

Intergenerational Catechist Leadership Program

Title III. Canon 4. Sec. 1 (a)

“A confirmed communicant in good standing or, in extraordinary circumstances, subject to guidelines established by the Bishop, a communicant in good standing, may be licensed by the Ecclesiastical Authority to serve as Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharist Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, Evangelist or Catechist. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons, and the duration of licenses shall be established by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry”

Seeking a need to further develop ministries of life-long Christian formation in the Diocese of Easton, Bishop Santosh Marray has envisioned a lay leadership program for those called to do God's work as *Intergenerational Catechist Leaders*. The Lay Catechist is a licensed ministry, according to the Canon's of the Episcopal Church, with the role of serving as “a teacher, lay or ordained who provides instruction in Christian faith” (Canon 4: Sect. 8).

According to Canon 4 of the Episcopal Church, the diocese is responsible for the development, discernment, and support for the gifts of all baptized persons in their ministry as Christians. One area is the development of lay ministries, particularly licensure of catechists. “*A catechist is a lay person authorized to prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith*” (Title III. Canon 4: Section 8).

Catechists follow a structured program of study and to be licensed must be found competent in the Holy Scriptures, the BCP and the Hymnal, church History, the church's Doctrine, and methods of catechesis (“Catechist”, Episcopal Church Glossary, retrieved from www.episcopalchurch.org)

While instruction is at the core of a traditional catechist, the role can be more expansive and be the source of more fully formed lay leaders in the parish. The *Intergenerational Catechist Leadership Program* will form rising leaders in the areas of teaching, ministry, church operations, small group facilitation, and evangelism. While Christian leadership may evolve organically when one is called by God, it is important that the diocese help laity, as intentional disciples, formally develop their leadership skills.

The Intergenerational Catechist Leadership Program will be a program of distinction with selected lay leaders nominated by their clergy. They will go through a rigorous process of discernment, interviewing, and final selection by the bishop. Students will complete a two-year period of instruction, experiential activities, and mentorship. Instruction will be provided by the Bishop's Institute, Clergy, and other Laity. At the end of the program, participants will receive lay Licensure as Catechists in the Episcopal Church and as graduates of the program they will be awarded a special stole and commendation by the Bishop of the Diocese of Easton. Lay Catechists are then deployed to large and/or small parishes, with the skills to assist clergy in formation of Christians in churches across the diocese.

The Program Curriculum was developed with significant input from the Episcopal Church, Anglican Communion and feedback from the Bishop's Annual Visitation to Parishes at open conversation forums for the past seven (7) years. The was program is developed in keeping with the diocese's vision and concentration on continued lay formation and empowerment.

DRAFT

Intergenerational Catechist Leadership Program

Diocese of Easton

Commissioned by

The Right Rev. Santosh Marray, D. Min., DD

XI Bishop of the Diocese of Easton



Developed by

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OVERVIEW OF DISCIPLESHIP AND CATECHESIS

The *Intergenerational Catechist Program*, offered by the Bishop's Institute, in the Diocese of Easton will offer a new opportunity for laity to grow in their call to leadership and serving Jesus Christ. Each Lay Catechist Leader may serve their local parish in helping others in their formation as Christians. Each participant will learn leadership skills, grow in knowledge and faith through studying the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, and other important documents of our Christian traditions. Finally, each participant who completes the program successfully will receive a Lay Catechist License, a certificate of completion, and a stole from Bishop Marray of the Diocese of Easton.

The focus of this program proposal is to develop *an Intergenerational Catechist Leadership Program*, training lay leaders to become intentional disciples of Christ, helping others come into their faith. Disciples who are followers of a master teacher have been evident in both the Old and New Testament. Moses, as a disciple, was called by God in the Old Testament, to “walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).

In the New Testament, we learn about Jesus Christ calling his first disciples, asking them simply to “Follow me and I will make you fish for the people” (Mark 1:17). Jesus schooled the disciples through his teachings, parables, healings, and miracles. He prepared them to continue the work of his ministry, after his crucifixion, death, and resurrection. The charge to teach Christians was made plain in the commissioning of the disciples. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus gave all authority to the disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). As the early church grew, it became more organized in preparing for baptism and education of new Christians. The theologian Tertullian, in the third century, wrote that Christians “are made (fashioned), not born”(Called to Teach and Learn, 1993). The Apostles went out into the world and taught that Christ died for our sins, and through baptism we have the promise of eternal life in God's Kingdom. Peter promised this to the early converts and their children: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38).

The church developed a structured form of teaching and learning for new Christians, called catechesis. Catechesis, a Greek verb “to cause sound in the ear or echo,” is the “process by which persons are fashioned into Christians within the life of a community of faith, including formation, education, and instruction/training (Called to Teach and Learn, Episcopal Church, 1994, p. 11).

