about what they are going to do after high school so they can make better choices about which courses to take in high school. Numerous courses such as literature, economics, sociology, and home economics lead them to think seriously about marriage, making a living, and the problems and pressures of life. By the time teenagers graduate from high school most of them have a part-time job. Within a few short years after high school, most people face the challenges, the successes and the failures of an adult in the American way of life.

To avoid having our Bible classes become a mere academic exercise, the cognitive content of the Word cannot be the only focus in determining course content. Course content must also focus on what is particularly relevant in the Word to the lives of teenagers and adults in the contemporary situation.

Maintaining a constant balance between the cognitive content of the Word and making that content life-related does not happen automatically. Perhaps a look at the five basic types of material we use in Bible class and what one has to do to make the study of each kind of material life-related will illustrate this.

1. Historical portions of the Bible:
 - a. The tendency is to focus on historical details.
 - b. Instead the historical details need to be read by the class at home either before or after the Bible class. In class the instructor might focus only on those events which show God carrying out his saving plan, and on those events which provide the opportunity to develop a spiritual lesson which is life related. (cf. the study of Habakkuk, p 10)

2. Doctrinal portions of the Bible:

- a. The tendency is to go verse by verse to develop the doctrinal argument of the author in great detail.
- b. Instead the instructor might focus on selected key verses pertinent to the class in the contemporary situation. The other verses can be covered transitionally to provide context and to establish the flow of thought. (cf. the study of 1 Th 4, p 11)

3. Study of a doctrine

- a. The tendency is to go through a large number of passages in great detail to develop every facet of the doctrine.
- b. Instead, a selected number of passages might be studied in their context (contexts with a parallel to life today would be preferable.) Each facet of the doctrine should be related to the life of teenagers or adults in our day (cf. the study of Christian freedom, p 12).

4. Study of a topic

- a. Since this study begins with a focus on life today, the tendency is to neglect a thorough study of all that the Bible has to say on the subject.
- b. Instead, the instructor needs to begin each facet of the topic with a study of what Scripture says. (cf. the study of poverty and riches, p13)

5. Study from a church history perspective

- a. The tendency is to focus mainly on what happened in the past.
- b. Instead, the instructor might focus primarily on events which parallel the present religious scene in demonstrating how Satan attacks God's Word and how God preserves it.

To make his Bible class life-related, the instructor would do well to begin, no matter which of the five kinds of material he is using, with the question, "What in this material is related to the life of my class members?" Then these will become the major points of the biblical content which he will develop and apply. Gilbert Peterson emphasizes the importance of this approach when he writes, "Adults are extremely need oriented. They tend to study in those areas where they feel the greatest need. Therefore, sensitivity to the needs of adults will provide the direction for the kind of life issues that should be studied."¹ Warren Wilbert adds, "Adult learning is most effectively accomplished when the learner is ...involved in something which has significance for his experience, and for the meaning of his life."²

A Basic Method for Any Kind of Bible Class Material

A Bible class instructor does not always have the time to develop a special method to match the particular content of each new course he teaches. What follows is an attempt to suggest a method which can be used no matter which of the five kinds of material is being used. It also seeks to incorporate the three basic techniques in a way which maximizes their strengths and minimizes their weaknesses:

- telling for transitions and moving quickly over minor points;
- questions of both the lower and higher types to involve the class in developing the major points; and
- discussion type questions to involve the class in the application as well as testing their understanding of these main points.

¹ Peterson, Gilbert ed. *The Christian Education of Adults* (Chicago: Moody, 1984), p. 123.

² Wilbert, Warren *Teaching Christian Adults* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), p. 75.

On page 14 you have a form for preparing a lesson using this basic method. In the first few spaces there are some notes indicating what might be written into each of the spaces designated "HOOK, AIM, BOOK, LOOK AND TOOK." A somewhat fuller explanation of BOOK, LOOK AND TOOK will follow shortly. On pages 10 - 13 are four sample lessons of this method for several of the kinds of material used in Bible class. Those who are familiar with Larry Richards' book *Creative Bible Teaching* (cf. the bibliography for this series of lectures) will know where the terms "hook, book, look, and took" came from. The method presented here is an adaptation of the method Dr. Richards proposes for teaching at all levels of Christian education, from children to teenagers to adults.

