

# CALLED TO TEACH AND LEARN

## LEADER'S OUTLINE FOR PART ONE

### CATECHETICS

#### Aims and Content

#### Chapter 1

#### To Be Christian:

#### Catechetical Aims

Catechetics, according to the Glossary, page 11, is an exploration of the aims and 'content' of the Christian faith and life. (p 11) "What is our purpose and focus as catechists?" is the question we address in this section. Christianity is a way of life. It is the life of the baptized. The authors quote the third' century theologian, Tertullian. "Christians are made (fashioned), not born." *Called to Teach and Learn*, the author points out, is a guide to the ongoing process by which Christians are "made." (p 16)

That, in a nutshell, is the focus of this first section. This is what we are about as catechists in a variety of settings in which we find ourselves. *Called to Teach and Learn* goes on to say: Before we explore the various dimensions of the process, we need to consider the question: what is the Christian way of life? We do this by exploring our baptismal liturgy, for it is at our baptism that we are told who we are and how we are to live. (p 16)

Part One of *Called to Teach and Learn* begins with a look at where we are going. Our goal as catechists is to "make Christians." This includes both preparing adults for baptism and deepening the life and faith of the already baptized. From looking at the "destination" in Chapter One, we look in Chapter Two at the process for getting there. Subsequent chapters in Part One examine the context of our ministry as catechists, the shape of our ministry and the unique ethos or character of the catechetical ministry we exercise as Episcopalians. Part One helps to introduce the idea that catechesis is not created out of a vacuum, but rather reflects a particular context. That context includes an expectation that Christians live within a covenant relationship established at baptism.

Look at the words of the baptismal rite along with rubrics that describe the actions of the rite. (BCP, pp 299-314) First, there is a turning away from evil to accept Jesus Christ. This ritual act is followed by the Baptismal Covenant, the prayers, thanksgiving over the water, the actual baptism in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the anointing. All of these actions and words reflect the gospel and give shape both to the rite and to the meaning of being a baptized Christian.

What does this rite say to us about our lives as Christians? That is the question that informs our study of the baptismal rite. Notice that the first option for the act of baptism is immersion. (BCP p 307) How would immersion affect the way the congregation understands the commitment made at baptism?

*The aim or goal of the Church's catechetical ministry is, with God's help, to become communities of*

*persons who are devoted to assisting each other, and who are compelled to live fully the life of faith into which they have been baptize (p 24)*

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #2A**

**Purpose: To explore the baptismal rite from the Book of Common Prayer as a way of understanding the meaning of our baptism.**

Participants read the baptismal rite along with the rubrics.

Question: What do we discover about being Christian as we look carefully at the rite that makes us Christians?

Question: How does the baptismal rite shape our faith as Christians? In other words, how is our life as the Church different as a result of our baptism?

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #2B**

**Purpose: To enter into the experience of baptism through meditation as a way of understanding the meaning of our baptism.**

Create the environment of baptism with the learners. Sing a baptismal hymn and gather around the baptismal font. Using guided meditation, ask the learners to imagine a baptism as it is happening. If the congregation is familiar with the Easter Vigil, use that experience as the basis for your guided meditation. To heighten the impact of the meditation, describe baptism by immersion in your guided meditation. Discuss the reflection questions from Application #2a.

## Chapter 2

### The Making of Christians: The Catechetical Process

Catechesis comes from the Greek root of a verb, meaning "to cause to sound in the ear," or, "to echo." (p 26) We "sound" the biblical story and the stories of the tradition in the ears of the learners. Most of all we "sound" the Word that is Jesus into the lives of the learners. Jesus' authority came from his living the Word. Catechesis is a life-long apprenticeship in the tradition of Jesus Christ.

Catechesis can be seen and understood as *three intentional, interrelated, life-long processes: Formation, education, and instruction/training.* (p 28) Post the following definition of formation on chalk board or newsprint.

#### CHRISTIAN FORMATION

##### I. Formation: Participation and Practice

- *Formation is the participation in and practice of the Christian life of faith.*
- *Formation is the means by which a community's world-view and value system are transmitted.*
- *Our faith (how we perceive life and our lives), our character (our identity and behavioral dispositions), and our consciousness (our awareness and predispositions to particular experiences) result from such practices.* (p 28)

The communal rites of the church are the primary formation events. What we say and do in worship forms us in faith over time. (For this reason, it is important for the whole congregation to share in the communal rites of the church. Children should never remember a time when they were not a part of the worshipping community). The formal rites of the church are not the only activities that shape the Christian, however. Everything the congregation does together has a direct influence on our understanding of being Christian. This includes negative as well as positive understandings of faith. The congregation needs to examine both what it says and what it does at all formal and informal gatherings of the church.

#### PRACTICAL APPLICATION #3.

**Purpose: To draw on the experience of participants as a way of understanding the power of worship as the primary formation event of the congregation.**

Participants share three stories of early childhood experiences of worship in the church. (Adults, not brought up in the church, recall other communal rites from school, scouts, or other organizations that have meaning as they look back at those events). Following the story sharing, talk about how those memories influence our understanding of being Christian. What do we learn about Christian formation as we reflect on our own experiences?

The whole life of the congregation forms Christians in either positive or negative ways. We "teach" in everything we do together. That is an awesome thought! **Congregations intentional about formation will review their life continuously in order to reflect on just how children, adults and youth are being formed. Every aspect of communal life needs to be examined.** Give participants Handout #1. Share the concepts outlined on the

handout, and, time permitting, Practical Application #4 suggested in the handout.

## **HANDOUT # 1**

### **Formation: Participation and Practice**

**Eight Areas of Formation: The whole life of the congregation forms Christians in either positive or negative ways.**

- 1) Participation in the Communal Rites of the Church: *Ritual worship is the primary responsibility of the Church, and nothing else that it does can compare in importance. If the Church only gathers for worship, it need not question its place or influence in the world. If it loses faith in the act of worship, if it is mindless in ordering and careless in the conduct of worship, it cannot expect its other activities to save it, for it is dead in its heart. This explains why, historically, when the Church discerned that it was not living faithfully, it revived itself by engaging in liturgical reform. It also explains why participation in the rites of the Church have always been considered essential for all persons, regardless of age.* (p 28-29)
- 2) The Environment: *All that we see, taste, touch, smell, and hear, as well as the arrangement of the space in which we gather and live, significantly influences us. We shape our space, and then it shapes us. Our space, what we put into it, and how we arrange and shape it, encourages or discourages particular actions and interactions.* (p. 30)
- 3) The Ordering of Time: *The Church has a calendar based on a story. Our faith, character, and consciousness are shaped, and community made possible, by the internalizing of that story.* (p 30)
- 4) The Organization of Our Life: *The question for us is, How does our life together contribute to God's reign, and equip us for ministry in daily life and work; and how do the activities and programs sponsored by the Church make contributions to this end?* (p 31)
- 5) Communal Interactions: *Life in the congregation should be a sign to the world of what life in God's reign looks like.* (p. 31)
- 6) Role Models: *Role models are those persons, past and present, whom we raise up to be examples of some aspect of the Christian life.* (p 32)
- 7) Disciplines: *We learn to be virtuous by practicing the virtues. We learn to pray by the practice of prayer; we learn to care for others by the practice of caring.* (p 32)
- 8) Language: *When we listen and do not object to sexist or racist remarks, we encourage their continuance, and contribute to the oppression of others. When we neglect feminine images of God, we make our God too small. As Christians we need to be intentional about how we talk and write.* (p 33)

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #4.**

**Purpose: To focus on all of the elements of "formation" as they are experienced in the congregation as a way of understanding the impact of the whole experience of being Christian together.**

- Using the eight "areas of formation" on the handout as a guide for reflection and discussion, close your eyes and in silence picture a variety of church activities from Sunday morning coffee hour to the content and conduct of meetings. You may want to use a Sunday bulletin to recall the variety of gatherings that happen regularly in the church. Discuss what you saw as you thought about those gatherings.

- Question: How is faith being formed in your congregation today?
- Question: What do we learn about catechesis as we examine our life together?

In this chapter we are looking at the "three intentional, interrelated, life long processes" that are integral to catechesis; formation, education, and instruction/training. We turn next to look at that second process of education. Handout #2 includes a brief outline of the content related to education along with

## **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #5**

**Purpose: To engage in a process of "Christian education," and to become more aware of the dimensions of social ministry in the congregation.**

## **HANDOUT #2**

### **Education:**

#### **Critical reflection on what we participate in and practice**

*Education is critical reflection on what we participate in and practice, on our thoughts, feelings, actions, and experiences in the light of the gospel and the Christian life of faith. Education is a process that intends to produce change, to aid us to reform and renew our personal and communal lives, to bring them into line with more Christ-like lives. It is also the procedure by which we continually examine and reflect upon how faithfully we are engaging in formation.* (p. 33)

We may be accustomed to use the term "Christian (or religious) education" as the umbrella for the learning process in the congregation or other Christian setting. *Called to Teach and Learn* uses the term "education" in a distinct way. Catechesis is the umbrella term. Education is one aspect of the overall process. If we are to appreciate the overall impact of *Called to Teach and Learn* it is important to keep the definition in mind. *Education is a process of guided reflection that involves concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.* (p 33) *Called to Teach and Learn* outlines a distinct process for an educational encounter. Scripture, tradition, and reason inform the educational process.

Step 1 - Examine our Lives

Step 2 - Engage the Church's Faith

Step 3 - Renew and Reform our Faith

Step 4 - Live our Faith (p 34)

#### **Critical Reflection on Our Social Ministry in the Community**

**Step 1:** Examine your congregation's social ministry in the wider community. If possible, look over bulletins and newsletters so that you can review present programs as well as opportunities offered to help the congregation seek a deeper understanding about the concerns of the community.

**Step 2:** In groups of four to six participants do a Scripture dialogue on one of the two texts.

- Isaiah 58:1-14 - On false and true worship. "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed

go free." (Isaiah 58:6)

- Luke 16:19-31 - The Rich Man and Lazarus.
  - The text is read aloud followed by silence.
  - Read the text a second time.
    - Ask: What words, phrases, images stand out for you?
    - Write down words or phrases that come to you without comment.
    - the passage aloud a third time. Think out or write: "Where does this passage touch my life, my community, our nation, our world today?" How does it relate to our congregation's social ministry in the community? (3-5 minutes)
    - Each person shares the above: "I..."
    - Dialogue: "From what we have heard and shared, what does God call us to do as individuals and as a congregation? How does God invite us to change?"

**Step 3:** With all participants together, reflect on congregational life and outreach ministry in the light of these texts. What have we discovered about "education" in the life of the congregation?

The third process of catechesis is instruction/training. This is the process of discovering the necessary content about the Christian life of faith.

