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# CD 510: Foundations in Christian Discipleship

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## Recommended Citation

Marmon, Ellen L., "CD 510: Foundations in Christian Discipleship" (2005). *Syllabi*. Book 821.  
<http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi/821>

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# CD 510: Foundations in Christian Discipleship

## Provisional Syllabus

Fall 2005

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*My purpose is that [believers] may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

-- Colossians 2:2-3

### **Course Description (highlights on our journey)**

CD 510 explores the roles and responsibilities of the local church Christian Education Director/Minister of Discipleship, for "equipping of the saints," including foundational preparation in Scripture; theory and practice in training teachers; program planning, with special focus on nurturing, facilitating, administering and coordinating the church's educational/discipleship lay leaders and ministries.

### **Course Objectives (targets I aim for you to hit)**

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

1. Articulate biblical/theological principles that provide the foundation for disciple making ministries.
2. Understand God's creation-design for human development and learning.
3. Design incarnational models of ministry that provide structures for discipleship (evangelism, teaching, and nurture).
4. Provide a contextual analysis of the church or parachurch institution and community.
5. Demonstrate a commitment to servant leadership that equips and empowers others according to their unique differences (gender, age, culture), gifts and calling.
6. Orchestrate an ongoing pattern of planning-action-evaluation for ministry effectiveness and faithfulness.
7. Exemplify a commitment to a life of personal integrity and spiritual growth through weekly practice of spiritual disciplines and journaling.

## **Required Textbooks (reading that forms and informs)**

- *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-first Century*, Michael J. Anthony, ed.
- *Making Disciples: Faith Formation in the Wesleyan Tradition*, Sondra Higgins Matthaei
- *Creative Ministry*, Henri Nouwen – Chapters 1 and 4
- *Patterns in Moral Development*, Catherine M. Stonehouse.
- "Learning from Gender Differences," Catherine M. Stonehouse
- *A Many Colored Kingdom*, Conde-Frazier, Kang, & Parrett
- *Spiritual Preparation for Christian Leadership*, Glenn Hinson

### **One of the following:**

**Note: Do not purchase your book from this list until you meet with your Age-Level Ministries Team the first week of class**

*Rediscovering the Sunday School*, Talmadge Johnson and Stan Toler  
(Focus: All ages)

*Children in the Worshiping Community*, David Ng and Virginia Thomas  
(Focus: Children)

*Young Children and Worship*, Sonja Stewart and Jerome Berryman  
(Focus: Children)

*Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students: A Guide for Youth Workers, Pastors, Teachers, and Campus Ministers*, Richard R. Dunn  
(Focus: Youth, College)

*Family the Forming Center*, Marjorie J. Thompson  
(Focus: Young Adults)

*Disciple Making Teachers: How to Equip Adults for Growth and Action*, Josh Hunt  
(Focus: Adult)

*Boomers, Xers, and Other Strangers: Understanding the Generational Differences that Divide Us*, Rick and Kathy Hicks  
(Focus: Adult)

*Giving the Ministry Away: Empowering Single Adults for Effective Leadership*, Hershey, Butler, & Hurst  
(Focus: Single adults)

*Another Country, Navigating the Emotion Terrain of our Elders*, Mary Pipher  
(Focus: Older Adults)

*Soul Stories: African American Christian Education*, Anne Streaty Wimberly  
(Focus: Youth/ Adult multicultural)

## Recommended Reading

- *How People Grow, What the Bible Reveals about Spiritual Growth*, Cloud & Townsend
- *In The Name of Jesus, Reflections on Christian Leadership*, H. Nouwen
- *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, Nouwen
- *Giving The Ministry Away*, Hershey (NAVPRESS: geared for single adults, but this is an excellent resource for developing leadership in laity, single or not)
- *The Overload Syndrome*, R. Swenson, M.D.

## Course Assignments

### Theology (Basic Beliefs) of Discipling Ministry (15 points)

We need to start with the “why?” behind ministry; otherwise we end up with lots of nice programs to keep busy people busier. Therefore, you will draw from the first two units of this course, in a 5-8 paged paper. Articulate your Theology of Discipleship by integrating biblical convictions (ultimately), theological beliefs, and social science understandings (secondarily).

#### Grading Criteria:

- Attention given to the “WHY?” of discipleship
- Significance of biblical/theological understandings
- Grasp of relevant social science insights
- Scope of the discipling theology
- Quality of the writing

### Book Looks (5 points)

You will write 2 paragraphs highlighting 1) key insights from and 2) application of five following required books for the class:

- *Creative Ministry*, Henri Nouwen – Chapters 1 and 4
- *Patterns in Moral Development*, Catherine M. Stonehouse.
- "Learning from Gender Differences," Catherine M. Stonehouse
- *A Many Colored Kingdom*, Conde-Frazier, Kang, & Parrett
- *Introducing Christian Education*, Anthony

The first paragraph describes 3-5 major insights from the book. In the second paragraph write about one application you could put into place in ministry or your personal life. Due dates are provided in the weekly syllabus.

#### Grading Criteria:

- Contains both insights and application

## Two Integrative Papers (20 points)

These assignments help you make connections between biblical foundations, theory, and experience.