Each Bible class lesson is divided into three to five cycles of BOOK, LOOK AND TOOK. Each of these cycles focuses on one major life-related truth to be learned from the Bible content of this lesson.

-The BOOK portion of each cycle is essentially telling. Here the instructor transitions from the last major point to the new one. In the process he may give background or context, summarize the verses which serve as a transition to the next verse or group of verses to be studied in more depth, or have the class read the transitional verses while he comments briefly on them.

-The LOOK portion of each cycle is essentially questioning. Here the instructor gets the class to think through the content of the verses to develop a truth which relates to their faith or life. A type one or two question may be used to focus attention on certain words in the passage and their meaning. Then a higher type question will guide the class in relating these words to one of the major points being developed under the AIM of the lesson. To finish the LOOK the instructor adds an illustration to summarize and clarify the point while also attaching the appropriate emotion to the conception which was developed.

-The TOOK portion of each cycle presents a type 5 or 6 discussion question which gets the class to talk about how the truth just developed from the Bible relates to them in the contemporary situation.

The Use of the Six Principles in This Method

Principle 1

Interest is stirred by having the focus of each cycle being life-related, thus establishing value. Interest is also stirred by using an illustration to attach the appropriate emotion to each conception developed in every LOOK section.

Principle 2

Activity is promoted by the use of questioning and discussion in the introduction and in the LOOK and TOOK portions of each cycle. Sometimes it takes some special effort to get adults who are not used to participation and interaction in Bible class to become active. We need to remember that although children bounce back quite easily from giving a wrong answer, teenagers and adults tend to feel terribly embarrassed if they give a wrong answer. A number of things, however, can be done to overcome this problem:

-The instructor needs to work constantly at building a spirit of helping one another learn (rather than showing off or putting others down) and a readiness to be corrected (rather than always having to be right.)

-The instructor needs to use questions which are challenging (rather than insulting the intelligence of the teenager or adult by being too simple) yet also answerable questions (so the class is not frustrated by giving wrong answers to many of the questions.)

-The discussion questions of types 5 and 6 need to be carefully formulated statements about situations which are ambiguous (i.e. they can be agreed with in part and disagreed with in part so a person is at least partly right no matter which way he answers) or problems which do not have an easy or obvious solution but require comparison and analysis according to certain established priorities.

Principle 3

Progress is accomplished by establishing a single AIM for each Bible class, clearly laying out three to five cycles which can be completed in a given class period, and then making sure that this material is covered so that the lesson is not carried over to the next week. When class members see that the instructor has a well-planned lesson for them to complete in a given time slot, they will be much less likely to want to go off on tangents. It is a mistake to think that the principle of activity overrides the principle of progress and that, therefore, any point brought up by a class member takes precedence over the prepared lesson. On rare occasions it might be advisable to depart from the lesson to devote time to such a point, but it dare never become the rule. When the instructor introduces a discussion question in the TOOK portion of the lesson, some people may mistakenly think that at that point they are free to talk about anything that comes to mind. That is why the instructor needs to be well prepared to guide the discussion (from behind) to accomplish the purpose he had in mind rather than letting the discussion go any old place it happens to go (cf. the section in last week's lecture on guiding a discussion.) While class participation and interaction are highly desirable they need to be the kind of activity which promotes progress in the lesson rather than impeding it or even bringing progress to a complete halt. The Bible class instructor who lays out a six week course should complete the course in six weeks rather than going on for 10 to 12 weeks. It is very frustrating for many people to break off in the middle of a lesson, especially when this happens because some people in the class got the instructor completely away from the subject at hand or because the instructor just doesn't have any sense of urgency about progress. People should always be left with the feeling that they would like to have spent more time on a lesson rather than that too much time was spent on it. It bears repeating again, therefore: progress requires the establishing of a single goal, laying out a clear plan to reach that goal and then sticking to the plan.

Principle 4

Peer teaching is accomplished by involving the Bible class members in developing the major points in each of the LOOK sections and by the type 5 and 6 discussion questions in the TOOK sections.

Principle 5

The BOOK portions of each lesson provide some obvious opportunities for the use of visual aids to assist in teaching the lesson. Pictures, slides, video clips, overhead transparencies or the use of a blackboard can assist in giving a summary of a number of verses, or in providing background etc.

Principle 6

The three to five life-related cycles, each of which closes with a TOOK portion, ensures that the lesson will go beyond repeating and restating to relating and realizing.