*Instruction is the process that provides us with the necessary content about Christian life of faith to make critical reflection and faithful formation possible....Instruction in Christian knowledge concerns learning about the Bible, Christian theology and ethics, about the spiritual life, and about Christian service and ministry. It also includes learning the skills of biblical interpretation, theological thinking, ethical decision making, the discernment of God's will and ways of prayer. (p. 35)*

Instruction can be done in a variety of formal and informal settings. Both the intuitive and intellectual way of thinking and knowing must be touched for instruction to be a dynamic force in the congregation. Thus the arts play as important a role as didactic learning experiences.

## **HANDOUT #3**

### **Reflecting on the three processes of Catechesis**

#### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #6.**

**Purpose: To reflect on the three processes of formation, education and instruction. Note: Practical application #4 focused on the eight areas of formation. In this exercise, we broaden the reflection to include examples of instruction and Christian Education as well as formation.**

- Talk about all aspects of parish catechesis including the preparation of persons for baptism, renewal of baptismal vows, reception and confirmation and reflect on other aspects of formal and informal catechesis happening in the congregation.

- Identify the three processes of formation, education and instruction as your congregation's catechetical ministry is discussed.
- How have you experienced these processes as they have lived life in the church over the years?
- Recall the story sharing you did earlier and make any relevant connections between your own faith journey and the processes discussed in Chapter Two of *Called to Teach and Learn*.

The Catechumenal Process as outlined in The Book of Occasional Services is one of the most important catechetical experiences happening in the Church today. Here the Church looks back to the first few centuries to re-discover an ancient process that incorporates all three aspects of catechesis. The rediscovery of this process stems in part from the centrality of baptism that is inherent in the present Book of Common Prayer. The entire process as it unfolds over the course of the seasons, feasts, fasts, and holy days of the Church's calendar, incorporates aspects of formation, instruction, and Christian education. (See the bibliography put in pp numbers after corrections are done for resources describing this important process).

## Chapter 3

### Church and Society: Catechetical Context

*Catechesis takes place within some particular social, historical context, a context that can either support or undermine catechetical efforts, but always should inform them. It is important that we attempt to describe accurately the context in which we live, along with resulting insights and implications for our catechetical ministry. (p 42)*

#### **Social Context: Diversity**

**In race, culture, and ethnicity.** A homogenized population has been the spoken or unspoken goal of the Church in past times. Strangers were welcome with the assumption that they would fit the image of the typical Episcopalian. Today there is a new appreciation for racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity in society and in the church. The recognition of the increasingly diverse traditions and backgrounds within American society means we must work harder at being inclusive. Diversity needs to be affirmed for it enriches us as a people as our world expands to include the experiences of others who are unlike us.

**In religion.** There was a time in the recent past when ecumenism meant the blending of a variety of traditions into one. Today we are conscious of the need to appreciate our own unique heritage as well as the heritage of other Christian denominations and the variety of religious faiths represented in our increasingly diverse population.

#### **Social Order**

*Rapid progress in science and technology has put into human hands unprecedented power which can either reap great benefits for the human race or sow destruction on the earth. (p 45)* The complexity of our life must be seen as a part of the context of our catechesis. For example, how do we relate as individual Christians and as the Church to the myriad of ethical questions raised by technology? *The rapidity of change and the escalation of ethical issues never encountered before increases our difficulty in being faithful to the gospel ... The Church's catechetical ministry needs to both inform its people of the issues and help them respond faithfully. (pp 45-46)*

#### **Modernity**

Generations have been raised with the understanding of the Enlightenment as the benchmark of our consciousness. The Enlightenment stressed reason and logic. *We need to reaffirm our imaginations, the intuitive way of thinking and knowing, nonmaterial reality, community and interdependence, cooperation and nonaggression, the arts, nature as a subjective reality that engages us, the presence and action of God in human life and history, and our dependence on God. (p 47)*

#### **Church and State Relations**

From the fourth to the twentieth century we lived in what is often called the "Constantinian or Christian era." The assumption was that church and society were one. To be a good citizen was to be a good Christian. This assumption was not true in the first three centuries of the church when Christians found themselves living in an alien culture as a result of their baptism, nor is it true in this "post-Christian" era. (This is precisely why the ancient

catechumenal process mentioned above is once again relevant).

### **The Vocation of the Church**

The church must once again be an *intentional, disciplined community... of faith*. (p. 49) In this we have much to learn from the Jewish people who have lived a distinct life "in but not of" the society around them. Judaism has survived precisely because the stories have been told, the festivals have been observed, the distinct way of seeing life through Torah has been emphasized.

Use the outline found on Handout #4 as the basis for further discussion with participants. The six "bulleted" headings on the handout provide participants with an outline of the points made above and on pages 42-50, *Called to Teach and Learn*. The outline of the attributes of a **community of faith** and the **Body of Christ** are taken from pages 50-52.

In talking about role of the church and the individual Christian, you may want to point out that the ideal of this community of faith is often not realized. What often determines the life of the congregation are the pressures of surviving in the face of:

- 1) Busy, hectic lives
- 2) Tight schedules all day long and into the evening
- 3) One or both parents playing the role of taxi driver for their children
- 4) In place of a common meal together, members of the family eat and run on their own schedule.

McDonalds becomes the model for the home as well as the shopping center!

This, too, is the context in which we are called to be the Church of Jesus Christ today. How can we be the Body of Christ as a congregation today is the critical question.

Handout #4 includes two possible, practical applications designed to help participants relate to the content in Chapter 3.

## **HANDOUT #4**

### **The Context in Which We Live**

- Diversity in race, culture, and ethnicity
- Diversity in religion
- Social order
- Modernity
- Church and state relations
- The vocation of the Church

**Community of faith.** A community of faith has six particular characteristics.

- 1) a common story that shapes the life of the faithful
- 2) a common authority
- 3) common rituals

- 4) a common life that is modeled on the family rather than the institution
- 5) the vision of the church is to reflect the reign of God rather than the survival of the institution
- 6) diversity is valued

**The Body of Christ.** *The Church is a community of faith so that it might shape, equip, and empower its people to be Christ's presence in the world. The people of God are called to take their places in the life, worship, and governance of the Church so that they might faithfully represent Christ and his Church, be witnesses to Christ wherever they might be, and according to their various gifts carry on Christ's reconciling work in the world.*

*Ministry is doing God's will wherever we are: in church, in home, in community, and in daily life and work.*

*When people look at us, they must be able to see persons who are striving in all that they say and do to imitate and represent Jesus in every aspect of their life and work. The primary content of ministry is therefore our daily life and work. (p 52)*

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #7**

**Purpose: To become more aware of the context in which the congregation is called to do ministry.**

Place a large sheet of newsprint on a the wall or other flat surface. Ask participants to describe the context of the Church's catechetical ministry by describing the life they experience and see around them. Use the headings from this section of *Called to Teach and Learn*, included on Handout #4 as a guide.

- Who surrounds us and touches our lives and culture in the places in which we live and work and worship?
- How do people express themselves?
- What language do they use? (slang, metaphors, imagery, etc.)
- What music and other artistic expression influences them?

As participants describe their context, participants agree on symbols that express the various realities as they are named. (Examples: an image of a suburban ranch style house linked with an image of a car on a freeway and a large office tower might express the life of the suburban commuter).

Next, describe your congregation using the six characteristics as a guideline for discussion. In what ways do those characteristics set the congregation apart from the community around you? How is catechetical and prophetic ministry exercised in this context? How do individual Christians witness to the reign of God in their lives given the context of their ministry?

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #8**

**Purpose: To identify the six elements of the congregation as a community of faith. (Also shown on Handout #4)**

As a group, describe the congregation under each of the elements of a "community of faith." The common story is obviously the faith story expressed in Scripture and tradition, but what are some of the common stories that shape the life of your particular congregation? The official "common authority" is the bishop, rector/vicar, and vestry/bishop's committee, but who and what other authorities are recognized in the life of the congregation?

## Chapter Four

### Liturgical<sup>2</sup>, Ethical, Spiritual, Pastoral, Missional Life: The Catechetical Ministry

The church has tended to separate its life into separate areas of discipline that have become associated with secular disciplines. Catechesis has been modeled on the public school. Curriculum and the teaching of children have been the primary concentration. (The architecture of suburban churches built following the Second World War sometimes looked just like the suburban school down the street!) Pastoral care has been modeled on the therapist's practice. What were once conceived of as separate disciplines must now be seen as a unified catechetical ministry informed by the baptismal covenant rather than by secular models. (BCP pp 304-305)

Share the content outlined on Handout #5. A practical application is included on the handout.

#### HANDOUT #5

The six dimensions of communal life within the Church as they relate to the baptismal covenant. (p 56)

1. Liturgics and homiletics: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers?
2. Ethics: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?
3. Spirituality: Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
4. Pastoral care: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
5. Catechetics: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers?
6. Ecumenics: Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

**The Catechetical Way.** It is important to look at each of these dimensions of life and *apply the three processes that comprise catechesis: namely, (1) formation—that is, to participate and practice the life of faith; (2) education—that is, to reflect on our lives of faith so we might live more faithfully; and (3) instruction—that is, to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be faithful. It is essential to the Church's catechetical ministry that each family, congregation, and school be intentional about each of these processes in reference to each dimension of pastoral theology.* (p 59)

#### Examples of catechesis in each category (Based on discussion, pages 57-62)

##### Liturgical Catechesis

- All baptized, including the youngest child will be included in the liturgical life of the congregation.

