

# **Resources for Catechism and Faith Exploration:** **Including Mennonite History, Theology, Doctrine and Contemporary Life**

Everything on this list is available at the Conference Resource Library  
316-283-6300 [crlib@mennowdc.org](mailto:crlib@mennowdc.org) on line catalog: [www.mennowdc.org](http://www.mennowdc.org)

**Note:** here is a great pool of resources that could be used in a variety of settings – instruction, discussion, journaling, retreats, and worship. Many of these resources have amazing bibliographies of articles, books, DVD's and web sites!

**List compiled by Marlene Bogard, WDC Minister of Christian Formation and  
Resource Library Director, January, 2015.**

## **Books:**

*Ask Third Way Café: 50 common and quirky questions about Mennonites.* By Jodi Nisly Hertzler; Cascadia, 2009.

*The Mennonite Handbook.* Herald Press; 2007.

*How to Teach Peace to Children.* By Anne Meyer Byler; Herald Press, 2003.

*What is an Anabaptist Christian?* By Palmer Becker; Missio Dei, No. 18, Mennonite Mission Network. (Google for a pdf version.)

*Why I Am a Conscientious Objector.* By John M. Drescher; Herald Press, 1982.

*An Introduction to Mennonite History: a popular history of the Anabaptists and the Mennonites.* By C. J. Dyck; Herald Press, 1993.

*Spiritual Life in Anabaptism.* By C. J. Dyck; Herald Press, 1995.

*Prayer Book for Earnest Christians: a spiritually rich Anabaptist resource.* Translated & edited by Leonard Gross; Herald Press, 1996.

*The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision.* By Guy Hershberger; Herald Press, 1957.

*On Fire for Christ: stories of Anabaptist Martyrs.* By Dave and Neta Jackson; Herald Press, 1989.

*Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant.* By Walter Klaassen; Conrad Press, 1981.

*The Upside-Down Kingdom.* By Donald Kraybill; Herald Press, 2003.

*Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger: the MCC Experience.* By Robert Kreider and Rachel Waltner Goossen; Herald Press, 1988.

*Praying With the Anabaptists: the secret of bearing fruit.* By Marlene Kropf and Eddy Hall; Faith and Life Press, 1984.

*But Why Don't We Go To War?* By Susan Mark Landis; Herald Press, 1993.

*Why I Am a Mennonite: essays on Mennonite identity.* Edited by Harry Loewen; Herald Press, 1988.

*No Permanent City: stories from Mennonite history and life.* By Harry Loewen; Herald Press, 1993.

*Why I am a Mennonite: essays on Mennonite Identity.* Edited by Harry Loewen; Herald Press, 1988.

*Anabaptist Portraits.* By John Allen Moore; Herald Press, 1984.

*By Birth or By Choice: who can become a Mennonite?* By Martha Denlinger Stahl; Herald Press, 1987.

*Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.* Herald Press, 1995.

***Hymnal: A Worship Book.*** Herald Press and Faith & Life Press, 1992.

***Mirror of the Martyrs: stories of courage, inspiringly retold, of 16th century Anabaptists who gave their lives for their faith.*** By John S. Oyer and Robert S. Kreider; Good Books, 1990.

***Beliefs: Mennonite Faith and Practice.*** By John D. Roth; Herald Press, 2004.

***Practices: Mennonite Worship and Witness.*** By John D. Roth; Herald Press, 2009.

***Stories: How Mennonites Came to Be.*** By John D. Roth; Herald Press, 2006.

***The Anabaptists are Back! True stories of folks who take Anabaptist peacemaking seriously.*** By Duane Ruth-Heffelbower; Herald Press, 1991.

***Joining the Army That Sheds no Blood.*** By Susan Clemmer Steiner; Herald Press, 1992.

***Welcome! : a biblical and practical guide to receiving new members.*** By Ervin Stutzman; Herald Press, 1990.

***What Mennonites Believe.*** By J. C. Wenger; Herald Press, 1991.

***Catechesis*** edition of in *Vision: a journal for church and theology*. Includes 14 articles on Catechism and Faith Exploration written by pastors and professors. V.4 No. 2. Fall 2003. Institute of Mennonite Studies, AMBS.

## **DVD:**

***The Quickest Ever DVD Guide to Anabaptists and their Values.*** Mennonite Health Services Alliance, 2009. 4 minutes.

***The Radicals.*** Based on the Myron Augsburger book, *Pilgrim Aflame*, the story of the Michael and Margaretha Sattler and the early Anabaptists in 1525. 99 minutes.