Several Suggested Methods

Other methods which not only provide variety but also fit specific types of Bible material and develop some important Bible reading skills are:

1. Marking verses with symbols according to content (cf. p15)
 - a. This method is especially useful when the lesson is based on a limited number of verses whose content has two to four main themes.
 - b. This method helps people develop the skill of comparing thoughts verse by verse in a doctrinal portion of Scripture.
2. Dividing a portion of Scripture into sections and then summarizing each section with a topical sentence. (cf. p 16)
 - a. This method can be used in a Bible portion which moves rapidly from one distinct thought to another or in a historical section spanning several chapters.

- b. This method develops the skill of reading longer sections and analyzing the flow of thought or the flow of events.
3. Assigning homework prior to or as a follow-up to a Bible class.
- a. Questions of types one and two can be used on the content of the assigned portion. Questions of the higher types can be used to link matters from contemporary life to the Bible content.
 - b. These home assignments would develop the skill of reading both for content and integration with life in personal Bible study.

Using Breakout Groups

Breakout groups can be used effectively in Bible class if the four rules for the use of this method are observed. 1) The groups should have no less than three and no more than five in each group. 2) A “leader” needs to be assigned in each group. 3) Each group needs to have a specific assignment [usually the same assignment]. 4) A time limit needs to be set [e.g. four minutes] for the groups to complete the assignment. The reason for these rules and some thoughts on how best to make use of breakout groups were given in lecture 3 (cf. the section on using breakout groups in catechism class.)

One example of how the breakout group method might be used in Bible class would be to discuss one or more of the TOOK portions of a cycle in breakout groups rather than in the class as a whole. The advantage of this method is that it gets everybody in the class talking about the TOOK rather than having only a few members of the class being given a chance to express themselves.

Using Filmstrips and Video Tapes Effectively

Sometimes we might choose to use a filmstrip or video tape on the work of Synod, or some facet of church history, or on Bible background etc. as the basic content of a Bible class or for a series of Bible classes.

Rather than having the class view the filmstrip or tape and then hoping they get enough out of it to have a useful discussion, the Bible class instructor might incorporate activity and peer teaching in his lesson plan. A sample lesson plan is given on page 17. The lesson plan consists of three parts:

- An introduction which consists of several questions to get the class thinking about the subject of the filmstrip.
- A preview and discussion section which consists of a dozen to twenty true-false or multiple-guess questions. The class is asked to guess at the answers to these questions before they see the filmstrip. In this way they are alerted to look for certain things as they view the filmstrip. After they see the filmstrip the class is asked to give the correct answer to each question. As this is done the instructor can add any other remarks he may consider pertinent about the content of the filmstrip or the class members may ask questions about what they saw.
- A couple discussion questions to get the class to relate the content of the filmstrip to their own lives.

Planning the Curriculum

For any educational agency to be effective it needs to have a curriculum which is not the result of a haphazard approach based on convenience and whim but a curriculum whose content and time sequence are determined by some clearly defined goals.

Some general goals for teenage or adult Bible classes which might apply to most congregations would be:

- To help people grow in their knowledge of Gads Word (a cognitive goal).
- To help people grow in their ability to do personal study of God’s Word (a skill goal = to learn how to learn).
- To help the people relate the Word to their lives in the contemporary situation (a life-related goal).

- To help people use the Word of God as a member of the congregation to strengthen, encourage, comfort, admonish correct and teach other Christians (a family goal).
- To help people reach out with the Word to the unchurched (a mission goal).

Each congregation will have to examine its goals for Bible class in the light of its unique opportunities and needs. Once the goals have been established the course content and the time sequence for each course can be established. Questions like these can be answered much more readily if the goals are clear: In what order should the basic content areas be taken up in order to reach our goal(s)? How long should each basic content area be the focus of study to reach our goal(s)? How often should each basic content area be repeated? Should we have some in-depth courses which run for twenty to thirty weeks [e.g. an overview of all the books of the Bible or a doctrine course]? Should these courses be repeated until every member of the congregation has taken these courses? Should we have a variety of courses during the year each of which does not run longer than six or seven weeks (cf. a sample on p18)? Should we offer electives (cf. the article on elective Bible classes p 19)? Should we have Bible class only on Sunday morning or should we offer the same class or a class with different content at various times during the week?