**(formation)**

- Participants need to critically reflect on the rites and the biblical texts that shape those rites. How do the texts, the Prayers of the People, and other aspects of the Eucharistic rite inform our lives as Christians today? (What does it mean to "... offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee..."(BCP p 330) **(education)**)
- Instruction in the history, theology, and meaning of the rites and services in the Book of Common Prayer, Hymnal, Book of Occasional Services. **(instruction)**

**Ethical catechesis - examples**

- A sense of identity as Christians living in the world establishes a unique "world view" out of which ethical perspectives are formed. **(formation)**
- **Instruction** in the ethical tradition of the Church and in ways to engage ethical questions today is seen as a regular aspect of catechesis.
- Christians are called into critical reflection on ethical issues. **(education)**

**Spiritual catechesis - examples**

- Retreats, disciplines of daily prayer, small groups gathering to meditate and pray on a regular basis provides an environment of spiritual **(formation)**.
- Instruction in the ways of engaging in spiritual discipline are offered.
- Critical reflection on experiences of prayer and spiritual encounter are a part of spiritual catechesis. **(education)**

**Pastoral and catechetical examples**

- Participation in the Maundy Thursday liturgy that includes foot washing provides a formative experience in pastoral catechesis. **(formation)**
- *Aware that our knowledge of human needs and the predisposition to be present to those needs in Christ-like ways is a consequence of **formation**; we need to provide opportunities to be present to, and to minister with, the poor, the homeless, the sick, the lonely, the hungry, the oppressed, and others in need.* (p 61)
- Scripture dialogue on Gospel text, John 13:1-15, and critical reflection on the whole Maundy Thursday rite. What does it mean for us to "love one another as I have loved you?" **(education)**
- *Opportunities to reflect critically on our personal lives in terms of health and wholeness, as well as on how society deals with those in need, are necessary. Opportunities for pastoral counseling with individuals and groups are also important.* (p 61-62) **(education)**
- **Instruction** in the knowledge and skills necessary for persons to minister with the needy, as well as the means to achieve greater personal and communal health is needed. (p 62)

### **Ecumenical catechesis:**

- *The Church is a witnessing community, which proclaims, by word and example, the Good News of God in Christ.. Just as Christ is the sacrament of God, so the Church is to be the sacrament of Christ in the world, an outward and visible sign of God's grace and will.* (p 58)
- *Episcopalians can work with other Christians in promoting cooperation in projects for the common good. Similarly, opportunities and encouragement to be faithful stewards of God's creation, and to tithe (a minimum aim for the faithful) our time, talents, and treasures to the mission of the Church, need to be provided.* (p 62) **(formation)**
- The Nicene Creed repeated at every Sunday's celebration of the Eucharist includes the phrases, "We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins." The creed is the formal expression of the Good News. **(formation)**
- Christians from different denominations gather to reflect on how they understand their common call to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19a) **(education)**
- At this same meeting, denominational leaders help participants appreciate the similarities and unique differences inherent in their traditions. **(instruction)**
- (The Concordant of Agreement between the Episcopal and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America opens up the ecumenical question in exciting ways. A study of the Concordant itself would make an interesting study especially if done with Lutherans in attendance. **(instruction)**
- The growing consensus in liturgical practice and theology is another dynamic ecumenical development in our own time. **(formation, education)**

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION # 9**

**Purpose: To focus on practical ways to offer catechesis in each of the six dimensions of communal life.**

Working singly or with others, choose one of the six dimensions of communal life listed above.(p17, handout #5)

Step 1: Talk about the examples of catechesis under your chosen area of concentration.

Step 2: Suggest other examples that occur to you and the other members of your group.

Step 3: Focus your discussion on practical ways that catechesis could be done in your congregation in the specific area you have chosen. For example, under "liturgical catechesis," how could persons be encouraged to "critically reflect on the rites and the biblical texts that shape those rites?" Talk about ways of designing the process of education.

Step 4: Share insights from your chosen area of discussion with the whole group.

## Chapter 5

### The Anglican Way: Catechetical Ethos

Here we look at what gives the Episcopal Church a distinctive identity within Christendom. *This Anglican tradition, of which we are a part, has over the years acquired a distinctive identity with resulting predispositions to behave in particular ways. These need to be named and described so that we might be faithful in framing an Episcopal understanding of our catechetical ministry.*(p 64) Note that the term "Anglican" expresses our common roots in the English Church. We share those roots with the Church of England, the Anglican Church of Canada, and other provinces of the Anglican Church throughout the world. This common tradition shapes the way we understand what it means to be Church. At the same time, it is important to realize and appreciate the contributions of the growing number of persons in the "Anglican" tradition today who come from Africa, Asia, South and Central America, and other areas of the world. The identity inherited from our traditional roots in England are shaped and enriched by the inclusion of a diverse people who bring new life and understanding to the Church today. With that in mind, we look at the distinctive identity that shapes us in this ancient "Anglican" tradition.

**Identity** - *We are bound together by our liturgy. To put it simply, we are best understood as a 'prayer book tradition.' Orthodoxy, for us, is right worship. Theological and ethical issues are resolved through decisions concerning liturgy, rather than doctrine.* (p 64)

**Authority** - Our ultimate authority, of course, is God. Anglicans point to three *interrelated authoritative sources: Scripture, Tradition, and Reason.* (p 65)

Scripture is the *primary criteria for its teaching and the chief source of guidance* for the church. (p 66)

Though Anglicans take Scripture seriously, we balance the word of the Bible with tradition and reason.

Tradition represents the liturgy, the scholarship, the experience, and the practices of the Church handed on through the generations.

Reason recognizes that the Holy Spirit guides us into truth. God's word is not static. It is constantly being uncovered fresh and new in each generation. This understanding of continuing guidance is expressed in the Gospel of John. "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you." (John 14:25-26) "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." (John 16:12-13)

An example of keeping the delicate balance between Scripture, tradition, and reason is found in the Church's attitude towards divorce and remarriage. In the *Scripture* we read Jesus' words about divorce. "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." (Mark 10:10) In the Anglican *tradition*, the marriage rite assumes the lifelong commitment of marriage. "Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder." (BCP 428, quotation from Mark 10:9) The Canons of the Church, however, allow for divorce under strict guidelines. This, too, is a

part of the *tradition*. The pastor meeting with an estranged couple finally decides, after prayer, counseling, and a study of Scripture and tradition, that divorce is appropriate. Later, the pastor applies to the bishop for authority to perform a marriage for one of the parties to the divorce in line with the Canons. Reason has dictated an action for the parties involved. (In 1 Corinthians 7:1-16 we see a fascinating example of St. Paul applying Jesus' teaching to the evolving life of the young church. "To the married I give this command - not I but the Lord - that the wife should not separate from her husband. [1 Cor 7:10] "To the rest I say - I and not the Lord - that if any believer has a wife..." [ 1 Cor 7:12] Paul begins to adapt Jesus' words to the context of the church in Corinth.)

**Handout #6** is designed to help participants engage the content of Chapter 5. Use the handout as an outline of your remarks drawn from *Called to Teach and Learn* and other sources.

## **HANDOUT #6**

### **The Roots of Anglican Tradition**

*This Anglican tradition, of which we are a part, has over the years acquired a distinctive identity with resulting predispositions to behave in particular ways. These need to be named and described, so that we might be faithful in framing an Episcopal understanding of our catechetical ministry. (p 64)*

I. Identity

II. Authority - Scripture, tradition, and reason

III. Spirituality. Definition: ... *(an) understanding of how we approach our relationship to God and grow in an ever deepening and loving relationship to God and therefore to self and neighbor. (p 69)*

Liturgical and biblical: Daily Offices of the Prayer Book shape our spirituality. Scripture is at the heart of Anglican spirituality.

Communal: The individual Anglican functions as part of the wider community of the church. The liturgy, communal life in the church, Anglican tradition, dialogue with others and prayer informed by the Bible and Prayer Book are the individual's constant companions. *Any individualistic or privatized understanding of the spiritual life would be antithetical to Anglican spirituality. (p 70)*

Sacramental: Baptism and Eucharist form our Anglican spirituality. We participate in the sacraments and over time discern that we are to be the sacrament of Christ to the world.

Pastoral: The Pastoral Offices and intercessions of the Prayer Book are at the heart of our spirituality.

Incarnational: We are a "worldly" people in the sense of seeing God's presence and power in the world that Christ comes to redeem. An Incarnational emphasis means that we experience God in the "flesh and blood" of daily living.

Mystical: *Mysticism describes a long, slow journey into union with God as opposed to pietism, an immediate, emotional, felt experience of God... Anglican spirituality has always had an inclination toward mysticism. (pp 71-72)*

IV. *Temperament refers to a tradition's characteristic way of thinking and behaving.* (p 72)

Comprehensive: Anglicans are known for the *via media* (following the middle way...*that is the conviction that all truth is known and guarded by maintaining the tension between two counter-opposite truths.* (p 72)

Ambiguous: A willingness to live with ambiguity means that Anglicans can live with an openness to seeking truth over time rather than a need for definitive answers in the moment.

Open-minded: *We encourage a searching, questioning, reasonable mind always open to new insights.* (p 73)

Intuitive: The arts, liturgy, wonder, imagination inform the Anglican temperament more than the attainment of rational knowledge.

Aesthetic: Anglicans have made beauty the doorway into truth and goodness. (p 74)

Moderate: *...Anglicans typically avoid extravagance, extremes, and excessiveness in any aspect of personal life, thought or emotion.* (p 74)

Naturalistic: Nature and natural beauty are a high value. Natural theology and natural law have long been espoused. That is, humans can grasp an understanding of God's presence through natural reason in addition to the gift of revelation.

Historical: A deep respect for history and remembrance leads the Anglican to seek insights about the present and the future partly through an appreciation of the past.

Political: We pray for the nations and leaders of the world convinced that God is in the midst of political struggle and vision.

#### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #10**

**Purpose: To share the experience of being Episcopalian in the light of participant's stories and the traditions reflected in other traditions.**

Share the stories of participants.

- What brought you into the Episcopal Church? (or, what has kept you in the Episcopal Church over the years)?
- Based on your experience, what characteristics listed in *Called to Teach and Learn* stand out for you?
- What would you add? question? change?
- Talk about the differences you have noticed when you have participated in the life of congregations in other denominations?
- How would you explain the Anglican tradition to someone who asked you to talk about your church?
- Finally, what do your stories and discussion say about the way we do catechesis in the Episcopal Church today?

# CALLED TO TEACH AND LEARN

## LEADER'S OUTLINE FOR PART TWO: CATECHESIS

**I**n the first major segment of *Called to Teach and Learn* we looked at the "content of Christian faith and life."<sup>1</sup> In this second major section we look at "the process by which persons are fashioned into Christians within the life of the community of faith." What goes into catechesis? How does catechesis happen? What disciplines of study, praxis<sup>2</sup> and discovery are involved? Each chapter in this section looks at a different area of scholarly discipline.

### Chapter 6

#### Insights from Biblical Theology

We begin, of course, with the Bible. The insights from the Bible are stated succinctly every time the Holy Eucharist is celebrated. The Nicene Creed and the six Eucharistic Prayers from the Book of Common Prayer provide an outline of biblical theology that is easily remembered. If you want to express the good news of the gospel in one minute or less turn to the Prayer Book!

From the study of the Bible we understand Jesus as one who models the role of catechist. Look at Jesus' way of forming disciples and we begin to understand catechesis!

First phase: (the disciples) *simply observe his life and discuss what they observe. They are expected to learn specific duties and accept special responsibilities. Thus, they learn how to do things before they learn why. They participate in and practice Jesus' life of faith before they understand its meaning or implication. (Called to Teach and Learn , p 83)*

Second Phase: Reflection and conversation in order to understand..

Third phase: Call to action.

We see this pattern unfold in the Gospel according to Luke.

