

12-1-1939

## Teaching the Postconfirmation Bible Class

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### Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, P. E. (1939) "Teaching the Postconfirmation Bible Class," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 10 , Article 89.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol10/iss1/89>

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world, rules as He wills and can damn and save as He wills without doing any wrong. This arbitrariness on the part of God is the final cause of man's predestination or reprobation. "It is manifest that predestination or reprobation is in agreement with the divine will, which wills to give to the one eternal life and to the other perpetual punishment, because (His) will is nothing else but God Himself, and there is no cause of predestination or reprobation on the part of the creature itself or why the same is eternal and uncaused." (Coll. in *Sent.* III. d. 26. q. 1. nota 2. D.) Here we have the same arbitrariness that we find in the theology of Duns Scotus. It is true, Biel says, that God does not "withhold what is necessary for salvation from any adult who has the use of reason and does what is in him" (*Sent.* I. d. 41. summ. 7. G), but such thoughts cannot comfort the sinner seeking a gracious God and continually asking himself whether he has really and sufficiently done what is in him in order to obtain the grace of God.

Morrison, III.

THEO. DIERKS

### Teaching the Postconfirmation Bible Class

The postconfirmation Bible class, in our circles commonly known as the junior Bible class, has always presented peculiar difficulties to pastors and other leaders of youth who realized that the years of early adolescence in many cases are extremely difficult years for our juniors to negotiate, that they represent in more than one respect the dangerous age. But whenever a condition offers a challenge to leaders, this challenge should be met without hesitation, although always with great care and upon the basis of a most careful study of all pertinent circumstances. The very fact that work with junior adolescents calls upon practically every resource of pastors, counselors, and leaders in general should cause the latter to study every problem with painstaking care, in order to give the juniors the benefit of an encouraging, positive approach and a constructive program, in order that we may not merely keep them with the Church, as the common saying is, but also give them such an opportunity for integration with the work of the Church, in keeping with their developing talents and abilities, as to make them cooperating units in the building of the Kingdom.

If we keep these facts in mind, we must realize at once that much of the success of the Bible class in the postconfirmation age depends upon *the teacher*—his personality, his interest in the work, and his mental, pedagogical, and spiritual equipment for this work.

The personality of the teacher is an important factor in the

work. That he should be a Christian with a full conviction of the truth of the Bible and all its parts and all its truth is a condition which we presuppose in our circles. This condition includes also a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the chief doctrines of the Bible, that teachers of Bible classes "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," Eph. 4:14. Moreover, the ordinary characteristics commonly associated with the idea of leadership should be present, at least in a measure. If, for example, the teacher of juniors does not possess at least a fair amount of vitality, or physical energy combined with mental alertness, of attractiveness in personal appearance, of emotionality or humanness, of cordiality or a pleasant way of dealing with young people, of spirituality, of sincerity, and of individuality, he will have a rather hard time making a ready, favorable impression on his class and assuming the position of leader in their midst. Some of these attributes may be present in an individual from the beginning, others may be absent in his pedagogical make-up. But, as Doctor Link and others have demonstrated, a personality may be developed if one is earnest and persistent, and, above all, if he really believes in the work among the junior adolescents of our Church. It is the person who refuses to learn and to keep on growing mentally and spiritually that will very likely be a failure at teaching a junior Bible class.

Closely associated with these considerations we have that of the teacher's attitude toward his work, of a real interest not only in the subject but also in the pupils that are to be taught in these classes. If the teacher is himself not vitally concerned about his work, if he performs it in a perfunctory, mechanical way, as a part of a dull routine, he can hardly expect to kindle a fire of enthusiasm in the hearts of the adolescents whom he has in his classes. Every lesson should be prepared and presented with such energy as to arouse a corresponding amount of curiosity, interest, and energy on the part of the pupils. The teacher's efforts at penetrating ever more deeply into the divine thoughts contained in the inspired text, his efforts at finding new illustrations, his search for new teaching procedures and different methods, must never cease.