Conclusion

The growing importance of teenage and adult Bible class is evident as we witness a society which is slowly but surely deteriorating around us. It will not surprise us if the spiritual renewal urged by the delegates at the synod convention this year includes special emphasis on Bible classes in our congregations. The Synod can help us with our Bible classes by providing biblically sound, life-related materials. But each congregation will need to carefully weigh its own spiritual needs and then set its goals for its Bible classes to meet those needs. And each Bible class instructor will have to consider those methods which will best enable him to apply the principles of the teaching-learning process so that, under God's blessing, his Bible class may be a truly edifying as well as a fun learning situation for those who gather to study the Word in this setting.

The Principles of the Teaching-Learning Process Applied to the Adult Information Class

Last week we noted how the application of the principles of the teaching-learning process in teenage and adult Bible class were limited neither by the Bible material to be taught nor by the development of the student. This was in contrast to the limitations which these two factors played in the application of these principles both in Sunday School and in catechism class.

In the adult information class we are again in a situation where the application of the teaching-learning principles will be limited both by the material to be taught as well as the development of the student. Principle two (activity) and principle four (peer teaching) are particularly affected.

The goal of the adult information class is to inform an adult who is not a Lutheran about the Lutheran faith. At the same time, the class is to instruct him in the basic truths of Christianity so that he can become a communicant member of the congregation. This is to be accomplished in 20 to 25 lessons, each of which is approximately one hour long. So within 25 hours we want to accomplish what we do in a minimum of 450 hours with a child. (cf. The average child in our congregation who does not attend Christian day school spends 300 hours in SS [9 years, one hour a week for about 33 weeks] and 150 hours in confirmation class [2 years, two hours a week for 36 weeks]. One could also add to this about 10 hours a year for 9 years in VBS. If the child attends a Christian day school, the minimum of 450 hours could be tripled or quadrupled.)

Dealing with the Time/Material Problem

When we look at the adult information class from the viewpoint of the amount of material we have to cover in 25 hours, it becomes quite clear that the principle of activity is going to have to give way a bit. We do not have the time to develop every major point by means of questions; instead, we will have to rely heavily on telling in order to cover all the material in the allotted time.

To lengthen each lesson from one hour to an hour and a half in order to incorporate more activity is not the best solution. To go beyond an hour's time will tax the learning capacity of the adult human being. We should be able to cover five or six points in one hour, but retention will be adversely affected if we expect an adult information class to work at learning anything new beyond that time frame. Nor should we try to pack more into that one hour. In the first lecture when we spoke about human memory, we noted that there is a limit to the number of points that a human being can put into his memory bank and retain at one time. He needs time to absorb what he has learned before he is ready to go on and add more learning. The amount of new doctrinal points that we should expect an adult to handle at one time is five or six, at the most seven. Again, this is a good reason for staying with a one hour lesson.

Nor is it practical in many situations to increase the number of lessons from 25 to 50 or more in order to get more activity. In most instances it is difficult to schedule more than one lesson a week. If we expect some homework, and there are several good reasons for doing so, then even if more than one lesson a week could be scheduled, it may not give the student time to complete the homework. If we schedule one class a week, that means that the person taking the information class will not be able to become a communicant for at least six months. To expand this period to a year or more may not be desirable and in some instances may even be inadvisable.

The Problem of the Learner's Background

Another factor which suggests a limitation of both the activity principle and the peer teaching principle is the background of the learners in an adult information class. In SS, VBS, catechism class and teenage or adult Bible class we normally have learners who already share the same faith. When we ask a question about a Bible passage or section, we can usually expect the class members to answer the question from a correct, Scriptural viewpoint. In adult information class we normally have learners who have no background in the Lutheran church. To expect them to answer questions with the proper understanding (e.g. of law and gospel) may be anticipating too much until they are well along in the course.

In SS we are constantly building on the knowledge acquired at a previous level (middle grades using the facts learned at the lower level to do more penetration, in the upper grades using the penetration done at the middle level to do more application.) In catechism class we build on the Bible history knowledge the children bring from SS and VBS. In teenage and adult Bible class we build on the background brought from SS, VBS and catechism class. But in the adult information class, we may have little or no background on which to build. As a result, even the simplest questions of types 3-6 may be very difficult, if not impossible, for the class members to answer.

