

Soul Purpose: Re-Imagining Faith Formation

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2018-10-01 Bishop's Leadership Conference Breakout Session - Day 1

Opening Ice Breaker: Cards of pictures that could represent God for us (see picture) What draws us? What it is that makes these pictures describe God for us.

What is Faith Formation?

"The church's educational mission is to provide an environment that cultivates an intimacy with God through one's mind as well as one's heart that continues through the lifespan."

(Sharon Ely Pearson. The Christian Educator's Handbook)

"Churches that practice intentional faith development know that it is always about content and relationships. Ideas change people, and people change people; and God uses both together to shape our lives in the image of Christ. Transformation comes through learning in community."

(Robert Schnase, Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations)

Through the Episcopal Church, God Transforms All People...

1. By developing new learning experiences, equipping disciples for life in a world of secular challenges and carefully listening
2. By seeking out diverse ways to empower action, evangelism, advocacy & collaboration in our contemporary global context.
3. By striving to be a loving and witnessing community,

(Michael Curry. The Charter for Life-Long Christian Formation, The Episcopal Church)

"The really inconvenient thing about being Christian is the fact that God is revealed in other people, and other people are annoying ... But I think the experience of bumping up against other people has changed me in ways that I never could have been changed if I was just reading books and practicing meditation."

(Nadia Bolz-Weber, Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People)

(discussion on what words in the above four definitions draw you....)

Faith Formation

I. What is the Environment

- a. Not 'school'
- b. Not 'work'

Is it warm? Welcoming? Not boring?

Balance of head & heart. Content & Community.

Goals & objectives sound like school – we want people to absorb the love of God.

Head & Heart. Is it transformational?

II. Transformational –

- a. Share an activity of church – outside of Sunday when you were inspired or transformed.

- live our faith.
 - i. Living in a place where we were the minority, had to
 - ii. Church gave up a close family time to minister to others – church was changed.
 - iii. The impact of simple gifts
- b. Share a learning experience in your faith life that has changed you.
 - i. Major life event, facing mortality, God gave me life.
 - ii. Hitting despair, but then saw the power of prayer.
 - iii. Cumulative changes

The church becomes witness to these transformational events – we have to be open to others in the midst of these events.

Walking beside each other.

Gathering together to share stories.

Getting out, together, out of our box and making changes in our community.

Connecting with others.

Faith Formation at OUR church

- Inside the box (within our church – Bible study, Recovery groups, etc.,)

- Seasonal (Lent study, etc.)

- Joining with other ministries (Kairos, Choir, Prayer groups)

- Outside the box (Soup Kitchens, Mission trips, etc)

Sue Tait at the Diocese – resources, library, etc.