For this reason the teacher's mental, pedagogical, and spiritual equipment for his work is named above as a leading factor in the success of his junior Bible class. It is undoubtedly true that teachers are born rather than made, and the person who has a natural capacity and ability for teaching will have a great advantage over one who has many handicaps to overcome all along the line leading to success. Yet it is also true that every teacher can and should bend every effort to develop natural talents in the

field of teaching, a fact which must be emphasized especially with reference to the teacher who is battling with slowness of thinking, diffidence, lethargy, and other difficulties. For this reason the teacher's pedagogical equipment, his knowledge of educational psychology as it pertains to the postconfirmation age, his familiarity with the principles and methods of education, of the laws of teaching and learning, in short, of the whole art of teaching, should constantly be augmented by such devices as the study of selected books, the attendance at conventions and conferences devoted to the study of work among junior adolescents, especially if demonstration lessons are included in the program of such meetings. In this way the mental and the pedagogical growth of the teacher of juniors will go hand in hand. And that the spiritual growth of every one engaged in this work must keep pace with the rest of his professional development is so self-evident as to require nothing more than a reference. While it is true, as in the case of a pastor in his office, that a living faith and true spirituality and consecration are not absolutely essential for a professional attitude, few men will deny that they are very important factors in producing conviction in the heart of men. Such are the pre-suppositions, then, if not the conditions on the part of the teacher of religion in the junior Bible class.

In keeping with these considerations, the teacher of the post-confirmation age must study the general difficulties of the age as presented in the most reliable monographs in the field. A working knowledge of these difficulties may not have any bearing on the subject-matter as such, but it has a great deal of influence on the manner of presentation, especially as regards a sympathetic understanding of the stages of development through which the adolescent passes. Thus the teacher should have a good working knowledge of the physical changes of puberty, not only in the organs which are being prepared for adulthood, but especially in the senses. He must realize that the restless energy of the adolescent may easily give way to a listlessness which will result in apathy and even aversion to subjects of which the junior fully knows that they are valuable for his spiritual life. The teacher must also be aware of the fact that the mental changes of adolescence are closely connected with the physical changes, so that the intellect seems quite often to be in a state of unstable equilibrium and that the enthusiasm of one day or even one hour may be followed by a corresponding apathy in the next.

The latter phenomenon gives rise to many of the specific difficulties which the teacher of the Bible class must recognize and be able to cope with. It would be folly to assume that every show of opposition to traditional ways of teaching and doing things

connected with the Church is due to deliberate wickedness on the part of the young person or even to an outright denial of the truth received in the course of the catechumen class. The problem of adolescent skepticism cannot be ignored entirely, of course, but it would certainly be foolish for a leader of junior adolescents to make an issue of every instance when members of the organization or the class express doubts concerning certain revealed truths. The early adolescent period is definitely a period of storm and stress, when a young person is frequently torn between several emotions and is seriously concerned about the truth as he sees it. The position taken by the junior skeptic is usually not one based upon conviction, but upon impressions which are frequently based upon inadequate information and may give way to other conceptions which crowd up for recognition. It may also be that the reaction against the systematic and sometimes rather rigid training of the catechumen lessons will intensify an apparent opposition and hostility against a dogmatic presentation of Scriptural truths. Not all juniors will show self-assertiveness in the same degree, but one may expect it to come to the surface at the most unexpected moments.

Among the rather serious specific difficulties of the postconfirmation age is a false conception of the significance of confirmation. The opinion is traditional—and it has not been losing ground—that confirmation means the end of all systematic instruction in religion, that the young person leaving the altar on the day of his confirmation has a full and adequate knowledge of the Bible and has no need for further study of the truths of salvation and sanctification, and all this in spite of Heb. 5:12 to 6:2. One finds this notion of a sort of indelible character again and again. It savors of the Calvinistic idea that, if a person has once become a believer, he cannot permanently fall from grace. Perhaps it is due to this fact that many young people of the postconfirmation age underestimate the Bible as a permanent guide in all vicissitudes of life. The leader of youth, and in particular the teacher of the junior Bible class, will find that he will be obliged to meet these notions and to combat their evil effects.