For all of these reasons - the amount of material to be covered in 25 hours, the background people bring from another faith or the lack of any Bible background at all - the instructor of an adult information class will have to rely more heavily on telling and use questioning and discussion less than in other types of classes. As was said earlier, activity and peer teaching will be limited, but this limitation can be compensated for at least in part if the principles of interest (#1) and visual teaching (#5) are used more.

A Suggested Method: The Illustrated Lecture Method

When we are forced to resort to the telling technique for the reasons cited above, we need to compensate for the weaknesses of this technique. Otherwise the instructor may "get through" a lot of material, but the student's understanding and retention will suffer greatly.

One weakness of the lecture technique is that very few people are able to retain the interest of listeners beyond a 10 to 20 minute time frame. To stir interest the lecturer needs to use vivid illustrations and sprinkle

them liberally throughout the lecture. Vivid illustrations stir interest if they touch the hearer's emotions. Vivid illustrations aid understanding if they are right to the point and not off on a tangent of some kind. And vivid illustrations help retention if they skillfully tie the appropriate emotion to the conception which is being developed.

Another weakness of the lecture method is that many students are unable to handle the thoughts as rapidly as the speaker is dispensing them. Or the student may have trouble seeing how all the thoughts fit together logically and so gets lost in the maze of information he is receiving. Or there are a rather large percentage of people (estimates run from 30 to 40 percent) who must see things in addition to hearing them in order to comprehend and retain what they are being taught. To overcome these problems the instructor needs to visualize things for the members of the class as well as talking to the class about them.

The weaknesses of the lecture method suggest, therefore, that for this method to be to be effective in an adult information class it needs to be an illustrated lecture. There is no adult information course available at present which uses this method. Each of the present courses has its strengths and weaknesses (cf. p 10), but the illustrated lecture method can used with any of them.

Material is also readily available for a pastor to develop his own illustrated lecture course. In a 25 lesson course, the first 6 to 8 lectures might give an overview of God's plan of salvation using the stories of the two year OT-NT SS course: slides of the colored pictures on the children's lessons would be the basis for the instructor's lecture. The remaining 17-19 lessons could be based on the catechism exposition; the 80 plus overheads (66 from the Catechism Handbook and several dozen from Fehlauer's 5th and 6th grade catechism) could be the basis for the instructor's lecture. (cf. Pages 11-1a)

To avoid pure lecture, the instructor could pause at times during the slide lectures on Bible history to look at a handout sheet which emphasizes the key points in God's plan of salvation. The assignment after each lecture might be to read selected chapters of the Bible as a follow-up to the lecture; a fact question with a corresponding penetration question could be used to direct the reading of each assigned chapter. In the lectures on the catechism the instructor could have the class look up two or three passages which are the key ones on which the doctrinal content of each overhead is based. The home assignment might be to read the questions and answers in the catechism which correspond to the material covered in each lecture; selected discussion questions from the handbook could be given for the students to wrestle with as they read.

An approach such as this which uses many verbal illustrations as well as constant visual aids would allow the instructor to cover a goodly amount of material in one hour in a way: 1) which can sustain interest for that amount of time; 2) which also makes the material easier to follow with understanding; and 3) which greatly increases retention. It also gives the instructor more flexibility to tailor the course to the background of the particular class he is teaching at any given time. While there is not a lot of activity in the presentation of the new material, the assignments get the students active in reading the Bible and the catechism as well as giving them some type 3-6 questions to study by way of preparation for the next class.

The first half-hour of the new lesson would be devoted to a discussion of the assigned study questions (followed by an hour presentation of the new lesson). Since these questions require the class members to express themselves in sentences instead of merely filling in blanks or indicating which letter of a multiple choice is right or indicating whether a statement is true or false, the instructor has a better chance to see how well the class members have understood the previous lesson. In this way type 3-6 questions are used for activity, but only after the students have been shown from Scripture what God says and after they have had a chance to study each major point for themselves at home.

Note the progression from Bible history to the study of abstract doctrine in this approach as well. Principle three emphasizes that the best learning progresses from the concrete to the abstract. The same progression which we feel is so basic to our instruction of children is followed here as well, although in a condensed form. If the members of the adult information class are parents or future parents, this also gives them a good background in the material their children will use in SS and catechism class.