First phase: In Luke 5, Jesus calls the first disciples. Peter hears Jesus preaching to the crowd from his fishing boat. After a miraculous catch of fish, Peter fell to his knees in recognition of divine power. Other disciples are called and then "instructed" on the meaning of their discipleship in the "Sermon on the Plain." Second phase: All through the Gospel, we hear the questions of the disciples. Jesus' response to questions is to tell a story or to ask another question of his own. Third phase: In Luke 10, Jesus sends out "the seventy" to prepare the way for him.

As we hear and study the Bible we learn about God, and God's intentions for us and for creation. In a sense, we learn about God's "agenda" for the world that God creates in every new moment of time. We learn about ourselves in hearing the Bible as well. The Bible is not a book about a perfect people who lived in harmony with God and with each other. The biblical characters we encounter are often not very nice people! What makes the Bible so powerful in our lives is that we find ourselves in those people! Their struggle is our struggle. Our fears, hurts, and hopes are their fears, hurts, and hopes. Finally, we learn about the relationship that exists between humanity and

God.

Amos 5:18-24 and Matthew 5:43-48 are two examples of how the Bible opens up God's agenda for us. We hear the Word. We place the Word in the context of our lives as a way of discovering God's agenda for us as the church and as individuals today. The Word confronts. The Word heals. The Word calls us forth to be disciples.

#### **Amos 5:21-24**

21 I hate, I despise your festivals,

and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

22 Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them;

and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.

23 Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

24 But let justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

#### **Matthew 5:43-48**

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy'. 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect".

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #11**

**Purpose: To reflect on insights discovered from the Bible as expressed in the tradition of the Church and in the lives of the participants. (The Scripture dialogue portion of this practical application is outlined on Handout #7).**

- Begin this practical application by having someone read Eucharistic Prayer D, BCP page 373 ("It is truly right to glorify you...") through the middle of page 374 (...to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.")  
Read the prayer slowly and dramatically. Option: Sing Hymn 534, "God is working his purpose out," or some other hymn that seems appropriate after reading the Eucharistic prayer.
- Ask persons to keep silence for several minutes. "Think about passages from the Bible that have particular meaning to you? What do those texts say about God, about us, and about our relationship with God?" Share reflections in the group.

### **HANDOUT #7**

#### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

**Purpose: To reflect on insights discovered from the Bible as expressed in the tradition of the Church and in the lives of the participants. To discover specific insights from the biblical texts heard this coming Sunday.**

Scripture dialogue on one of the passages appointed for the coming Sunday using the following process<sup>1</sup>:

Step 1. Read the passage aloud.

Step 2. Discuss what the passage tells us about God.

Step 3. Read passage aloud a second time.

Step 4. Discuss what the passage tells us about human beings (men, women and children, young and old, difference races and different places) and the relationship between people?

Step 5. Read passage aloud a third time.

Step 6. Discuss what the passage tells us about the relationship between God and human beings? How might people living in different circumstances or in different cultures perceive the passage's message about the relationship between God and human beings? How does the passage call us (individually and corporately) to change?

Step 7. Read the passage aloud, quietly, meditatively, as a closing prayer; after a moment of silence close the session with prayer.

- Based on the summary of faith found in the Eucharistic prayer, the music of the church, and our experience with the Bible, what's the good news expressed in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures?" Ask each participant to prepare a one minute "good news" statement.
- What does this experience tell us about the Bible skills we need as catechists?  
How can we gain those skills individually and together in the time ahead?

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1. Theological Bible study method taken from *In Dialogue with Scripture: An Episcopal Guide to Studying the Bible*, The Episcopal Church Center, 1992.

## Chapter 7

### Insights from Psychology

*Ever-changing insights from psychology, the other social sciences, and pedagogy can be of value. Nevertheless, we should not imagine that any one school of thought or theory is sufficient or that any should be accepted uncritically. What follows are brief summaries of a few insights that may be helpful in planning for teaching and learning. (p 86)*

*Called to Teach and Learn* looks briefly at several psychological schools to gain insight into the way people learn and grow particularly in the context of religious development. The purpose of this chapter is to stimulate interest in going deeper into these important theories.

*Developmental psychology aims to describe stages and transitional processes of growth in persons. (p 86)*

- Eric Erickson "...observed that there were special moments in the human life cycle for developing particular human qualities." (p 86-7). Reflecting on one's life story may help to understand the life-long process. *Called To Teach and Learn* stresses the importance of ritual, story telling, imagination, and intergenerational sharing.
- Piaget's emphasis is on how people know. Here, again, we see *stages through which individuals pass at their own rate, and at which they may become arrested if not helped to make a transition to a higher stage.* (p 88)
- Kohlberg comes next with stages of moral development.
- James Fowler and Gabriel Moran look at the stages of faith through which one may move. Understanding and appreciating these stages of development alerts the catechist to a variety of approaches that need to be kept in mind as learning experiences are designed and evaluated.
- The psychology of personality helps the catechist appreciate the different ways people respond to the world around them. Carl Jung lies at the heart of this approach that has been popularized by Isabel Briggs Myers and Peter Myers.
- *The core of all these theories is that it is through human interaction with the environment that learning and growth occur.* (p 96)

Share Handout #8 as a way of outlining the content of this chapter. Refer to the bibliography under Chapter 7 for resources providing more detailed descriptions of the various theories outlined in this chapter. If possible have some of the resources available for loan or purchase.

#### **HANDOUT #8**

##### **Insights from Psychology**

*Psychology focuses its attention on individual persons and their behavior...Developmental psychology aims to describe stages and transitional processes of growth in persons. (p 86)*

## **Schools of psychology**

**Eric Erickson** - Development of human qualities based on the way persons resolve life tensions. The focus is on life stories, and the importance of ritual, repetitive symbolic behavior, and play. He “observed that there were special moments in the human life cycle for developing particular human qualities”.

Trust vs. Mistrust

Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

Initiative vs. Guilt

Industry vs. Inferiority

Identity vs. Identity Confusion

Intimacy vs. Isolation

Generativity vs. Stagnation

Integrity vs. Despair

### **A constructivist approach to how people know:**

*A constructivist approach to human development focuses its insights on cognition, how people know, and how the mind structures experience and constructs reality, through the interaction of people and their environment...*  
(p 88)

**Piaget** is the major voice in this approach. One of his insights is that children do not think in the same way as adults. However, while age is a factor in understanding what persons are able to do in terms of cognitive processes, there are stages through which individuals pass at their own rate, and at which they may become arrested if not helped to make a transition to a higher stage.

**Constructivists** have examined general patterns of thinking: Kohlberg on moral reasoning, and Fowler on faith (understood as an activity of the mind irrespective of particular content). Their insights can help us understand why people deal with the world and information differently, and how they can be helped to mature in theological, ethical thinking. (p 88)

### **Kohlberg - how people develop moral reasoning**

Pre-conventional

Conventional

Post-conventional

### **James Fowler - how people develop faith (p 90-91)**

Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective faith (about age 2 or when the use of language begins). *Persons are powerfully influenced by experiences, examples, action, ritual, and stories.*

Stage 2: Mythic-Literal Faith (between ages of 6 and 8) *Persons begin to embody the language of sacred narrative and metaphor ...While knowing is concrete and literal, children become able to envision reality from the perspective of others.*

Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith (between ages of 11 and 13). *Persons develop the ability to think*

*conceptually, to make generalizations and abstractions, and to acquire a sense of history.*

Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith (after age 18). *Persons begin to reflect critically on the tradition they have acquired, as they take seriously the burden of responsibility for their own commitments, lifestyles, beliefs, attitudes, and values.*

Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith. *This stage involves a reuniting of symbolic power with conceptual meanings, as well as a reclaiming and reworking of one's past. A new appreciation of symbols, myths, and rituals emerges.*

Stage 6: Universalizing Faith. *There is a dramatic widening of social perspective, and there is a mystical relinquishing of self into God.*

### **Gabriel Moran - another system for understanding faith development**

1. Simply Religious (birth to 7)
  - a. The physical - small child
  - b. The Mythic - (8 to beginning adolescence)
2. Acquiring a Religion (through adolescence)
  - a. Acquire the religion of their communities
  - b. Disbelief - questioning and doubt
3. Religiously Christian or Jewish
  - a. Parable - accepting ambiguity
  - b. Detachment - Coming to terms with life and death

Caution - Recognize the complexity of the individual and their journey through life.

### **Pathways through life:**

Experiential pathway - the intuitive way of knowing

Reflective pathway - intellectual thinking and knowing dominates

Integrative way - integrate intuitive and intellectual ways

### **The psychology of personality types (Myers-Briggs).**

*...contrasting ways people approach the world and receive data from the world. (p. 94)*

Sensate persons (depend on facts) and Intuitive persons (depend on intuition)

Contrasting ways of judging or evaluating data

Thinking persons (use systematic logic), and Feeling persons (use emotional cues)

Where people receive their energy

Introverts (get re'energized by being alone), and Extraverts (get re'energized by being with others)

Different attitudes or methods for dealing with the world

Judging persons (seeking closure), and Perceptive persons (prefer open ended exploration)

### **Four dominate ways that personality affects learning:**

Style One - The learner...needs an expert teacher.

likes routine, assignments, and repetitive drill

Style Two - The learner...needs a caring teacher needs to experience life in order to learn

For this learner, everything lies in the moment

Style Three - The learner...needs directing teacher learns through individual study, experimentation, trial and error

Style Four - The learner...needs a teacher as role model to observe and imitate

imagination is highly developed. Emphasis on language and the arts

(Caution - We tend to teach the way we learn. Consider team teaching and variety of approaches).

### **Psychology of behaviorism**

B. F. Skinner: Children reflect their environment. Behavior is conditioned.

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #12**

**Option One. Purpose: To use the life experience of the learners as a way of reflecting on faith development.**

- Learners reflect back on their story of faith development. Respond to the question: How do I identify my own stages of faith development as I think about my journey in faith in light of developmental theories?

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #13**

**Option Two. Purpose: To enable participants to reflect on their own personality type as a way of understanding both the theory and practical applications of personality types.**

- Arrange for a qualified person to administer and explain the Myers Briggs Type Indicator to the participants.
- Separate learners into groups based on their personality types and invite them to interview each other. Include persons with a variety of types in each group.
  - Question: What is the most satisfying approach to prayer, worship, learning and, teaching for me?
- (If learners are already familiar with their type, simply review the various categories and move directly into groups).
- In their book, *Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types*, David Kiersey and Marilyn Bates include a simple self-administered profile on temperament types that can provide insights for the group.

