

Instructional Background for Ten Great Teachings from the Bible

Critical Thinking :

Ten Great Teachings from the Bible was developed for eighth grade confirmation instruction at a Lutheran day school. The curriculum can also be used for adult instruction classes. In its present form it has been field tested for three years, but these materials have been under development since 2002. The current book has been used by a number of pastors who gave it positive reviews and helpful suggestions.

Eighth grade students have reached the stage of Formal Operations, in Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development. That means they can reason, think abstractly, and engage in critical thinking at the higher levels.

<http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/piaget.htm>

The workbook questions are geared toward developing critical thinking skills. There are many higher order thinking questions that the students may not be able to process completely on their own. That's why they are called exercises. They will need the information scaffolded. Teachers scaffold when they help students bridge from problems they are capable of solving easily, to problems that will stretch them. This curriculum is designed to stretch students outside of their comfort zone, into a thinking and learning adventure. <http://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>

The questions in the exercises are divided into six types: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In both the teacher's guide and student materials, each exercise is rated for difficulty. The more difficult the exercise, the more analysis, synthesis and evaluation questions there are.

Certain exercises are best completed during class time, so that the teacher can help the students with difficult concepts and mentor the students in how to think critically about the problems. This is a piece of the learning puzzle that is often missing from American education today. In recent years, with the explosion of technology, students have found that they don't have to search for information, ask mentors, or think critically in order to solve problems. They use Google to help them rather than their parents and teachers. This curriculum is designed to drive the students back to interaction with teachers and parents as they explore their Christian faith.

Teacher and Student Materials:

The Basic Book is complete and so is the exercise book. We are currently using the teacher's guide with the eighth grade students, but are looking at creating companion Teachers and Student Guides for use with students who are not fully in the Formal Operational Stage.

Moodle:

Moodle is a learning management system that allows online interaction between teachers, students, and other teachers. We are developing a Moodle course for teachers in how to teach these materials. We are also developing Moodle modules for teachers to use while teaching.

Power Points and Videos:

There are Power Points and videos being produced to help teachers deliver this material. Many of the videos will contain teaching tips and strategies for exploring these materials with the students.

E-Reader Materials:

PDF materials are already available, and can be used with iBooks and some e-readers. We are exploring developing materials for other e-reader formats.

Author's Background:

The author of Ten Great Teachings, Rev. Mark Willig, is a synodically trained educator with thirty years experience in the ministry, teaching confirmation, and eighteen years teaching experience in a Lutheran day school. Rev. Willig has his Bachelor degree in Elementary Education from Concordia University, Chicago, His Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and the coursework completed for his Master of Sacred Theology from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He has not completed his thesis. He is currently the Senior Pastor at St. John Lutheran Church – Chester, Illinois.

<http://www.10greatteachings.com>