The Value of Several Follow-Up Courses

Everything that has been said about trying to cover a lot of Bible history and doctrine with people who have no Lutheran background and maybe little or no biblical background, indicates the value, if not the necessity, of having several follow-up courses for these people to take in the first several years of their membership in a congregation. A Bible history course with an overview of the whole Bible and a more in-depth doctrine course would be the two most obvious courses.

Because we all easily forget what we may have learned well earlier in life but have not kept fresh in the memory by constant review, several courses such as this would be beneficial not only for the new adult confirmands but also for the whole adult membership of the congregation. Since these courses might be repeated 10 to 20 times in order to provide an opportunity for every member to attend, a layperson in the congregation who has the gift of teaching might be groomed to teach the course after the first several times. If the layperson takes the course and then observes how it is taught several times, he should be able to teach it well.

Recently the Board for Parish Services appointed a committee to develop a curriculum which would begin with a number of in-depth courses for adult education in the congregation. Hopefully, these courses will be of the kind which will serve well both as follow-up courses for a new adult confirmand as well as helping longtime members grow in faith and Christian living.

The Principles of the Teaching-Learning Process Applied in the Fellowship and Service Organizations of the Congregation

Almost every congregation has organizations which gather to enjoy Christian fellowship and to pool their talents in serving the congregational family in various ways. Perhaps the three most common are ladies', men's and youth groups. More recently singles groups and older adult groups have also been started.

Part of the meeting time (a half hour at the most) is spent in a business meeting to discuss the service aspect of the organization. Usually the meeting closes with a half hour of fellowship which includes the sharing of food. Often the group also looks for some kind of "entertainment" to get people to attend. Unfortunately, entertainment such as a sports film, a demonstration by someone with a unique hobby, a talk by a local public servant such as a judge or a narcotics officer, or a travelogue by a person who just returned from a visit to some interesting part of the world is the entertainment which is sought. I say "unfortunately" because it surely is a shame if a group of Christians does not consider the opportunity for spiritual growth a bigger "draw" than some secular entertainment.

If an organization gets together for a couple hours each month, spiritual growth surely would be a worthwhile use of one half hour of that time. The offer of a pastor to provide a half hour of spiritual "entertainment" might be accepted gladly if, and this is a big if, if it is something other than listening to him read or give a lecture for the half hour. And the pastor should restrict himself to a half hour rather than extending the time to 45 minutes or an hour. He needs to remember that time is also needed for the service and fellowship purposes of the organization. If he goes beyond a half hour and robs the group of time for these things or extends the time of the meeting beyond the hour and a half or two hours which the meeting is supposed to take, his failure to stay close to a half hour can have an adverse effect on attendance.

Does the restriction to a half hour mean that the pastor needs to turn to illustrated lecture as in the adult information class? The answer is sometimes yes but usually no. Yes, if the material to be presented is so extensive that it can only be covered by telling in a half hour; however, it might be better in some instances to divide the material between two meetings rather than try to get it all into one.

Usually, a half hour provides plenty of time to involve the group in some activity and peer learning by using questions of types 3-6 for them to answer or discuss. Instead of three to five BOOK, LOOK, TOOK cycles as in an hour Bible class, one might have only two or three cycles. Instead of 10 to 20 true-false/multiple guess questions on a filmstrip or video tape, one might use 5 to 10. Instead of using 40 minutes to make a presentation followed by 20 minutes of discussion, one would use 20 minutes for the presentation and 10

minutes for discussion. In this last instance, there is no question that using the illustrated lecture technique would be better than just talking even though it is only a 20 minute presentation. More material can be presented in less time by the illustrated lecture, and retention is much better.

By making comparisons to the way a Bible class is taught, we do not mean to suggest that a pastor should take the same material he presents in Bible class and use it in a capsulized form in the men's and ladies' organizations during the same week or month. The point is simply that a half hour gives the same latitude for variety in content and method as the Bible class does. Nor should the pastor forget that, like Bible class, the cognitive content of the Word cannot be his only focus. What he presents must also be life-related, that is, it must focus on what is particularly relevant in the Word to the lives of people in the contemporary situation. (Principle #1 : interest is stirred if one sees the value of what is being learned)

If a pastor is given a half hour of an organization's meeting time (or takes a half hour by gradually expanding his opening devotion into Bible study), he can make it a truly interesting and edifying half hour if he keeps the principles of learning in mind and applies them in a way that is similar to their use in a Bible class.

