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CD 552 Christian Education Seminar: Adult Ministry

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CD 552 Christian Education Seminar: Adult Ministry

One Hour Credit

February 28 – March 1, 2003

Nurturing the Church's Hidden Treasure: Ministry with Senior Adults

Janet M. Peifer, Dmin., Instructor

Catherine Stonehouse, Professor of Record

SCHEDULE

- Session I (Friday - 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.)
Session II (Friday - 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.)
Session III (Saturday - 9:00 - 12 noon)
Session IV (Saturday - 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.)

Welcome to CD 552: Nurturing the Church's Hidden Treasure: Ministry with Senior Adults

I trust that this seminar will be a meaningful, formative experience for you. Be sure to note the pre-seminar assignments and the due date for the post-seminar assignments.

If you have any questions prior to the seminar contact Cathy Stonehouse by email or at 2117.

COURSE FOCUS

During the seminar participants will explore:

- * Biblical mandates for an adequate response to the elderly
- * Demographics of aging and the affect on congregational life
- * Ministry by and with Senior Adults; intergenerational involvement and ministry; need for lifelong learning
- * Ministry to Senior Adults; Visiting in the Nursing Home; ministry to those living alone or with family; addressing needs of caregivers of older adults
- * Loss and Grief Issues of Older Adults
- * Understanding the Aging Process and its Many Challenges
- * Meeting the spiritual needs of those affected by dementia and cognitive loss
- * A review of what various denominational groups are doing to address the aging phenomenon

ASSIGNMENTS

For this one credit hour seminar you will invest 12 hours in the seminar and an additional 36 hours in the assignments listed below, for a total of 48 hours.

Reading

Gallagher, David P. *Senior Adult Ministry in the 21st Century: Step by Step Strategies for Reaching People Over 50*. Group Publishing, 2002. (160 pages)

Gentzler, Richard H., Jr. and Donald F. Clingan. *Aging: God's Challenge to Church and Synagogue*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1996. (121 pages plus appendices)

Koenig, Harold G. and Tracy and Betty Lamar. *A Gospel for the Mature Years: Finding Fulfillment by Knowing and Using Your Gifts*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 1997. (139 pages)

Booklet published by The Alzheimer's Association titled, "A Guide for Clergy." (To be handed out at the seminar.)

CoursePack: CD 552 Christian Education Sem. Senior Adults

(Unless otherwise noted assigned read materials may be purchased from the bookstore.)

Pre-Seminar Assignments

1. **Reading:** Complete the reading of:

Gallagher, David P. *Senior Adult Ministry in the 21st Century: Step by Step Strategies for Reaching People Over 50*. Group Publishing, 2002.

Articles in the CoursePack

2. **Conversation with a Senior Adult:** Choose one senior adult over 75 years of age and arrange to spend 2 hours with him or her. Begin with some comfortable chatting and then use the **Spiritual Life Review** form from page 5 of this syllabus to direct the conversation. In the conversation be respectful, not forcing the person to respond to questions with which they are not comfortable. After your conversation, make notes to use in your course paper to be written after the seminar.

If you do not have a senior adult friend, your church might help you identify someone with whom to visit. Or you could contact Dana Davis at Ddavis@wvillage.org or at 858-3013, Ext. 236. Dana is the Activities Director at Wesley Village and, on a first come first serve bases, she will connect you with someone in Wesley Village. Call and arrange for

your visit with the senior adult well in advance of the seminar. Seniors often have busy schedules and may not be available on short notice.

3. Pastoral Care Reflection Paper: Review the following situations. Select **one** situation and **write a 2-3 page paper** discussing what steps you would take to provide pastoral care for the person or persons described.

a) An elderly parishioner is grieving over the sudden death of her husband to whom she was married 60+ years. She dreads coming to church for the first time alone. She has entirely too much time on her hands and is feeling lonely and deserted.

b) A 98 year-old female member of your congregation lives in a nearby nursing facility and can no longer ambulate, her sight and hearing are impaired. She had been an active and appreciated leader in both the congregation and at the retirement community in prior years. She asks you, "Why am I still here? Has the Lord forgotten to take me home? I'm no good to anyone any more."