### 1. Due September 28 (5 Points)

#### A. Reflect on your spiritual journey

- What influences have played a significant role in your discipling?
- What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the discipling you have received?
- How does your spiritual journey relate to John Wesley's description of the Way of Salvation?
- Where can you see God's prevenient grace at work in your story?

#### B. As you think of discipling others:

- What role will you give to Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as you assist others in "doing theology"?
- What aspects of a Wesleyan view of persons impress you as being most important for effective discipling, and why?

### Grading Criteria

Significance of reflections on personal experiences of being disciplined  
Grasp of Wesleyan perspectives

Be sure to address each section of the questions and include in your response several points that relate to each grading criterion. Your paper is to be no more than 2 1/2 - 3 pages, typed, double spaced, and documented when drawing ideas from readings or class notes. Use 12 point type.

### 2. Due November 16 (15 Points)

You came to Grace Church in June two years ago. After observing Vacation Bible School for two summers you decided that a change in curriculum is needed. A dedicated group of women and men have led vacation Bible school for the past 5 years; they love working together and want to lead the VBS again next summer. Each year they order materials from a certain publisher without looking at other possibilities. VBS is one of the church's main means of outreach to the community. You believe there are more creative resources available that will provide more significant learning experiences for the children. A church across town used one of the resources

you would like your leaders to consider. Their pastor excitedly told you about their experience and showed you a video of their VBS in action.

- Use Everett Rogers' paradigm as a guide for identifying elements necessary in the change
- Process and develop an action plan for leading your VBS leaders in considering, and adopting new curriculum resources for next summer's VBS, as well as using this leadership team more effectively.
- Briefly explain which aspect of Rogers' paradigms is implemented by each step in your action plan. Your plans should implement insights from Everett Rogers' paradigm of the Innovation-decision Process, and may reflect approaches from the Collective Innovation-decision-making Process, or the Authority Innovation-decision-making Process discussed in class.

#### Grading Criteria

Understanding of Rogers' paradigms

Ability to plan workable strategies based on theory and the situation

Be sure to address each section of the questions and include in your response several points that relate to each grading criterion. Your paper is to be no more than 2 1/2 - 3 pages, typed, double spaced, and documented when drawing ideas from readings or class notes. Use 12 point type.

#### **Spiritual Formation Journal (15 points)**

Most of the books on leadership tell us to use 10 infallible rules or tools that will equip us to gain loyal followers. We'll be effective, efficient, goal-driven, and winsome. Scripture gives us a great variety of leadership styles to learn from, but the underlying principles of leadership reflect the nature of a servant who is in a vital relationship with God. That's why we're using Glenn Hinson's book to explore aspects of leadership in ministry.

Each week, we'll devote some time in class to highlight the assigned chapter. In addition we'll practice some of the disciplines he describes, reflect on them by journaling weekly. You will reflect on the meaning of that chapter to you, where you are right now. You'll turn eleven into on **December 7**.

### **Age-Level Ministry Plan in Teams (25 points)**

The Age-Level Ministry Team project sets the stage for you to think and plan with your colleagues and share practical applications of the concepts and ideas being explored in this course. Jump right in, contribute your ideas, and learn from others. Make this more than an academic requirement. As a team you can experience discernment through Christian community and develop a creative plan that could make a difference in the lives of your church family.

Form a 5-6 member team and submit a list of your group members to me by **September 12 (e-mail)**. Within the first two weeks of the semester, meet to organize and take on specific responsibilities. You'll work on the following two assignments.

#### **A. Book Summary (5 Points)**

Each group member will select a different book from the "select one" section of the reading list (p.2), corresponding to the age-level discipling plan you will develop.

You will prepare a one-page summary of key insights from the selected book you read and lead them in a brief discussion of your book's major concepts. Spend a minimum of 20 minutes discussing each book. In the Course Schedule, note the dates by which the books are to be completed. On the due date listed for your specific book in our weekly syllabus, **give me a copy of your one-page "summary of key insights" and the date when the group discussed your book.**

Grading Criteria: Clarity and Significance of insights identified

#### **B. Age-Level Discipling Plan (20 Points) - Due November 30**

Sondra Matthaai, in *Making Disciples*, states, "To be Christian in the language of the Wesleyan tradition means having a 'living faith' made evident through love of God and neighbor, **a living faith that continues to grow across a lifetime**" (p. 38). She also endeavors to set forth "a Wesleyan ecology of faith formation, an interconnecting network of **relationships, structures, and practices** that [constitute] an environment for nurturing and sustaining a holy life in communion with God and others" (p. 35).

How can we, in our churches, provide an environment in which persons come to and grow in that living faith described above? That's what Christian discipleship is all about.

As an age-level ministry team you will **develop a discipling plan for a church**. Your goal in this project is to integrate the insights of this course and additional research each group member will do, into a discipling plan that will “serve the present age,” to use Charles Wesley’s words (Hymn: A Charge to Keep I Have). Each group member will research and develop the plan for one age group, 3-4 pages in length.