The Principles of the Teaching-Learning Process Applied in a Program of Family Life Education

The Need for Family Life Education

Time does not permit us to go into this subject in any detail, but there isn't any question that it is a matter every congregation needs to consider carefully. Our contemporary society is steadily undermining Christian principles and values in regard to family life. As a result the people in our spiritual care need to hear what God's Word has to say on topics such as the following:

- What marriage is (a lifelong commitment of two whom God has made one) and its God-given blessings (loving companionship, children, and sexual happiness).
- Relationships in marriage: the wife as the subordinate helper, the husband as the loving leader, making financial decisions, communication and problem solving, and maintaining a good relationship through the changing phases of a marriage.
- Responsibilities of parents: providing the "good life" and how it-relates-to the spiritual training of children, the parent as teacher and role model, Christian discipline.
- Family life at home: developing a feeling of security (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual), giving support and encouragement, loving companionship, family Bible study, and an atmosphere in which children feel free to discuss things with their parents. (cf gyp. 13..14)

Applying the Teaching-Learning Principles

There are a number of very useful filmstrips and video tapes which could be used to develop interest in the subject. Not all the members of a congregation may realize how much society has influenced their thinking on family life. A visual presentation (principle #5) might attract their interest enough to get them to attend a series of lessons on one of the topics listed above. The WLCFS series (*Living in Grace*) might be the best to start with. It not only covers most of the subjects, but also provides a leader's guide which enables the instructor to incorporate self-activity and peer teaching (principles #2 and #4) in the course. Several other series which could be used are the marriage enrichment series by Faulkner and several series by Dobson on parenting.

Once one has established the value of family life education and thus stirred interest (principle #1) in the subject, several other forums might be used for family life education. Once or twice a year a series of a half dozen lessons might be worked into the Bible class schedule. Seminars, conferences or weekend retreats could be developed and offered in a given area by a pastoral conference. Such seminars or retreats could be repeated as people who attended tell others in the congregation that it is well worth their time. Parent-teacher meetings could be held every month or every other month for the parents of Sunday School children. In all of these forums, it would be important that activity and peer teaching (principles #2 and #4) be incorporated by the use of type 3-6 questions and occasional break-out groups.

Conclusion

At the end of a series of lectures such as this, it might be easy for a person to begin to say something like one or more of the following:

- All this theory is nice, but where am I going to find the time to rework my teaching in some ways to put the theory into practice?
- I'm glad to find out that I'm doing quite a few things right according to the principles of the teaching-learning process, but how can I use some of the other things I've learned to improve my teaching?
- I've been fairly successful with teaching in my ministry. The people who attend my classes say they enjoy it. Why should I make any changes?

Permit me to recall again the analogy between teaching and planting seeds which was used in the first lecture. Applying the principles of the teaching-learning process will not add any power to the Word any more than how the sower plants a seed can add to the power God has placed into a seed by his creative word. But just as the failure to observe the laws of nature established by God can affect the growth of a seed negatively, so the failure of a teacher of God's Word to observe the laws of the teaching-learning process can have a negative effect on the understanding or retention of that Word by the learner.

This is not to say that the methods proposed in this series of lectures must be followed. They were merely suggestions as to how the principles might be applied in the various areas where the pastor is involved in the teaching-learning process. And they are suggestions made particularly to seminary students to enable them to put together some good lessons in a reasonable time in their busy first years in the ministry. The suggested methods are always accompanied by the encouragement to the student to adapt them to their own personality, their own teaching gifts, and each new class they meet in the teaching-learning process. But the students are also reminded to do their adapting with the principles clearly in mind so that in their teaching of God's Word they do not violate the laws of learning he established in his creation of the human being.

A checklist of questions is given the students to help them analyze their teaching from time to time from in their ministry. Perhaps this checklist is also an appropriate way to close this series of lectures to an audience of experienced pastor-teachers.