## Chapter 8

### Insights from Sociology

*Sociology focuses on human social interactional behavior in groups. It studies social systems and human behavior in communal units such as the family and the congregation.* (p 98)

*While there are various metaphors for social systems, one is biological. A social system is two or more living organisms related to each other by a common purpose to carry out a particular aim. Using this definition and a biological metaphor, a family, a church-related school, and a congregation display the following characteristics:* (p 98)

Share the following list of characteristics on Handout #9, and share the content from *Called to Teach and Learn*, pp 98-99. Practical applications are shown below.

#### HANDOUT #9

##### Characteristics of a system

- boundaries:..."persons know if they are inside it or not".
- character:..."an identity, and the disposition to live in particular observable ways".
- a life cycle: system passes through *childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age*.
- size: "Small", "medium", and "large congregations have significant differences in how they order their lives".
- interdependence: *Every part of the system is related; all the parts are connected and affect each other.*
- health or sickness: A healthy congregation does not tolerate co-dependent or passive-aggressive behavior, or other forms of pathology.
- need for nourishment: *...a community of prayer and learning.*
- an "immune system": *A healthy congregation needs ways to resist the influences of society.*

##### Examples of biblical texts

##### reflecting the characteristics of a system

- boundaries:
  - Luke 5:1-11. Calling of the disciples.
  - Luke 9:23-27. The nature of discipleship.
- character:
  - Luke 5:27-39. Questions about fellowship and fasting.
  - Luke 6:17-49. The "Sermon on the Plain.
  - Acts 2:43-47 Communal life described.
- a life cycle:
  - Acts 2:1-13. The Coming of the Holy Spirit.
  - 1 Corinthians chapter 12. Spiritual gifts shared equally by everyone. The Body with many members.
  - 1 Timothy 3:1-13. Qualifications of a bishop and deacons. (Notice the dramatic difference in the view of the church. In a generation we move from "equal gifts" to a concern over hierarchy).

- size:
  - Luke 6:12-16. Jesus chooses the Twelve Apostles.
  - Luke 8:1-3. Some women accompany Jesus.
  - Acts 6:1-7. Growth of the Church leads to new roles.
- interdependence:
  - 2 Cor 8:1-15. Encouragement to be generous and share in collection for the church in Jerusalem.
- health or sickness:
  - 2 Cor 2:5-11. Forgiveness for the offender.
- need for nourishment:
  - John 6:32-40. "I am the bread of life."
- an "immune system":
  - Matthew 16:5-12. Beware the Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

#### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #14**

**Purpose: To gain insights about the congregation and to experiment with the theories outlined in the manual.**

- After briefly describing the characteristics of a system as outlined on Handout #9 and explored in *Called to Teach and Learn*, Chapter 8. Invite learners to describe their congregation using the listed characteristics as a guidelines for discussion.
- What do we discover together about our congregation and the catechetical task that we are called into? For example, what is the "character" of the congregation?
- Talk about the history of the congregation describing its beginning, childhood, adolescence, etc. Invite persons with the longest historical memory to share their reflections of times they remember that are characteristic of those stages.

#### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #15**

**Purpose: To gain insights about the biblical church and the church today in the light of the theories presented in Chapter 8, *Called to Teach and Learn*.**

The passages with each characteristic in the list above provide some examples for looking at the early church in light of the theory presented in this chapter. Can you think of other texts that seem to relate to the various categories? What does the Bible tell us about the characteristics of the early church? Discuss the differences and similarities present in the church today as compared to the pictures we have of the biblical church in the texts.

For the Christian, the primary system is the Body of Christ, the Church, but the Christian must be deeply involved in the other systems that touch one's life as well. It is expected that Christians will influence those other systems in a way that expresses the call for justice and liberation.

*One other insight from systems theory is that every system has both an aim, typically seen in a statement of mission, and a primary task. What is important is that every system critically and honestly looks at its life, names*

*both its aim and primary task, and then seeks to close the gap. It does this by seeing that what the system does and how it lives, corresponds and contributes to its stated aim. (p 101)*

#### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #16.**

**Purpose: To understand systems theories by reflecting on the system that is the congregation.**

- Invite congregational leaders (vestry members, clergy, other elected and appointed leaders) to share the mission statement and goals of the congregation.
- Ask: How can we work together more closely to empower the congregation for ministry?
- What questions and concerns are raised by learners as they reflect on the mission statement and goals?

From the manual, p 101: *...we need to work for radical change in the systems of the world by exerting direct pressure for political, social, and economic justice.* Evaluate the congregation's mission statement and goals in the light of this statement.

## Chapter 9

### Insights from Anthropology

*Anthropology's major contribution to catechetics is its understanding of culture. Culture is humankind's learned, shared understanding of life (world-view or social construction of reality), our ways of living (ethos or behavioral dispositions), and our resulting artifacts. (p 104)*

Share the ideas about the culture of geography, *Called to Teach and Learn*, pages 105-106, and outlined on handout #10. Include the **practical application** from the handout that is designed to help participants reflect on their own insights about the culture of geography.

#### HANDOUT #10

##### The Culture of Geography

###### Rural culture

- Apt to be more tradition-bound and more resistant to change
- Customs determine social controls rather than codified laws
- Social relationships apt to be long lasting
- Gender and age roles more prescribed
- Lives of people self-sufficient

###### Urban culture

- More future-oriented and characterized by continuous change
- Traditional values may be questioned
- Codified laws govern behavior
- Relationships more transitory
- Age and gender roles blurred
- Achievement becomes increasingly important
- Participation in church may be more limited

###### Suburban culture

- More comfort-oriented
- Social controls are reinvested in neighborhood and family
- Desire for homogeneous neighborhoods
- High mobility
- Gradual dissipation of religious, ethnic, or racial subcultures

#### PRACTICAL APPLICATION #17

**Purpose: To provide an experience to enable participants to reflect on their own insights about the culture of geography. (This application is also included on Handout #10 p.70 )**

Form the meeting space into an imaginary map of the United States. Point out the Pacific Northwest, the Southeast, Midwest, and so forth. Persons go and stand in the space that represents that geographic area where their most formative years were spent. Be sure to set apart a space for persons raised outside the United States. If there are several persons who grew up in a particular region ask them to discuss and be ready to share the following questions as a geographic group. For smaller groups, combine persons from several areas for discussion but ask learners to report individually for their area.

- What was distinctive about growing up in your geographic area?
- Were you influenced mostly by rural, urban, or suburban culture?

- How accurate are the characteristics just shared?
- How do your formative experiences contribute to an understanding of catechetical ministry in your congregation?
- Briefly share the stories and reflections from each geographic group with all the participants. Begin each group's response with the sharing of three distinct, common memories that characterize their geographic regions.

Talk about the theory of high and low context cultures and other points made in Chapter 9 summarized below.

**Low and high context cultures** is another way of describing distinctions between peoples. (p 106-108) **Low context** describes the typical Northern European or North American culture. Words carry a direct message. The written word, schedules, self reliance, clocks and calendars, and specialization, all describe the low context culture that we may be most familiar with in our congregations.

Persons from **high context** cultures approach life in vastly different ways. *In high context cultures the message is in the context more than in the words.* (p.107) People touch more. Their schedule is set by tides, dawn and dusk, and personal needs. Worship may start "when the people and the Spirit are ready" rather than at 11 o'clock Sunday morning!

*Anthropologists also speak of technological and personal cultures, which correspond in some ways to low and high context cultures. In technological cultures, the workplace dominates the home, while in personal cultures, the opposite is true. Technological cultures emphasize the intellect and objective rational truth. They are lineal and move toward a defined future; they value pragmatism, individualism, and competition. Such cultures focus on the particular and are literalistic, expect high internal control, and tend to specialize.*

*Personal cultures, on the other hand, emphasize the intuitive. They are cyclical and tend to be tradition-oriented, valuing a memory of the past. They are more personal and subjective, valuing the community and cooperation. They focus on the general and tend to be holistic in their approach to life.* (p 108)

For a congregation to function effectively together, an appreciation of these different cultural differences is imperative.

Culture and language:

*The grammar and words we use determine how we think and act. As language changes, so do we.* (p 108)

Gender and culture:

*How we understand being men and women is a result of culture as well as biology.* (p 109)

Learning and culture:

In North America we tend to value formal education in classroom settings with professional teachers and age-grouped students. Competition and achievement are stressed. In other cultures persons view education in a less structured and a more family and community centered life-long endeavor.

Handout #11 outlines the content found under the heading "Symbols, Myths, and Rites, pages 110-113.

## HANDOUT # 11

## **Symbols, Myths, and Rites**

*Cultural anthropology asserts the centrality of symbols, myths, and rites, in structuring a people's thoughts, experiences, and behaviors. (p 110)*

- *Symbols are agents of revelation. As outward and visible signs of inward and invisible reality, sacraments are the ultimate symbols. (p 110)*
- *Myths are symbolic stories, sacred narratives that point beyond themselves to reveal a truth that cannot be described in ordinary speech. Myths establish our view of the world, our perceptions of reality. (p 111-13)*  
The Bible offers many powerful "mythic" stories that form our "world view" as Christians and as Jews.
- *Rites are repetitive, symbol actions (word action and deed actions) that express and manifest the community's sacred story or myths.*
  - *Rites of intensification or community (Holy Eucharist)*
  - *Rites of transition (Baptism, funeral, wedding, childhood to adulthood etc.) (p. 111)*
    - Three parts to rite of transition:
      - Separation ceremonial
      - Period of transition (liminality)
      - Reincorporation into the community

## **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #18**

**Purpose: To gain understanding about rites of passage through analysis of such a rite in the Book of Common Prayer, and in designing a practical rite of passage for possible congregational use.**

- Study "The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage" (BCP 423-432).
- Talk about the three parts of the rite as learners study the written text and the rubrics describing the actions of the rite.
- Briefly outline a separation rite for a person leaving the congregation based on the three parts of a transition rite and the study of the marriage rite.

### **Or**

- **Discuss:** Ask participants to describe times of transition in their lives. What kinds of formal and informal transition rites did they experience at those points. Describe those rites in light of the theory that you have just shared.
- **Ask:** What do we learn about the need for transition rites that help children and adults face important turning points in their lives? What kinds of transition rites do we have—or need to create—that help the whole congregation move through times of transition?
- **Ask:** How does this discussion speak to our ministry as catechists?

Write the following definitions on chalk board or flip chart and share the theory found on pp 113-114.

## **The Acquisition of Culture**

- Enculturation: *Process by which culture is transmitted from generation to generation.*
- Acculturation: *Learning to live in a second culture while maintaining loyalty to one's own.*
- Assimilation: *Persons leave behind the culture in which they were raised and enculturated into a new culture...in terms of religion, this is the process of conversion.*
- Enculturation: *The process by which a faith tradition becomes intertwined with its cultural context. (pp 113-114)*

## Chapter 10

### Insights from Pedagogy

*"Pedagogy's major contribution is in terms of learning and teaching." (p 116)*

Begin a discussion on Chapter 10 with a time of reflection among participants.

#### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #19**

**Purpose: To reflect on participant's learning experiences as a way of approaching learning theory.**

Learners meet in groups of five to seven persons with each participant describing in some detail a particularly satisfying learning experience. They are to relate the experience in such a way that others can identify with what they went through in the learning process. The experience can include learning how to drive, how to cook, or the intricacies of understanding mathematics or bio-chemistry. After each experience is shared, participants reflect on what went into the learning experience that made it effective for the learner. List the characteristics of each experience and be ready to share with the entire group.

Leader briefly shares ideas about learning and teaching (pp 116-118) seeing how many remarks from *Called to Teach and Learn* match the characteristics discovered in the groups. Use Handout #12 as an outline for the theory presentation.

#### **HANDOUT # 12**

##### **Teaching and Learning**

##### **Decisions that must be made**

- **Who:** *Who are we to teach, what are they like, how do they learn, what do they already know, and what do they want to learn?*
- **What and Why:** *What concretely do we intend to teach, and why do we believe it is important?*
- **When and where:** *What are the boundaries of time and space?*
- **How:** *How will we arrange the environment for learning and what will we do to assist the learner, and how will we help the learner evaluate his or her learning? (p 117)*

##### **Goals of Teaching**

*We need to be clear on goals, so we can choose the most appropriate models for teaching. Some of those models and their ends are:*

- *information-processing, which aims at the acquisition of knowledge and its comprehension;*
- *group interaction, which aims at social responsibility and decision making;*
- *indirect communication, which aims at self-examination and encounter with truth;*
- *personal development, which aims at helping persons to mature and express themselves;*
- *and action-reflection, which aims at doing the truth.*

*In each of these models, teachers and learners have different roles. Also, each has a different strategy.*

*Teaching can involve hearing (verbal), seeing (visual), simulation, and direct experience. Verbal teaching through talking, workbooks, and the like is the least effective form of teaching. Learners remember the least from this method, and it is valuable only if used in connection with other forms. Visual learning using flannel boards, films, blackboards, pictures, television, computers, videos, CDs, or CD Roms and the like, when used with verbal learning, is more effective but still limited. Stimulated learning through playing with puppets, simulation game, drama and other art activities increases learning significantly. But, direct experience, in which the learner is fully involved is the strongest learning of all. Teachers should, therefore, attempt to involve as much direct experience as possible.*

*It is important to acknowledge that when we make a decision to teach one thing, we have made a decision not to teach something else. That decision needs to be justified. And the way we choose to teach may influence learning more than what we teach. For example, to provide external rewards for learning implies that there is no intrinsic reward in learning. More seriously, it implies that God gives us what we deserve and that we can earn rewards from God. This violates the Church's teaching that God gives us what we need, not what we deserve, and that the grace of God is free and does not need to be earned. (p 118)*

### **Basic List of Criteria for Choosing Curriculum Resources (pp 121-122)**

*Note: A curriculum is a course to be run. It requires a beginning and end. (p 119)*

*Curriculum: from the Latin meaning "course" or "career." A regular course of study or training. (Oxford English Dictionary)*

- How compatible is the material with the congregation's mission, values and beliefs? Is the resource compatible with Episcopal tradition?*
- How clearly and accurately does the resource provide information? Are the purposes and objectives clearly stated? Does it accomplish its stated purpose?*
- Are the biblical, theological, and ethical assumptions of the material consistent with our tradition? How is biblical material used? How are learners encouraged to connect their life experiences to the text? To think theologically?*
- Is the resource sensitive to the developmental needs of the learner? Developmentally, spiritually, physically, intellectually? How does the resource motivate the learner? Does it raise questions rather than answer them? Does it stimulate inquiry and discovery? Does it allow for diversity of feelings and opinions? Does the material involve a variety of types of activities as part of the learning process? Are the activities also developmentally appropriate? Does it teach anything that will have to be unlearned later?*
- Is the resource sensitive to the issues of gender, class, race, ethnicity, and culture? Is it written in nonsexist and nonracist language? Do both the text and visual images found in the resource portray positive images of women and men, as well as persons from different racial and ethnic groups? What message are portrayed by the art work?*
- Does the resource encourage the learner to explore the physical, political, social, and economic structure of the events and situations to be studied?*

- *How does the resource demonstrate the connection between the Church and global issues? Between the living of the Christian life and seeking justice and peace in the world?*
- *How is the resource designed? Is it attractive and user-friendly? Does the resource strive to meet the expectations of both the learners and teachers? How adaptable is the resource to groups of various sizes? Different settings?*
- *What training and skills are needed to effectively use the resource? What preparation is required, and are these demands realistic in your setting? (Called to Teach and Learn, pp 121-122)*

**A question to keep in mind:** *"What is basic? (as in "back to basics") Is it knowing about the Bible and its contents, or is it the ability to be engaged by the Scriptures and to interpret the meaning and implications of that experience? Are we primarily to be concerned about making a difference in the lives of others, or in our own lives?" (p 117-118)*

## **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #20**

**Purpose: To use the basic theory on teaching, learning, and curriculum development as a way of evaluating the congregation's curricula resources.**

- Briefly study and talk about the curricula presently used in your congregation. Evaluate the curricula on the basis of teaching models outlined briefly on page 118 of *Called to Teach and Learn* and reprinted in the first section of Handout #12.
- Next, evaluate the curriculum in terms of the criteria listed on the same handout. (Consider giving each learner or group of learners one of the criteria to evaluate and report back to the whole group). If your congregation does not have a formal curriculum, evaluate what is done formally or informally using the tools of *Called to Teach and Learn*.

Talk about the "hidden and null curriculum" that children, youth, and adults are learning through the entire life of the congregation. *There is also always an overt, implicit, or "hidden curriculum." What we intend persons to learn, and what they really learn, are often different because we neglect the implicit curriculum and the fact that how persons learn becomes what they learn. There is also a "null curriculum" comprised of that which we neglect to teach.* (p 119) In other words, if children are taught about the Bible in a way that does not engage them, their real learning may be that the Bible is a boring book that has little meaning to them.

It is significant that the terms most often used to describe the Christian's journey is "pilgrimage or "journey." A pilgrimage or journey involves a "way to go," or a "course to be run." The terms denote a lifelong "curriculum" that calls us out to follow Christ.

# **CALLED TO TEACH AND LEARN**

## **LEADER'S OUTLINE FOR PART THREE:**

### **CATECHETICAL PRACTICE**

**A**s mentioned in the introduction, Part Three of *Called to Teach and Learn* deals with the day-to-day practice of catechetics. Call Part III "the rubber hits the road" section. Given the theory, how do we do the ministry?

## **Chapter 11**

### **Understanding the Needs of Children**

*The Church should provide appropriate and faithful catechesis for all members of the community. Intergenerational learning is particularly important.* (p 128) Our tendency, modeled on the secular education model, may be to segregate children into graded groups, but learning happens naturally between the ages. The elders share their wisdom with the younger. The younger teach the elders to dream and see life fresh and new again.

#### **Children (0-12)**

Children need to feel loved and accepted by the congregation. The liturgy is the place where the community gathers regularly for praise and thanksgiving. Participation in that experience week after week is the primary formation experience of the pre-school child. Members of the congregation need to be aware of their ministry of welcome to the children in their midst, and model for the child the sense of awe, wonder, and praise they feel towards God. At the same time, the ministry of children needs to be recognized and affirmed. Often they are the ones who model that sense of awe and wonder to the adults! Children should be encouraged to participate in leading the liturgy as soon as possible. They can serve in the choir, and as acolytes. They can also serve as lectors and intercessors and go with Lay Eucharistic Ministers to take the sacrament to the shut-ins of the congregation.

Children need to have access to a space (preferably in the nave itself) where they can go if they feel the need to move about and change their activity. Loving and patient caregivers are available to be with the children. In a sense, young children will participate in the liturgy in their own way. A brief nap, looking at a book, playing quietly with a soft toy, or using crayons are ways they naturally respond to the experience of worship. (Think about ways that adults "tune in and out" during worship. A word in a prayer, an image shared in a sermon, can send our minds on their own journeys which may lead to insight and praise).

#### **The Preschool years (p 131)**

*The preschool years are best described as "feelings-oriented".* (p 131) The "curriculum" is congregational life where feelings of love and acceptance (or anger and judgment) are experienced. The "curriculum" is the child's life in the home, in the congregation, and in the wider world.

### **The Years of Middle Childhood (p 133-136)**

Children are at the stage where they can begin to develop physical skills in sports and daily living. They can enjoy increasing proficiency in a variety of mental and physical areas. They are able to think rationally and have moved beyond simpler ways of understanding. An increased awareness of success and failure becomes part of their feelings as they face an increasingly demanding and competitive world. Children's primary focus and source for nurture gradually shifts from parents to peers. Group norms as well as family expectations shape their moral development.

Handout #13 provides guidelines for discussion for Practical Application #21 based on pp 132-136 and pp 56-62, *Called to Teach and Learn*.

### **HANDOUT # 13**

#### **Understanding the Needs of Children (0-12 )**

##### **Catechesis for the preschool child**

*Catechesis for this age group should provide many activities of formation and instruction, although preschoolers' inability to "think about thinking" still limits reflection. (p 132)*

- Liturgical catechesis: children are an integral part of the Eucharist week-by-week.
- Ethical catechesis: ... *should offer formation opportunities to hear stories about a loving God and about people who respond to God in love and obedience, along with many opportunities to show love towards friends. Instruction can be offered through discussions and in spontaneously arising classroom situations about being kind to others, resolving conflicts peaceably, respecting others' rights, empathizing with those who are sad or joyful, and asking for forgiveness from friends whom they have hurt. (p 132)*
- Spiritual catechesis: Opportunities for spontaneous prayer and praise. Prayer ritual in the home. Memorize words of prayers from Bible, BCP, Hymnal, and other sources.
- Pastoral Catechesis: Provide opportunities to show care including visiting sick with adults.
- Ecumenical catechesis: Bringing an unchurched child to Church. Recognize that "ecumenical" includes care for the whole of creation as well as the relationship between Christian denominations.