Each age-level plan will grow out of:

- Insights from *Making Disciples* by Sondra Higgins Matthaai
- Insights from the “Select One” books
- Discoveries from other course materials
- Additional literature research
- Research of what churches are doing
- Reflections on realities and needs of the twenty first century church
- Your own ministry experiences

Also your group will provide a 1-2 page introduction and conclusion that highlight the discipling goals and key principles implemented throughout the plan. Combine the introduction and age-level plans into a team document that is **not more than 20 pages, double-spaced**.

### **Here’s the game plan**

#### 1. Forming the team

- Within the first two weeks of the semester meet to organize your group work. Decide which book from the “Select One” list (p. 2) each person will read.
- Select the person who will develop the plan for:
  - Children: birth to 5 years plus their parents
  - Children: 6-12 years of age
  - Students: middle school, high school, college
  - Younger adults: 20s through the 30s
  - Middle adults: 40s-60s
  - Senior Adults: 65-90s
- Decide how to lead the group process and write the introduction and conclusion sections.
- Set meeting times outside of class for discussing the selected books.



2. Read and reflect on Matthaëi pages 11-98

- Identify what you believe to be the 3-6 most important insights from the reading.
- How and why are these insights important in the discipling of your assigned age group?
- In a group meeting, share the insights you identified and their importance to your age group.
- From other course readings and class sessions collect insights on discipling for your age group.

3. Each group member will do research beyond the course materials.

- Conduct literature research in at least one additional source.
- Research what two churches offer for the age group you chose to study.
  - Observe the church ministries for your age group and talk with those who lead the discipling ministries for them (staff and laity).
  - What **relationships, structures, and practices** are present to nurture the faith of your assigned age group?
  - Which relationships, structures, and practices discussed by Matthaëi are present? Which are missing?
  - Which relationships, structures, and practices are most important for your assigned age group?
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses you see in the church's discipling ministry?
  - Does this ministry operate out of a vision (mission) statement? If so, attach a copy to your final report.

4. Develop a discipling plan for your assigned age level. Design specific plans to implement the insights from *Making Disciples* by Sondra Higgins Matthaëi and other discoveries from course materials, additional reading, church research, and your ministry experience. **The plans should grow out of biblical convictions and reflect the realities and needs in the contemporary church.**

- What would ministry for your age group look like if it provided relationships, structures, and practices that nurture a living faith?
- Make your plans specific enough that a lay minister could work with them to develop an improved or new ministry for the age group.
- You may want to suggest implementing some plans immediately and beginning others later -be reasonable regarding how many new things a volunteer team can handle at one time.

- In each age level plan cite at least 2 course texts, one additional resource, and your church research (list the specific churches you studied).

5. Write your plan in a 3-4 page paper, double-spaced, and submit it to the group at least by **November 2**. Read each contribution and give constructive feedback. Then prepare your group paper by refining the age level sections, writing the introduction and conclusion and forming them into one coherent paper. **At end of the paper indicate who wrote each section and who led the group process. Due November 30.**

### Grading Criteria

- Integration of course concepts into the plan
- Significance of relationships, structures, and practices identified for each age group
- Practical insights from church research
- Scope of the plan

### **Basic Beliefs: Creative Presentation (20 Points)**

Working from your class notes and Bible study throughout the semester, develop 10-12 statements that capture your basic beliefs about faithful, effective discipleship/Christian Education. These statements should be significant convictions (values, principles) that grow out of biblical and theological foundations.

Develop a creative, 10-minute presentation of your Basic Beliefs statements to share with others, such as your congregation, lay leadership team, or Christian education staff. Any written copy for the presentation should not exceed 1000 words (4 pages, double-spaced). Include a statement identifying the audience you're targeting and the purpose of your presentation in that context.

Begin early to think about the creative medium you might use. We will brainstorm ideas in class. If you choose to develop visuals for the presentation, contact Information Services to borrow video, digital, or 35 mm cameras. You may use the library computer lab for editing videos.

On **December 14** you will share your presentation with three other classmates and turn it in to me. You can submit the project to me on a computer disc for power point presentations, video, or in hard copy forms.

## Grading Criteria

- Clarity of statements
- Biblical foundations
- Significance of belief statements
- Breadth of belief statements
- Creativity of the presentation

Your Creative Presentation is due on **December 14**.

## **Grading Criteria**

You'll find the following descriptions on p. 29 of your *ATS Academic Catalog, 2004-2006*:

A = exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives

B = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

C = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives

D = Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives

F = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

I'll calculate your course grade based on a 100-point scale:

95 - A

80 - B-

90 - A -

77.5 - C+

85 - B+

75 - C

82.5 - B

72.5 - C-

## **Incomplete Work**

The official end of each term is 4:00 pm on the last day of the examination schedule. This hour is the deadline for handing in all course work. Each instructor may set an earlier deadline for submission of any or all course work. The student must petition the faculty person involved and the student's advisor for permission to receive an "I" at the end of a semester. **A grade of "I" denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment.** If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F" (p. 29, 2004-2006 Academic Catalog).

Note: You'll receive a detailed, weekly schedule with due dates on the first day of class.