1. Do I simply assume that people will be interested in learning, or do I constantly work at stirring interest? Do I assume that people will see the value of what they are learning, or do I work hard at establishing value by good introductions and life-related applications? Do I get so caught up in teaching conceptions that I fail to touch emotions, or in the recording of every conception in the mind of learners do I also use vivid, concrete illustrations to attach the appropriate emotion.
2. Do I equate teaching with telling and learning with listening? Or do I do all I can to get the learners active by also using the questioning and discussion techniques? In questioning do I tend to use mostly type 1 and 2 questions which are really only a different form of telling, or do I also use type 3-6 questions at appropriate points in the lesson to get the class to think through each of the major points? Do I use discussion questions of types 5 and 6 in the applications to get the class active in reviewing what they have learned from a hoe-related viewpoint as well as testing their understanding?
3. Do I have goals for my teaching such as "getting through" a certain amount of material or "getting as far as we can today"? Or does every lesson I teach have a single goal around which the lesson is built? Do the major and minor points of the lesson tend to blend together, or are the major points clearly marked out as I progress toward the goal of the lesson? Does the progress in the lesson move from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex, and from the concrete to the abstract ?

4. Do the students look to me to do all the teaching, or do I also incorporate peer teaching by the use of questions of types 3-6? Do I let discussions get out of hand, or do I guide them toward accomplishing the goal I had in mind as well as getting the class members to correct, admonish, encourage, comfort and strengthen one another in the process?
5. Do I take the position that “it’s hard for an old dog to learn new tricks,” or am I willing to try to incorporate visual aids in my teaching even though I may stumble a bit at first? Am I satisfied with the understanding and retention that comes from hearing, or do I consider the increase in understanding and retention brought about by the use of the second sense worth the effort?
6. Am I satisfied that the level of understanding in my class has reached the “restatement” plateau, or do I make it my goal to bring them to the “relating” and realization” levels as well? Do my “reviews” merely go over old ground, or do I use type 5 and 6 questions to get the class to look at the “old material” from ever widening viewpoints? Do my applications merely repeat the abstract conceptions of the lesson in a general way, or does each application bring a life-related topic or situation into the classroom for the students to wrestle with?

You have been called to do essentially two things: to share the gospel with those who do not yet believe it and to nurture the faith of those who do. Nurture is accomplished by the teaching-learning process. May God bless your every effort to improve your teaching by the application of the principles which are vital to effective nurturing!

Strengths and Weaknesses of Adult Information Manuals

The following assessments are a composite from student reports over the last ten years (less for more recent manuals or recent revisions of manuals). The student assessments are based on two criteria: the principles of the teaching-learning process and the judgement of pastors who were interviewed about their experience in using the manuals.

The Wonders of God, by P. Eickmann

- Strengths: Uses a Bible history approach to teaching doctrine
Introduces the class to larger portions of Bible
Several discussion questions on each lesson
- Weaknesses: Treatment of the way of salvation does not come until lesson 13
The doctrine of Scripture comes in lesson 12
Supplementary discussion questions will have to be added to cover every major point of the lesson
- Use: Especially suited for people who have some Bible knowledge but have little or no Bible history background.

What Does the Bible Say? By O. Riess

- Strengths: The most thorough treatment of doctrine.
Passages and truths learned from the passages are arranged in clearly marked parallels
- Weaknesses: The lesson on the way of salvation does not come until lesson 16
The worksheet does not review each major point and uses mostly type 1-2 questions
The emphasis is highly cognitive with little life-related learning
Only three lessons on Bible history

-Use: A challenging course suited especially for people who have a Bible history background and can profit most from a course which emphasizes doctrine.

By Grace Alone, by R. Westendorf

-Strengths: Begins with a lesson on law and gospel
Develops the basic truths in a simple way which allows the instructor to supplement material according to the background of the class.
Emphasis on life-related learning

-Weaknesses: Little Bible history
The type 5-6 questions do not cover every major point of the lesson
Needs supplementary doctrinal material for people who have a Bible background.

-Use: Especially suited for people with very little Bible knowledge who will profit most from a basic law-gospel course.

New Life in Christ, by F. Bivens and D. Valleskey

-Strengths: Gets the class active by looking up passages and taking notes
Lessons on salvation come early in the course
Appendices with supplementary material for some lessons
Extensive exercises for work at home
Use of some diagrams to visualize doctrinal truths

-Weaknesses: Little Bible history
Less doctrinal content than other courses
Sometimes more Bible background is needed for some points in the exercises
Uses mostly type 1-2 questions in the exercises

-Uses: Especially suited for people who enjoy a workbook and worksheet approach to learning