c) A couple in your congregation is caring for the wife's 85-year old mother who lives with them. In addition, the husband's 90-year old father lives in a nursing facility about 50 miles away, but requires frequent visits since the husband is an only child and is the primary contact person for the health care decisions of his father. Both the husband and wife have full-time jobs; live from week to week in a state of near exhaustion, and have little time to give to their own relationship or to spend with their two adult children and three grandchildren who live nearby.

d) An 82-year old member of your church who lives alone in her own home is showing signs of severe emotional stress, as reported to you by one of her church friends. (Signs include not getting adequate sleep, not eating well, crying for a couple hours each day, and no longer having interest in the church and the activities in which she had been quite actively involved). When you called her on the phone having noticed her absence for several worship services, she said, "I think my family and the church would be better off without me. I'm tired of living." When you visit her later in the week, she begins crying uncontrollably and in between her sobs she tells you a sad tale of her life as a child and how she was repeatedly abused emotionally and sexually.

e) A 75-year old couple started attending your congregation about six months ago. They moved to your area to be closer to their children. They were active leaders in their former congregation. When your congregation went through the process of asking church members to fill a variety of Christian Education and volunteer ministry positions, no one inquired of the interests and abilities of this new couple. When you were in their home for a pastoral visit, they asked you if older adults were asked to serve in leadership positions. You learned in this visit that while they appreciated the worship services and the various gatherings planned for church members of all ages, they would be looking for another church if they could not utilize their ministry gifts in this congregation.

(Note: These situations will be addressed in class discussions throughout the seminar. Having thought about one of these situations ahead of time will enhance the group discussion).

Post-Seminar Assignments

1. **Reading:** Complete the assigned readings.
2. **Paper:** Write a 5-10 page paper that includes the following three sections:
 - a) **Senior Adults in My World**
Research what your church, community and the seminary are doing to minister with senior adults.
In the paper discuss:
 - What factors show that the aging phenomenon is being addressed
 - What factors show that the aging phenomenon is being ignored or overlooked
 - b) **Insights from a Senior Adult**
Review your pre-seminar conversation with the older adult.
Discuss the older adult's life and the experience of spending time with him/her.
 - c) **Hopes for the Future**
Based on what you have learned from this seminar, respond to the following statement:
"When I am eighty, what I hope my church will do for me..."
"When I am eighty, what I hope I can contribute to my church"

The sections of the paper may be presented as three essays or you may weave the discussions together as an integrate paper.

The paper is to be typed, double-spaced and use 12 point type.

With your paper submit the following:

A report of the hours you invested in this course (A total of 48 hours, including the seminar hours, is required).

A report of the reading completed.

The final paper and reports are due **April 14 2003**.

Send them to: Cathy Stonehouse, SPO 799.

Conversation Guide

I. Context and Setting of Your Background

1. Where you were born; year of birth; Age/circumstances when experiencing the Great Depression (1929)
Name persons in your family of origin in order of birth
2. Religious and social class identifications in your family; how they have stayed the same or have changed over the years
3. What you were taught by your family, both in word and actions, about being godly or spiritual
Name ways your family practiced their faith/spirituality
4. List memories which make you feel good about your family of origin
Name things which disappoint you about your family

II. Significant Others in Your Life

1. Name the persons who have been most influential in your faith/spiritual development and how they were influential
2. Name a hero, favorite saint or biblical character/Bible story
3. Name writers or figures in history that are important to your understanding of faith
4. Name a favorite hymn or religious song; favorite scripture or religious writing

III. Spiritual Journey

1. Name one or more experiences that were turning points in your relationship to God
2. Name and describe two times in your life when you felt closest to God; two times when you felt farthest from God
3. Describe how you feel about God at this time in your life; how you think God feels about you
4. Describe religious practices which are important to your faith/spiritual journey
5. Name things you would change about your past, if you could; name one thing you wish you could change about yourself now
8. Describe what the future looks like to you; what you dread; what you look forward to
9. Describe what gives your life meaning and purpose now and gives you a reason to get up in the morning

IV. Theological Themes

1. Describe how hope was/is renewed in you when you were/are most discouraged/depressed
2. Identify why some people suffer more than others
3. Name feelings you have when you think about death and dying
4. Describe what you believe was God's purpose for creating humankind; what God's purpose for you is
5. Name things you do not understand about God or your faith