##### **Catechesis for Middle Childhood**

- Liturgical catechesis: Focus on the stories and traditions that lie behind the liturgy. Help the child explore more abstract understandings of *symbols and sacraments and to order Bible stories into a narrative of salvation history. (p 134)* Provide "up front" leadership opportunities for children. (Choir, acolytes, intercessors, lectors)
- Instruction: More systematic study of Bible, BCP, Hymnal, and elements of worship. Hear adults talk about their faith and ministry.
- Ethical catechesis: Guide the formation of "Christian character traits" through reflecting and analyzing children's experiences with others. Share stories of *those who demonstrated uncommon qualities and acts of Christian*

*character.* (p 135)

- Spiritual catechesis: Encourage children to *form a personal, prayerful relationship with God, and the catechist should provide many opportunities for this age child to join in mission and ministry projects with their families and other members of the congregation.* (p135) Biblical formation and instruction comes from becoming immersed in social justice and compassion that lies at the heart of biblical faith. Reflection on how the biblical word touches present realities in community and world.
- Ecumenical catechesis: Expose children in positive ways to other denominations and faith traditions. Make connections between their growing understanding of conservation and ecology with Christian call for stewardship.

## **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #21**

**Purpose: To reflect on and evaluate the catechesis of children in the congregation.**

- Spend some time talking about what participants know about the young child from the experience of *being* a young child, parenting the young child, or observing and sharing life with young children in a variety of settings. Next, talk about experience with middle childhood or elementary school children.
- What has the group learned that can be applied to catechesis of children in the congregation?
- Study the dimensions of catechetical ministry outlined on pages 132-136 in *Called to Teach and Learn* and reproduced in Handout #13. Talk about how in practical terms catechesis can be carried out in the congregation for the preschool-and elementary-school-age children. (These categories were introduced on pages 56-62 of *Called to Teach and Learn*. See Handout #3).
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the present catechetical process in the congregation?

## Chapter 12

### Understanding the Needs of Youth

*Youth have special needs, and it is important that they not be completely isolated in youth catechesis and youth groups, but integrated into the life of the congregation. They also must not be viewed as a group. Each is a distinct individual with special needs. Placing children and youth solely in age groups is to be discouraged. Youth often drift away from the Church because the Church ignores their needs. Youth have a need to give their lives to a cause, to be active in the life of the congregation, especially its outreach and worship, and to experience hospitality to their psychological, intellectual, and political needs. Between twelve and eighteen, youth either begin to abandon the Church and its faith, or they become more deeply committed. Special efforts to encourage the latter need to be developed. To do this we need to emphasize the "personal-experiential," the intellectual, and service/social action dimensions of the Christian life of faith. An increased search for truth, goodness, and beauty; an increased interest in the spiritual life; and an increased concern for justice and peace often accompany the adolescent years. (p 138)*

#### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #22**

**Purpose: To stimulate discussion and learning about the needs of youth in the congregation.**

- 1) Furnish learners with a copy of this chapter to read ahead of time.
- 2) At the session place "notable quotations" found on Handout 14 on slips of newsprint or card stock and place them around the meeting place.  
(You may want to enlarge the handout for ease in reading).
- 3) Ask participants to move around the space going from quote to quote recording the numbers that raise the most response in them.
- 4) They are to go back and look over the quotations again settling on three quotations that they have the strongest interest in.
- 5) Leader calls out the number of the quotations and tallies the number of persons who have chosen that number.
- 6) Point out those quotations that seem to have drawn the greatest response.
- 7) If the group numbers over six, form small groups for dialogue formed at least in part from the cluster of quotations they have focused on. For smaller groups, simply talk about those quotations that generated the most interest.
  - What was it about this quotation that drew your attention?
  - What experience lies behind your interest?
  - How does the quotation address a personal issue for you?
  - Where do you find yourself disagreeing with a statement
  - What do you learn from this quotation that suggest new approaches to "youth ministry" in the congregation or diocese?

## Chapter 13

### Understanding the Needs of Young Adults, Middle Adults, and Older Adults

*Young adults are increasingly a distinct group of persons with special needs. The generation born 1961-1981 is coming of age with the realities of television and high technology as constant companions, the challenges of newly divided and blending families, a job market that is the worst in recent memory, the environmental crisis, and an economic future that is sometimes termed "downwardly mobile." Some of these young adults will have access to higher education, but many will not. Both need to be included in the general catechetical ministry of the congregation, and to be ministered with in terms of their special needs. (p 156)*

#### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #23**

**Purpose: To explore the content of Chapter 13 by reflecting on participant's own life experiences.**

- Gather adults of mixed age together. Read the opening summary (see above) of issues facing young adults. Read the issues "by title" for each adult age group from Handout 15 (p.78) (Young Adults, Middle Adults, Older Adults). Drawing on their own experiences, what issues ring true for participants and their peers?
- What issues would they add?
- Encourage the sharing of life stories so that the issues are shared at a deeper level than simply naming them.
- Read the quotation: *As in the case of ministry with youth, the question is not How do we get young adults more involved in Church? but rather "How do we get the Church more involved with young adults?" (p 159)*
- Questions: How is the congregation addressing the life issues we face together? What do our stories say about the need for a variety of approaches to catechesis? How are we calling ourselves to deeper faith in light of the issues we face together?

#### **HANDOUT 15**

##### **Some Life Issues facing Young Adults (18-35)**

- No clear sense of entering adulthood
- What kind of life commitments to make
- Stretched out time to begin making those commitments
- Job market unstable. No such thing as permanent employment
- Deferred decisions about making life-relation commitments
- More alternatives to getting married
- Young adults in non-traditional relationships and vocations may feel left out of congregational life where the assumption is "marriage and family"
- Searching for faith in and out of the Christian church

### **Some Life Issues facing Middle Adults (35-65)**

- "What next?" is the question often being asked
- More complicated marriage and other committed relationships. Dual career tracks, etc.
- New employment reality may mean constant anxiety over job
- Caring for adult children as well as parents who become more child-like with increasing dependency.
- Re-examination of priorities as milestones are passed
- Need to deal with life issues with others facing similar issues
- Desire to make a difference in the world

### **Some Life Issues facing Older Adults (65+)**

- Health issues may become increasing problems
- More leisure time can be a gift or a terrible burden
- Life and death issues are confronted more frequently
- Increasing loss of freedom and abilities
- Important bearers of the story to share with younger generations

### **Add your own issues for any age group**

### **Reflections on adult learning styles and needs**

The theories shared in Chapter 7, "Insights from Psychology" must be kept in mind as we plan for adult catechesis. There are adults, still functioning out of the "concrete thinking stage," who have never been encouraged to reflect critically on their understanding of faith. Increasingly, persons come to adulthood with almost no understanding of the Bible or doctrines of the Christian faith. They may feel guilty for not being more knowledgeable, and may be afraid to ask too many questions assuming that everyone else is well versed in Christian principles.

*The Bible includes some complex, abstract thinking and the Christian faith holds up a high stage of moral and faith development as an ideal. Engaging in this kind of thinking requires learning how to do it and practice in doing it.* (p 163) What does this statement say about catechesis of the adult?

Persons have different learning styles. Passive listening is the least effective way of learning for most adults. The offering of a variety of learning experiences is crucial. Looking at how persons learn outside the church setting can enhance our understanding of how best to do catechesis in the church.

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #24**

**Purpose: To use the "Principles of Participatory Adult Learning" as a check list for evaluating present catechetical programs, and as a way to look towards future program development.**

- Using Handout #16, "Principles of Participatory Adult Learning," reflect on the principles in the light of participants own experiences of adult learning.

- Add or change the list of principles as a result of the discussion.

## **HANDOUT 16**

### **Principles of Participatory Adult Education**

**(From *Adult Education Idea Book*, the Kerygma Program)**

- Adults are responsible for their own learning, rather than expecting the leader or book to be the authority and primary source of learning.
- Adults learn best when they can participate directly in the process of their own learning, by making decisions about what they will study and how they will interact with the subject matter and other learners.
- Learning is reinforced best when adults have opportunity to practice skills and express ideas in their own words.
- Learning occurs within the environment of trusting relationships, developed in a setting where participants are encouraged to share feelings, needs, and concerns and where their contributions are respected and valued.
- Adults are motivated by cooperative collaborate activities. It is not necessary to use competitive activities to motivate them to participate or learn.
- Adults who have a positive sense of self-worth are less threatened by new information and experience. Strategies that enhance self-worth will also enhance learning.
- Adults learn more when they experience satisfaction and success. Providing a variety of activities at which participants can succeed enhances their learning.

### **Reflections on adult learning styles and needs, continued**

Not only do adults evidence a variety of learning styles, but the time available for adults to engage in catechesis is increasingly limited. A library of good resources including books, videos, computer programs, internet web sites, audio tapes, and the likes will enable adult learners to design programs that meet their own schedules and learning styles. The catechist can serve as mentor in the learning process. One of the roles of this mentor can be matching persons with gifts to share with those seeking growth in certain areas.

In a time when social scientists are telling us that persons are becoming increasingly isolated, it is important to encourage group interaction at least on an occasional basis. Gather persons together who are engaged in a variety of "home study" activities for occasional sessions where they can share their discoveries and insights together. Offering a variety of learning experiences may seem overwhelming for the small congregation, but think in terms of matching adult learners with individuals who can share knowledge and experience on a one-to-one basis. A selection of individualized learning resources can be assembled even in the smallest congregation.

It is essential to look at the great diversity of people not only in the congregation, but in the surrounding community. "How are we relating to the diversity of people around us?" must be the constant question raised by the congregation.

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## Chapter 15

### The Catechist

#### Person, Function and Training

The priest is the primary catechist of the congregation. That is the starting point for discussion of the person, function and training of the catechist. "Now you are called to work as a pastor, priest, and teacher, together with your bishop and fellow presbyters..." (BCP, p 531) Those are the words that frame the understanding of the role of priest in the life of the church. The priest is called to model the importance of the teaching ministry. The role of teacher/catechist is so important that the canons of the church provide for the licensing of lay persons to take the priest's role as chief catechist when there is no resident clergy available to the congregation. This statement about the role of priest as primary catechist is not meant to denigrate the role of lay catechists, but rather to raise the vision of the importance of catechesis in the life of the church. All too often catechists find themselves cut off from the rest of the congregational leadership. They function separately from those who plan parish worship and program. The Prayer Book emphasizes a common ministry of teaching and learning.

*Every Christian, including children and youth, is a catechist or teacher, in that we share a common life of faith and influence each other. The chief catechist for the Church is the bishop, and as the bishop's person in a congregation, the presbyter (priest) is given a prime responsibility for the congregation's catechetical ministry as a whole. Beyond that, each and every congregation needs to identify, call, and equip lay people who have the vocation and the gifts of a catechist, that is a teacher, for this important ministry within the congregation. Perhaps all teachers should be confirmed and authorized by the bishop for their role as teachers, and be known as catechists. (p 181)*

Because of the crucial importance of catechesis, catechists need to be formed intentionally in their ministry. Their lives will teach (or fail to teach) the principles of the gospel as much as anything they say. The intentional calling, training and equipping of catechists as outlined in this chapter may seem overwhelming in light of the fact that getting people to commit to teaching is often so difficult. The assumption of this chapter is that when catechesis is held out as being of highest importance, the congregation will take this ministry more seriously. The bishop and priest model that importance by exercising their teaching function openly before the congregation.

#### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #26**

**Purpose: To encourage participants to create a vision of catechesis that will shape the life and ministry of the congregation.**

Talk about how teachers/catechists are recruited, trained and supported in the congregation today. Share a vision of what the catechetical ministry might look like in the light of *Called to Teach and Learn*. What would recruiting, training and supporting catechists look like if we take *Called to Teach and Learn* seriously? What are obstacles to the vision and some ways we might overcome those obstacles?

## Chapter 16

### The Catechetical Ministry Organization and Administration

#### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION.**

#### **Purpose: To build a network of support for catechetical ministry.**

Talk about support for catechetical ministry at the Episcopal Church Center, the province, diocese, and seminary, and the ecumenical community. Invite persons who know about the ministries to describe what is going on at the present time and how the congregation is involved in available programs.

Discuss: What do we need from our staff at the Episcopal Church Center, from the province, the diocese, the ecumenical community and the seminaries of the church?

*Teachers/catechists, authorized by the rector and commissioned by the congregation, need to be supported and nourished for their responsibilities. This will include continuing spiritual formation as well as instruction in Scripture, theology, ethics, church history, the social sciences, and catechetical theory and practice. It will also mean providing them with supervision, as well as with material and personal support and assistance. (p 190)*

With this statement in mind begin the process of planning your local catechetical ministry as outlined in the Appendix, *Called to Teach and Learn* pp 192-199. [Copies of the Handouts follow. (us this sentence for the web browsers)]

# DISCOVERING CALLED TO TEACH AND LEARN

## INTRODUCTION

**F**or the first time in thirty years, the Episcopal Church has a vision of the crucial role of Christian education available to guide the thinking and planning of congregational leaders. *Called to Teach and Learn* was published to "lift up a vision of Christian education and to provide guidelines for planning and implementing Christian education in various contexts." (*Called to Teach and Learn*, p 8) Between the covers of this resource is a vision that can shape the life of the entire congregation in dynamic ways. *Called to Teach and Learn* was "written for clergy and laity with some foundational knowledge in theology and education, who have primary responsibility for the Church's educational ministry within congregations, dioceses, provinces, seminaries and the national staff." (p 9) This is not a resource to hand to the newly recruited church school teacher in the last week of August. It is a serious document that needs to be translated and interpreted for those in the teaching ministry.

We now offer *Discovering Called to Teach and Learn* as a way of helping congregational leaders bridge the gap between the theories outlined in *Called to Teach and Learn* and the needs of the typical teachers, worship leaders, vestry persons and other volunteer leaders of the congregation. *Discovering Called to Teach and Learn* is designed to assist leaders in offering a series of orientation sessions, or to establish a course of independent study and reading for the individual. Four or five sessions are ideal, but you will need to find the schedule that fits your situation. Choose those areas of study that seem most important to you. Save less critical topics for future training sessions. This resource is not intended to be a specific design for a formal course of study. Rather we offer a variety of ideas and suggestions for sharing and experiencing the important concepts included in *Called to Teach and Learn*.

Everything we do together in the congregation is a part of the educational process! That is the theory that informs *Called to Teach and Learn*.

"It is the life lived together as a Christian people in the congregation of our churches that teaches - or fails to teach - the values and direction of the gospel. How we welcome the stranger, care for the child, settle our differences, and make decisions, is an integral part of the Christian education 'program' of the congregation. Moments of focused learning need to be offered so that members of the congregation can make sense of the events of their lives together. The goal of the focused events is to help the people see as they have never seen before. Everyone in the congregation is a learner and everyone is a teacher." (*Called to Teach and Learn*, p 5)

This quotation is crucial in understanding the approach of *Called to Teach and Learn*. The formal moments of planned education such as the church school are an important "ingredient" in the mix, but they are only a part of the whole picture. The educational sessions for adult, youth, and children provide times to reflect on what participants are experiencing in their lives and to help make sense out of it. The content that is shared in those focused events sets up an opportunity for participants to be in dialogue with the Tradition that has been handed on for generations. We share the stories and wisdom of our Tradition in such a way that participants find themselves in

conversation with their rich heritage of faith. The Bible is the primary resource for our memory. The Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal are companions to the scriptures. Christians, past and present, join in the conversation.

Because *Called to Teach and Learn* is concerned with the whole life of the Christian and the congregation, the language and theory associated with education is not as helpful as the more traditional language that grew out of the experience of the early church. That is the language of "catechetics." To quote from the Guide. "The language of Christian education (also religious education) has traditionally been associated with schooling, knowledge about intellectual content, and instructional techniques (primarily with children). **Catechetics, on the other hand, has been concerned with aiding individuals and communities in acquiring and deepening the Christian life of faith.** Therefore the language of catechetics appears to be more consistent with the vision that informs this manual, providing us with a much broader and inclusive understanding of the Church's educational ministry." (*Called to Teach and Learn*, p 10)

With this approach in mind, we talk about "catechetics, catechist" and other words transliterated out of the Greek language that nurtured the early church. If the Greek words put you off, remember that we step into the Greek milieu every time we talk about the Episcopal church, celebrate the Holy Eucharist, ordain deacons, or introduce the catechism from the Prayer Book. **The approach of Called to Teach and Learn is to form Christians in a way that leads to ministry shaped by the Baptismal Covenant. The approach of Called to Teach and Learn is that catechesis leads to conversion. The goal is congregations empowered for Christian witness and ministry in the world. Using the language of catechesis is a constant reminder of our primary goal as leaders of the congregation.**

As stated above, this study guide is designed to help congregational leaders bridge the gap between theory and practice. The theories of Called to Teach and Learn need to be shared over time in a series of sessions where learners can engage the theory and make sense of it in their practice. Begin with an introductory session where participants have the opportunity to reflect on their own formation as Christians over the years.

In Part One of Called to Teach and Learn we explore the "aims and content of Christian faith and life." In Part Two the focus is on catechesis, "the process by which persons are fashioned into Christians within the life of the community of faith." What goes into catechesis? How does catechesis happen? What disciplines of study, praxis' and discovery are involved? Each chapter in this section looks at a different area of scholarly discipline. In Part Three we turn to the practice of catechetics. If we were writing a book for physicians, we would need to look at the practical side of carrying on a medical practice. Who are the patients and what are their needs? What equipment and organization is needed for the effective practice of medicine? How does the physician function in the practice and what ongoing training is required?

These are the kinds of questions Called to Teach and Learn deals with in the third major section. The Catechist has placed her or his "shingle" on the door. "The catechist is in." How does she understand those coming for catechesis. How does he keep his standards of practice up? How shall we organize the practice?

**Discovering Called to Teach and Learn is not a Reader's Digest version of the resource. Rather it is designed to be used alongside Called to Teach and Learn.** Both resources need to be studied as preparations for each session are made.

## **Features of Discovering: Called to Teach and Learn**

The study guide is divided into an introduction and three parts corresponding to the divisions in *Called to Teach and Learn*.

Each part of this study guide contains important quotations from *Called to Teach and Learn*. These quotations are always printed in italics with a direct page reference noted in parenthesis immediately after each quotation.

Comments are woven into the text to serve as models for the leader. These are points that the leader may want to raise with participants using her/his own words or adapting what we have written.

Handouts are provided to help participants understand the content and invite their participation in group activities. These handouts are printed in full at the appropriate point in the text, and are also printed in a separate section at the end of this resource for your convenience in copying the material. Chalkboard or flip chart summaries are suggested from time to time.

Group activities designed to lead participants into dialogue with the theories presented in *Called to Teach and Learn* are included in each session under the heading "Practical Application." These activities are designed to draw on the experiences of the participants and on the life of the congregation. In some cases these practical applications are printed on the handout so that groups or individuals can be self-guided.

Resources are named in a separate bibliography that is keyed to each chapter. *Called to Teach and Learn* is a valuable syllabus for leaders providing direction, insight and an overall view of the complex field of catechetics. It is designed to invite the reader into deeper exploration of the theories that inform the practice of the catechist.

## **Recruiting and Training Catechists**

The idea of making an in-depth study of a densely packed resource with volunteer teachers may seem a bit daunting. "I can't get my teachers out to one orientation day in the Fall let alone to a series of training sessions," may be an initial reaction.

The resource we seek to introduce takes the teaching ministry seriously. It takes worship seriously. It takes every aspect of congregational life seriously. Engaging persons in significant study starts with the way we recruit people into ministry. Never ask for volunteers to "teach Sunday School." Rather, write personal letters to prospective catechists and invite them into a ministry of raising up Christians for ministry and witness. Identify gifts and skills the recipient of the letter has displayed that would make her or him an ideal candidate for such an important ministry. Send the letter out six months ahead of time as an indication of just how important this ministry is. Use a similar process when inviting persons into other parish ministries as well. A part of the invitation to ministry is the invitation to required orientation sessions. Small congregations can combine their efforts or do the orientation individually. Leader and catechist meet informally to share content and experience over time.

## **A Suggested Introductory Session**

After talking about some of the ideas outlined above, invite participants into a time of story sharing that will help them understand their role as catechists. **Practical Application for Session One** outlined below includes

the questions raised at the first meeting of the task force called together by the Presiding Bishop in 1986 to develop a vision for Christian Education in the Episcopal Church. The reflections shared by the participants at that consultation, set the tone for the two years of study.

## **PRACTICAL APPLICATION #1**

**Purpose: To enable participants to learn from their own experience.**

Let's begin the discovery process by reflecting on our own "Christian education" experience. Think about how you would respond to these questions. **How did you come to your present faith commitments? More specifically, how were you formed as a Christian?** Meet with three or four other persons. Describe the people, the experiences, the study, the events that have formed and shaped you as a Christian over the years. After sharing stories, reflect together about the "ingredients" that went into those stories.

- Where did formation happen for you over the years?
- What role did worship play in your memory of important events?
- Where did your Christian role models come from?
- What do our stories say about our Christian education process in the congregation and wider church today?

<sup>1</sup>From the Glossary, page 11, *Called to Teach and Learn*.

<sup>2</sup>Praxis is "...understood as 'reflective action,' that is, a practice that is informed by theoretical reflection, or conversely, a theoretical reflection that is informed by practice ... the term praxis attempts to keep theory and practice together as dual and mutually enriching moments of the same intentional human activity." *Christian Religious Education: Sharing our story and Vision*, Thomas Groome, Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1980, p xvii