***Cloud of Witnesses: Extending our lives; facing the powers; rediscovering Anabaptism.*** Three depictions of thriving Anabaptist communities around the world along with stories of past faithful witness to Christ. Study guide is included for each program. Extending our lives - Christians in Bolivia and Brazil, with Martyr's Mirror story of Joost Jossten. Facing the Powers - Christians in Ghana, Benin, Ivory Coast and Liberia, with Martyr's Mirror story of Elizabeth and Hadewijk. Rediscovering Anabaptism - Christians in England with Martyr's Mirror story of Nellekin Jasper. MennoMedia, Each session runs about an hour.

***Who are the Mennonites: a 15 minute look at the history and beliefs of Mennonites.*** An introduction to the history, beliefs and practices that define Mennonites in a down-to-earth, easy-to-understand fashion. Mennonite Church USA, 2010.

## **Curriculums:**

***Claim(ing) Faith: youth discover the Confession of Faith.*** MennoMedia, 2013.

Invites youth and their leaders to explore, discover and claim faith through an Anabaptist/Mennonite lens. Using the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective as the starting point, youth will explore the hard questions of faith and discover what it means to live a life of discipleship. 10 sessions include both print and video component.

***Via: Exploring the Way of Christ.*** Faith and Life Resources, 2009. Available in Spanish and English. Via is for those who are new to the church and who may know nothing of the

Bible or of Christian faith. Eight sessions introduce people to the basics of Christian faith from an Anabaptist perspective, in the context of a supportive group of other discoverers. Considered a Pre-Catechism curriculum.

***God's Story, Our Story: Exploring Christian Faith and Life.*** By Michele Hershberger; MennoMedia, 2013. Addresses essential issues of Christian faith through an engaging survey of the biblical story and sidebars containing real conversations from believers of all ages. Suitable for group or individual study. A companion piece to ***Making Disciples.***

***Making Disciples: Preparing People for Baptism, Christian Living, and Church Membership.*** By April Yamasaki; Faith and Life Resources, 2003. This practical guide helps pastors and other church leaders invite, instruct, baptize and follow-up with new members. Includes an adaptable 10-session study plan linked with ***God's Story, Our Story*** and the ***Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.***

***Adventures with the Anabaptists.*** By Jeanne Grieser and Carol Duerksen; Faith and Life Resources, 2001. Introduces youth to the events and personalities of the radical reformers of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. The 10-session study, written for teachers and including reproducible sheets, brings history to life, relating it to the contemporary issues youth face. Includes skits, quizzes, reflection, bible study, teaching on basic beliefs and the Schleithem Confession. It is adaptable for both senior and junior high youth, and in a variety of settings.

***Faith For the Journey: Youth Explore the Confession of Faith.*** By Ann Weber Becker; Faith and Life Press, 1997. There is a session on each article of from the Confession. Could be used as a core study for catechism or a framework from which to build discussion, study and journaling.

***Through Fire and Water: an overview of Mennonite History.*** By Harry Loewen, Steven Nolt, Carol Duerksen and Elwood Yoder; Herald Press, 1996. This was written as a textbook for Mennonite High School students. Study guide available on line at: [www.mph.org/studygds/](http://www.mph.org/studygds/)

***Begin Anew / Empezar de Nuevo.*** Mennonite Church by Palmer Becker; Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, 2014. A 16-session series of studies to make **adult** disciples in small groups and congregations. Based on the idea that Christianity is a combination of believing, belonging, becoming, and behaving, this discipleship resource is for anyone interested in growing in Christian faith from an Anabaptist perspective, regardless of their background or previous church experience.

## Websites:

<http://resources.mennoniteusa.org/about/confession-of-faith-in-a-mennonite-perspective-1995/> Mennonite Confession of Faith

[www.mennoniteusa.org](http://www.mennoniteusa.org) Mennonite Church USA

[www.thirdway.com](http://www.thirdway.com) Third Way Media

[www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org) Mennonite Central Committee

[www.gameo.org](http://www.gameo.org) Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia On-line

<http://thejesusevent.com/what-are-anabaptists/>

<https://garethbrandt.wordpress.com/>

<http://resources.mennonitechurch.ca/ResourceView/48/12235> youtube.com intro to Anabaptists from Australia.

## Multiple Approaches to Learning:

***Faith Talk Cards.*** [www.vibrantfaith.org](http://www.vibrantfaith.org). This handy pack of 200 cards features a question or story prompt to encourage sharing about a particular aspect of faith or church. I recommend one copy for your church library. Wonderful for beginning a committee meeting, jumpstarting discussion with youth or adults, taking on a road trip.

***Journal.*** Give each youth a new journal as they begin Catechism. Have them fill it up with quotes, doodles, questions. Invite them to respond to a question or case study that you pose each week.

***Spiritual Retreat.*** Spend time at a camp or retreat center, with no technology. Dig deep into Bible study, spend time in silence, pray in new ways, and reflect on Christian discipleship journeys.