How may we meet these difficulties? First, by appreciating the teaching situations of the junior Bible class. A teaching situation, unlike a teaching level, with which it is sometimes identified, takes into account all the factors which enable a teacher to fit his lesson to his audience. This includes not only the psychology of adolescents in all its ramifications but also the religious background, the home and social environments, the general cultural level, and the average I. Q. of the class. Generally speaking, a class composed of parish-school graduates may be expected to have

a larger fund of Bible history and Catechism information than a group whose members did not have the same advantages. Yet one must not jump at conclusions with regard to the interest which one may expect under such circumstances, since a smaller amount of religious information may be offset by an eagerness to learn and by a greater degree of initiative in searching the Scriptures and in applying their great truths to specific cases. The other factors referred to above are quite as important in preparing lessons for the postconfirmation Bible class. For example, rural life will give pupils a different background and different interests than urban conditions. Young people from the homes of professional people are likely to have a higher degree of general culture than those whose background is in industry and labor. While it is usually not advisable to have the class take an I. Q. test, one may be able to reach approximately the same results by means of judicious questioning. It would be difficult to judge as to the extent in which audience psychology must be regarded as a significant factor, but some such influence is at work in practically every group of Bible-class students. The size of the class also has some bearing on the teaching situation, for it may definitely rule out some methods of teaching which have been found very valuable in certain instances. For example, in a very large class the place of the individual may have to be taken by small groups of pupils, each of which will be regarded as a unit.

As for the laws of teaching and of learning, it is self-evident that these will have to be observed quite as closely in work with young adolescents as in the elementary school. In Thorndike's earlier version of the laws of learning he distinguished three groups, the Law of Use, the Law of Disuse, and the Law of Effect. He later modified these designations and also the form of these laws so as to state that the Law of Use does not merely imply that practice makes perfect, but that the response to a suggestion in teaching must be treated by the mind as affecting the situation in question, and with definite favor. In other words, only an intelligent grasping of the subject-matter concerned and a definite favorable mind-set will further the idea of learning. For that reason this Law of Use (with its opposite, the Law of Disuse) is very closely related to the Law of Effect, which means that the success of teaching depends in a large measure on the feelings of satisfaction or of annoyance in the mind of the learner. If one has a feeling of pleasure because new information has been received and new progress has been made, that fact will in itself promote the success of a lesson or a series of lessons.

Equally important, however, are the rules for teaching and learning. Even for a mere reception of information, with mere

passive thinking, the instructor must keep in mind that all forms of inhibition must be removed, initial inhibition, in the matter of presentation and language, intermediate interference, with regard to the sense avenues of approach, and terminal inhibition, in the matter of the mentality of the learner. Even in the matter of passive or receptive thinking and learning very much depends upon the proper focusing of mental powers, with the concentration most intensive with reference to fundamental points of knowledge. For learning, even on this level, does not consist in cramming uninteresting material into passively awaiting minds, but in organizing a body of knowledge in such a way as to make it usable in life situations. Still more is involved in learning which includes, and deliberately tries to cultivate, the ability to think and act in a creative manner. Here the mind should be trained to solve problems from the time that they are recognized as such and the issues are limited to the point when the evidence which has been gathered is carefully weighed and verified by reflection and application.

It stands to reason, therefore, that the teaching procedures and methods chosen by the leader will likewise be an important factor in the success of junior Bible class work. Teaching procedures, or processes, are chiefly *forms* of teaching which are put into activity in an individual lesson or in a series of lessons, while methods are the *means*, tools, or instruments of teaching, whereby processes are put into operation. Among the chief teaching procedures in the informational group are the forms which are known as inductive and deductive teaching. In *inductive* teaching we begin with a series of facts or statements of a general nature and then draw a specific conclusion, or, as we often say, we state a thesis, or a proposition, growing out of a consideration of many points. *Deductive* teaching, on the other hand, begins with a statement or proposition, and then calls upon the students to furnish proofs from their own knowledge or from data which may be available in books or other sources of information. *Inductive* teaching is largely psychological, *deductive* teaching is frequently, by way of distinction, referred to as a logical procedure. Among the chief teaching procedures in the functional group is *socialization* of the lesson or lessons. This means that the class is so conducted or organized as to have the students work in groups for mutual assistance and exchange of thought. This is customarily done thus, that the instructor, together with the class, finds and carries into execution some problems, ordinarily to be solved in a series of projects. Or we may say that problems occur in the field of doctrine and history, chiefly along topical lines, while projects are concerned with the practical application of Scripture truths and admonitions to given life situations or cases.

