

Hudsonville Reformed Church
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Important Issues in Faith Formation

The Task Force at Hudsonville Reformed Church focused on six important issues. They are:

- Parents Responsibility and Church Responsibility
- Teachers and Leaders of Children and Youth Programs
- Prayer Support
- Leadership Support
- Desired Learning Outcomes
- Profession of Faith

Parental Responsibility and Church Responsibility

Parents:

Christian nurture begins in the home and parents are the key to impacting children and youth with the message of Jesus Christ. Christian parents have an awesome responsibility to fulfill their covenant vows at the time of baptism by teaching and molding their children into learning and growing Christians. Christian parents should avail their children of every possible faith learning activity. Parents can help by:

- Supporting Children's Ministries at church. One way parents can have an impact on the spiritual growth of their children is to support the church's effort for Christian Education by assuring an on-going attendance at Children's Ministries.
- Making decisions that clearly send a message that Christian Education is a priority.
- Taking an active interest in what the child is learning in SS. Ask questions and where possible use the SS materials in family devotions.

Suggestions to implement:

- Educate parents in their, and the church's roles and responsibilities. (Offer classes to help parents in all aspects of Christian parenting)
- Provide resources and workshops to help parents with family devotions.
- Provide resources for parents to meet all learning outcomes. For instance, sex education resources for parents to use at the appropriate age level.

Church:

The church has long practiced and promoted Christian Education. Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Gems, Cadets, AtoJ, Impact and other ministries specifically focus educational opportunities for children and youth. The church has a responsibility as presented in the Covenant promises at baptism to support the work that Christian parents are doing by carrying out children's ministries as effectively as possible. The church needs to:

- Keep parents informed of the curriculum and materials being used in their children's classes. Parent's should be aware of child's attendance record.
- The church should find ways to support the parents' work of Christian nurture at home. This can be done through offering workshops, seminars and materials on family Christian nurture. See point 1.

Suggestions to implement:

- Teachers and leaders should meet with parents to discuss the year's learning plan for each class. Curriculum outline and other resources being used in the classroom should be made available to the parents.
- Periodic newsletters should be sent to parents with learning updates.
- Quarterly attendance record sent to parents.
- Give training and leadership to teachers.
- Assure a Bible based and Reformed curriculum is used.
- Assure Memory Work is included at all class levels.

Teachers and Leaders of Children and Youth Programs

Teachers and leaders are the second key ingredient to effective Christian Education. For the most part, churches rely on volunteer teachers and leaders. Although we are extremely grateful for the work our volunteers do, many are not trained instructors and must rely solely on the curriculum provided by the church. Our church must recruit teachers and leaders that are not only committed to children, but are willing to always look for ways of increasing the effectiveness of our Christian Education opportunities.

- Teachers should have a clear understanding of HRC expectations for their work.
- Teachers and leaders of children's ministry need to possess the skill for and the commitment to the task.
- An understanding of a person's spiritual gifts is important
- Teacher training will be available and teachers are strongly encouraged to participate.
- Teachers will be shown appreciation by the Education Ministry Team and by the church leadership.

Suggestions to implement:

- A job description will be provided for each position to be filled. The job description should outline expectations for each position.
- A verbal commissioning service at which time teachers, parents and congregation commit to quality Christian Education.
- Periodic expressions of appreciation, and appreciation dinner in the spring.

Prayer Support

Our own efforts, apart from a ministry bathed in prayer, are fruitless. Prayer needs to be the blanket that covers all children's ministries, youth ministries, adult education and parental responsibility. Yes we all pray, but the united prayer of many availeth much.

- Christian Education is extremely important in the spiritual formation years of our children.
- The efforts of Christian Education at HRC need to be supported 100% by prayer.
- The Education Evaluation Task Force recommends the recruitment and establishment of a Christian Education prayer team. This team would meet on a regular basis and support all areas of Children's Ministry, youth ministry, adult education and parental responsibility in prayer.

Suggestions to implement:

- Establish a Children's Ministry prayer team. Review Network to find those with a gift of prayer. Establish a team leader.

Leadership Support

We know if asked, HRC leadership will say Christian Education is important. It is the responsibility of the Education Ministry Team to raise the consciousness and importance of Children's ministry in the minds of leadership and church membership.

- We would like to see leadership put children's ministry as a priority.
- Leadership should be challenging Christian parents to be sure they use the Christian Education opportunities available at church.

- In time we would like to see a staff member with a focus on children's ministries.

Suggestions to implement:

- Children's SS and other children's ministries' attendance records will be given to elders.
- The Consistory is to receive a more extensive report once or twice per year regarding the health of Christian Education at HRC. Such a report will focus on the importance of making Christian Education a priority.
- Elders, by rotation, should be assigned a SS class to visit.

Desired Learning Outcomes

We recommend the approval of the attached Desired Learning Outcomes for age 3 through Adult. DLO serves as a filter for the selection of curriculum.

The DLO has been written to give a student a continual growth of Bible knowledge, life application, and Catechism learning.

Suggestions to implement:

- Adopt the DLO
- Instruct teachers and leaders on the use of the DLO

Profession of Faith

Profession of Faith is a significant mile-stone in the life of a young person. Adequate preparation, interview process and mentoring are important for the spiritual well-being of the young person.

- A Profession of Faith class should be offered once or twice a year to help young people prepare for and understand what they are about to do.
- A series of questions should be prepared that could potentially be asked when interviewed by the Elders. These questions will serve as a study guide and would be the basis for learning before making profession of Faith.
- A class syllabus should include not only the learning of Biblical facts (mind) but should also include how the application of faith (heart) applies to their lives.

Suggestions to implement:

- Determine best time to of the year to offer a Profession of Faith class.
- Prepare a class syllabus to serve as the content for the course using the Desired Learning Outcomes as a guide.