***Mentor or Conversation Partner.*** Pair each youth up with an adult in the congregation with whom they can have a trusted relationship during Catechism. If they already have a relationship with a mentor, this might be the time to breathe new life and energy into that connection. This person should be someone who has the ability to be transparent in their own faith and be able to pray for and with the youth. Provide assignment / discussion topics.

***Parent-Youth Retreat.*** *Partners in Nurture: a retreat during preparation for baptism.* By Marlene Bogard. This retreat is included in *Soul Care: how to plan and guide inspirational retreats*. Herald Press, 2004. It's important to include parents as partners in faith nurturing. This retreat gives an opportunity for parents to share about their own faith and connect with their youth in a relaxing and fun atmosphere.

***Invite Participation.*** Include youth in planning congregational worship and education. Some may like to visit committee meetings and participate in areas of church life that are beyond youth ministry. It never hurts to invite!

***Share Faith Testimonies.*** Do your youth know your faith story/testimony? How about their own parents and youth workers? Now is an excellent time to share faith journeys with youth. Hint: don't gloss over the tough stuff!

***Your Church History.*** Invite an older church member to give a tour of the church, including all the nooks and crannies. Have them share a bit about the specific history of your congregation including major decisions and controversies. How has God been faithful? Hint: Make a good quality video presentation of an elder in your church telling the church's history.

***Cemetery Stories.*** Not meant to scare, but to inspire! What would it be like for your youth to hear stories of faith and conviction in the local church cemetery? Using discretion and respect, this could be a neat time of connecting youth with the stories of the faithful that have gone before us.

***Field Tripping.*** Invite the class to visit Mennonite institutions and get acquainted with staff and their mission/ministry: Mennonite Central Committee, Bethel College, Hesston College, Western District Conference Office and Resource Library, Mennonite Church USA, Camp Mennoscah.

***Anabaptist Game or Re-enactments.*** Invite several generations to play the "Anabaptist Game" which consists of storytelling, drama and a hunt for the heretics. Some churches re-enact various historic moments of Anabaptist history by holding worship in barns and caves, and include the elements of darkness and secrecy.

## Miscellaneous Stories and Curriculum

NOTE: *Some of the following resources were written for children or are older publications. You may be able to glean some stories, activities, or discussion points from them. Also – they may give you a basic framework from which to structure your lessons.*

***Coals of Fire.*** By Elizabeth Hershberger Bauman; Herald Press, 1954.

***A Leap of Faith: true stories for young and old.*** By Peter J. Dyck; Herald Press, 1990.

***Twelve Becoming: Biographies of Mennonite Disciples from the 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century.***  
By C.J. Dyck; Faith and Life, 1973. Has separate leader's guide.

***The Mennonite Story by Rudy Baergen.*** (Faith and Life Press, 1981, Out of Print)  
Plus Leader's Guide. Good outline and content, although methodology could be certainly be spiced up.

## Menno Simons Resources (compiled for his 500<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1996)

David Augsburg. Menno Simons Birthday Tales. In Festival Quarterly, Winter, 1996. pp. 7-9. Folktales, historical vignettes and biographical fragments about the venerated priest-turned-Anabaptist-elder have grown, been told and then re-told for years. Here are eight "Menno Memories." For reading aloud, retelling or for readers ages 10 and up.

Cornelius J. Dyck. Menno Simons: 1496-1561. In Twelve Becoming: Biographies of Mennonite disciples from the 16th century to the 20th century. Faith and Life Press, 1973. pp.13-20. A basic story of the early understandings of re-baptism, discovering biblical truths,

hiding to save his life, Menno's wife and children and his old age. For reading aloud, retelling or for readers ages 10 and up.

Irvin B. Horst. Menno Simons, 500 years 1496-1996. In Purpose, October 6, 13, 20, 27, 1996. Horst writes four segments entitled "Menno Simons and Children," "Menno Simons and Violence," "Menno Simons and Witnessing," and "Menno Simons and Suffering." Best use might be retelling.

Dave and Neta Jackson. The Betrayer's Fortune. Bethany House, 1994. Part of the "Trailblazer Books series, this is an exciting fictionalized account of Menno Simons. For readers ages 8-14.

Jacob H. Janzen. Tales from Ancient and Recent Mennonite History. Waterloo ON, 1948. These tales offer interesting and accurate portrayals of Menno, but because of the format, would be best read aloud or told. For all ages.

Cornelia Lehn. "Blessed Are The Merciful: Menno Simons" in Peace Be With You. Faith and Life Press, 1981. pp. 48-49. A single tale taking place during Christmas, 1553 in Wismar, Germany. The Simons family, along with other believers gathered food and blankets to carry across the ice to a ship filled with refugees from the Reformed church. For reading aloud, telling, or for readers ages 8 and up.

Louise A. Vernon. Night Preacher. Herald Press, 1968. The lively story of all that happened as Menno went about preaching as seen through the eyes of his children, Bettje and Jan. For readers ages 8-14.