Among teaching methods, that is, means, tools, or instruments used in teaching, in conveying information, or in stimulating pupils to gain information, we have a fairly large variety, with some bearing such a great degree of similarity as to make them appear mere subdivisions of a group. The following methods have been used successfully in various teaching situations represented in junior Bible class work.

The lecture method is still in general use, and is occasionally employed with success, at least for some time. As its name indicates, it means the imparting of information by means of a more or less formal address or speech, which is either read *in toto*, with an open use of the manuscript, or is delivered on the basis of more or less detailed notes as used by the lecturer. There can be no question, of course, about the fact that the lecture method is economical of time and that an audience of mature people accustomed to taking notes or to follow a speaker in a well-organized discourse will derive a great deal of benefit from the use of this method. But in the case of the average Bible class for the post-confirmation age, a leader will be obliged to exert himself to the utmost, also in making use of oratorical devices, in order to maintain interest in the work. Possibly a good deal of personal magnetism may be of assistance in that case. Generally speaking, it will not be wise to employ the lecture method, especially not to the exclusion of other tools for teaching.

Some teachers advise the use of the (unmodified) *question-and-answer method* for Bible work among junior adolescents, basing their theory on the apparent success of the former *Christenlehre*, in which the newly confirmed formed the major part of the audience. In a Bible class this would mean that the teacher prepares a so-called catechization on the Bible-story or the verses which form the lesson for the day. It may be said at once that this method is likely to succeed if the teacher works out his lesson plans with a great deal of care. Very much depends on the *kind* of questions used, a chief consideration being that mere developing and fact questions be employed as little as possible, while thought-provoking questions and statements be interspersed rather freely. This will give the lesson a strongly functional character and tend to maintain interest.

This last consideration, namely, that the functional element should be prominent in Bible classes intended for juniors, deserves the earnest study of every teacher in this field. For it is only in the measure in which the pupils as a class and the individual pupil for himself are active in receiving and applying the information contained in the Word of God that the teaching is apt to be of personal value.



The *outline-discussion method* calls for a more or less detailed outline furnished by the instructor or leader (not to be confused with the lesson plan, which will contain additional points, especially as to aims, procedures, points of emphasis, etc.). Quite naturally the outline will not be a mere analysis of the lesson but will present subtopics and divisions according to the understanding of the teacher. With this outline and a Bible in the hands of every member of the class, there is usually a good possibility of going into the text in such a way as to bring specific truths to every attendant, especially if the leader is saturated with his subject and truly enthusiastic in marshaling his forces.

The *true-false statement method*, like all functional methods, requires a great deal of careful preparation; for it calls for a series of contrasting statements or questions regarding the topic or topics contained in the lesson. Every member of the class is requested to mark the statements as to their correctness or to answer orally, with the reason for the view submitted. The opinions thus expressed will naturally lead to a discussion. This will be conducted on the basis of the Word of God, for in every instance the Bible solution will form the conclusion, and this, in turn, will be suggested as the basis for action.

The successful use of the *socialized-group method* demands that the leader furnish a fairly detailed outline of the topic or the lesson to be studied, either in the form of subtopics, true-false statements, or multiple-choice questions or sentences, preferably with Bible references included in the script. The class is then divided into small groups of from three to five students each, and each group is given a few minutes (carefully timed by a watch) to find and to frame its answer. Then the entire class is called to order and the points are taken up according to the leader's plan, with the entire class offering suggestions and criticisms of the individual brief reports. Then the leader of the class will weave the individual reports and suggestions together to form a connected unit.

The *report method* is practically a variety of the previous method, for it requires that the subtopics or the statements for discussion be distributed at a previous meeting or at least a day or two preceding the meeting of the whole class, so that the speakers, with the assistance of the other members of their group, may have a more satisfactory report to present. This method is particularly effective if the leaders of the various smaller groups will meet with the leader of the entire class in order to discuss the main topic or problem from the standpoint of their contributions to the class discussion. This form of priming tends to remove

the feeling of diffidence felt by many students and often brings surprisingly good results.

A variety of the report method is the *panel-discussion method*, as it is now so extensively used in open-forum work of adult education centers. The significant factor about this method is that the chairman of the panel will be seated before the class with the other members of the panel. Either the leader of the class or the chairman of the panel will open the meeting with a short announcement of the topic of the day. He also names the subtopics (which may be distributed to all members of the class) and introduces the speaker on each section of the lesson. The discussion of the topic in all its subdivisions having been presented, the members of the panel may offer criticisms of the points brought out, or the chairman of the panel may call for further explanations of points which have not been made clear. Then the entire class takes up the discussion of the topic, especially by verifying Bible quotations used by the speakers. Under the guidance of a skilful leader this method has proved itself a most stimulating form of Bible-study.

The *problem-method* is somewhat difficult, since it requires a very comprehensive, practically an exhaustive, preparation of the lesson on the part of the leader. For it means that, after the lesson of the day is announced (either at the beginning of the hour or in a previous meeting), the members present will suggest points and difficulties which they wish to have discussed or explained. In most cases persons who have made suggestions will also be ready to state just where the difficulty lies, thus offering the leader a cue for the solution of their difficulties. Experience has shown that members of a class are usually more ready to enter upon a discussion if some one from their own midst has proposed a point requiring explanation.

Something like this method is the *parallel-passage method*. As its name implies, it calls for a listing of passages of the Bible which contain statements or thoughts either identical or similar to truths contained in the assigned lesson. This method can well be extended to include statements found in hymns, prayer-books, and other devotional material of the Church. The success of the plan will be furthered if the parallels can be listed on a blackboard before all the members of the class and, if possible, at their suggestion.

The *research method* is frankly one which can be applied in advanced classes only, after the leader has had one particular class for a number of years. It implies that the text from the Bible or the topic which has been chosen for study will be considered by a group working together, with the necessary helps

in the line of dictionaries, cyclopedias, atlases, concordances, commentaries, and maps, every member contributing to the best of his or her ability. This method may be used in particular in seminars, with every member of the class working on his section of the problem that is being studied. The leader has the task of coordinating the work of the various members of the class, so that all those in attendance may follow the solution with profit.

The *case method*, which has but lately received some attention, will also test the ingenuity of the leader, especially if the lesson is exclusively or strongly doctrinal in character. For it requires the presentation of a case or situation taken from life (if no story of the Bible is available for that purpose), naturally with the identity of the participating persons completely hidden or fictitious persons introduced. The life situation having been presented, the problem is stated in the form of one or more questions, and the entire class is guided in referring to the Bible for the right answer. The method is very much like that employed for quite a number of years in the so-called open forums of our summer conferences. Topics which may be treated are "Religion and Industry," "Capital and Labor in the Light of the Word of God," "The Christian in Politics," "A Changing Social Order," "The Modern Dance," "Marriage with Unbelievers," "The Drink Evil of Our Day," etc. As stated above, topics or cases of this kind may be worked out also in the doctrinal field.

It may be well to remember that the Bible should be the text-book and tool in every Bible hour. In other words, the attention of the members of the class should not be distracted from the Bible itself either by outlines which reprint the text of the Bible or by individual lesson plans prepared with the intention of fitting every conceivable teaching situation, rural and urban, with parish-school background or with no religious background whatever. *Helps should be helps only*, and outlines furnished in the form of leaflets, pamphlets, and books should contain only suggestions for the selection of subject-matter and the arrangement of subdivisions, possibly also helps from the field of history, archeology, and other extraneous sources. With such outlines to guide him, every teacher of Bible-study, especially of a junior Bible class, should work out his own lesson plans to fit his particular teaching situation. It is usually not possible for young David to don the armor of Saul, and frequently it is not advisable for a Bible class leader to use the lesson plans worked out by another man, unless the necessary changes are made, to adapt the plan to actual teaching needs. A Bible class teacher has a personal ministry for the needs of his individual parish or group, and canned lesson plans, unless judiciously used, will not be in agreement with the activity concept.

In conclusion, we briefly refer to other Bible-class situations which must be taken into account as they are found in various congregations, in order that leaders may prepare lesson plans in keeping with their particular local requirements.

The general difficulties presented by the *senior Bible class* consist chiefly in the distractions due to their establishing themselves in life, for many of the young people of both sexes during these years are bending every effort toward getting and holding a good job with an income that will suffice for their needs and something more. This frequently means a multiplicity of interests, since the establishing of proper connections in business requires a great deal of nerve force. Besides, many young church members are connected with various forms of church activities, such as the Walther League, Sunday-school teaching, choir work, and many other activities for which the energy of youth is required. Among the specific difficulties connected with middle and late adolescence in our congregations we frequently note a false security, connected with satiety, since the young people are apt to regard the stock of information acquired in school, Sunday-school, confirmation instruction, and junior Bible class as sufficient for life and hence do not appreciate the need of constant growth in grace and in knowledge. Occasionally one finds a belated outbreak of skepticism, which may culminate in an antagonism against the truth learned in the children's catechumen class. The solution of these difficulties, general as well as specific, lies mainly in an open, sympathetic, constructive discussion of the problems that cause the trouble. To this ought to be added the right training for leadership positions, for many a young person has the talent but requires sound coaching. And very much depends upon the use of proper functional methods of teaching, as described above, in order to develop initiative and intelligent self-activity.

In many smaller congregations, especially in rural communities, where the groups are smaller, the only possible class to be considered is the *mixed Bible class*, that is, one whose members are recruited from all classes of the communicant membership, young and old, well-indoctrinated and with little more than the minimum knowledge of the way of salvation. This fact immediately suggests the chief general difficulties, namely, different age levels and varying degrees of experience. The difficulties of the situation are aggravated by the fact that the peculiarities of each age level are apt to be viewed with impatience by members of other age levels. To these difficulties must be added the specific obstacles offered by the garrulousness and forwardness, the extrovert attitude, which may be found in one group or on one level, while on the other there may be a reticence born of introversion.

One danger is always rather prominent, namely, that open-forum discussions will not be of equal interest to all participants, a condition which may cause some members of the class to lose interest entirely. The solution in this case is found by fitting the teaching to two or more levels, chiefly by lesson plans carefully arranged. Frequently also there must be a combination of informational and functional methods. All in all, this type of class calls for the most careful preparation.

In the *men's Bible class* the general difficulties will ordinarily be found in the show of diffidence, and possibly even fear, of speaking in public, even when the majority of members attended school at approximately the same time, for the laboring man is inclined to feel abashed in the presence of the professional man and even of the business man and the artisan. Hence we may expect inarticulateness and incoherence on the part of the great majority in attendance. These difficulties suggest the solution, namely, that the leader use the most practical approach consistent with the ultimate doctrinal aim of the discussions. To this end functional methods must be employed which emphasize problems of daily life in their doctrinal setting.

As for the *women's Bible class*, the general difficulties are approximately the same as those in men's classes. Among the specific difficulties are timidity and diffidence on the part of the majority of women in attendance, no matter how glibly they express themselves on other subjects. By way of contrast trouble may sometimes threaten on account of the extrovert tendencies on the part of some of the people in attendance who are more facile in their ability to express themselves. In the majority of cases the solution will be found in the use of functional, cooperative methods, although an occasional lecture on one of the more difficult topics of the course may be thankfully received. Each class will require individual study and a great measure of wisdom in applying the Word of God to the specific field of women's difficulties.

P. E. KRETZMANN

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## Antichristian Teachings of Rosicrucianism

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### 1

Among the many "cunningly devised fables" (cf. 2 Pet. 1:16) which false prophets are spreading with unholy assiduity to injure the kingdom of Christ, those of modern Rosicrucianism easily rank among the first, both in insidiousness and in perniciousness.

Though perhaps this grossly antichristian movement will never