CATECHISTS IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Episcopal Church is a Christian tradition informed by Scripture, Tradition, and Reason. Catechists help to form and teach Christians about God and faith. The *Book of Common Prayer* (1982) provides “An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism,” which focuses on many of the beliefs, practices, and teachings of the Church (pp. 845-862). The catechism is used and taught by

priests, deacons, and lay catechists to serve as an outline of instruction. The catechism is in a question-and-answer format for the ease of learning about the faith. Lay Catechists are governed as follows:

- A confirmed adult lay person may be licensed as a catechist by the bishop or ecclesiastical authority of the diocese.
- A catechist is a lay person authorized to prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.
- The selection, training, and continuing education, deployment, and licensing of lay catechists is under the direction of The Bishop and Commission on Ministry.
- Lay Catechists follow a structured program of study and to be licensed must be found competent in the Holy Scriptures, the BCP and the Hymnal, church History, the church's Doctrine, and methods of catechesis (“Catechist”, Episcopal Church Glossary, retrieved from www.episcopalchurch.org; Canon 4: Sect 8).

VISION FOR INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES: CATECHIST LEADERS

According to Canon 4 of the Episcopal Church, the diocese is responsible for the development, discernment, and support for the gifts of all baptized persons in their ministry as Christians. Data from the House of Deputies Committee, on *State of the Church Survey* (2020) of deputies and their congregations, found that 644 respondents identified lack of lay leadership training as one of the major obstacles to ministry, second overall to finances (Blue Book, 80th Convention, p. 171). In *Parousia-God's Vision for God's Church (2020-2030) on the Eastern Shore of Maryland*, Bishop Santosh Marray established The Bishop's Institute, with the purpose “...to form and educate the baptized into intentional disciples, making them advocates for God's vision; vessels of God's mercy and agents of God's love to a broken and hurting world. Education and formation are the route for advancing the ideals and values of Jesus.” (Parousia II, p. 12). The education and formation of lay ministry is a particular emphasis of the Institute.

The Bishop's Institute, under the umbrella of the Commission on Ministry, has served as a vehicle offering Christian formation, training, and education for laity in the Diocese of Easton. With the approval of the *150th Diocesan Convention of Easton* (2018), The Bishop's Institute has flourished, offering training to over two-hundred lay leaders since January 2000, despite a period of shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the Institute has included the licensure of eighty-five Eucharistic Ministers, forty-five Eucharistic Visitors, and forty-four Worship Leaders. Additional training included preparing twenty discernment groups to help aspiring laity to the diaconate and priesthood. The result of these programs is the growth and development of emerging leaders across the diocese.

Seeking a need to further develop ministries of life-long Christian formation in the Diocese of Easton, Bishop Santosh Marray has envisioned a leadership program for those called to do God's work as *Intergenerational Catechist Leaders*. The Lay Catechist is a licensed ministry, according to the Canon's of the Episcopal Church, with the role of serving as "a teacher, lay or ordained who provides instruction in Christian faith" (Canon 4: Sect. 8). While instruction is at the core of a traditional catechist, the role can be more expansive and be the source of more fully formed lay leaders in the parish. The *Intergenerational Catechist Leadership Program* will form rising leaders in the areas of teaching, ministry, church operations, small group facilitation, and evangelism. While Christian leadership may evolve organically when one is called by God, it is important that the diocese help laity, as intentional disciples, formally develop their leadership skills.

MISSION OF CATECHIST LEADERS

The **Intergenerational Catechist Leader Program** has the following mission:

- To create **a program of distinction**, by The Diocese of Easton, which recognizes the gifts and talents of lay leaders who want to contribute more to their local parish.
- The cadre of Catechist Leaders will complete **a two-year, immersive program**. Each participant will be able to:
 - ❖ **Form their character and competence as Christian Leaders**, according to God's calling and the Episcopal Church.
 - ❖ **Examine and recall knowledge of catechism**. Participants will learn about the Holy Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and the Hymnal, church History, the church's Doctrine, and methods of catechesis by the Bishop and Commission on Ministry (Episcopal Church Glossary; Canon 4: Section 1a)
 - ❖ **Identify and analyze the role of leaders at the parish level**, in the areas of administration, finance, pastoral care, Christian Education, and church programs. Catechist leaders, in the service of the local parish, may be called upon to support these roles and functions within the church.
 - ❖ **Develop group facilitation skills in guiding intentional faith-based small groups** gathered in church or communities.
- Upon successful completion of the Intergenerational Catechist Leaders Program, participants will:
 - ❖ **Obtain a license as a Lay Catechist**, valid for a period of three years.
 - ❖ **Receive a certificate of completion from The Bishop** and a special stole indicating they are a Catechist Leader in the Diocese.

- ❖ **Serve as a Catechist Leader at their own parish** or be assigned to a parish in need of service by The Bishop.

EPISCOPAL CHRISTIAN FORMATION AND VALUES

This section focuses on Christian Formation in the Episcopal Church as a theological foundation for an Intergenerational Catechist Leadership Program. Formation is a life-long process for all Christians. The Episcopal Church developed a charter which articulates how Christian formation focuses on growth in knowledge, service, and love of others through encounters with the Living Christ. The charter encourages the Diocese to engage all generations and all ministers (priests, deacons, laity) in life-long Christian Formation. There are several tenets of the *Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation* (2009), cited here, that serve as a foundation of core values for this program:

▪ **Intergenerational Focus**

- ❖ The lifelong process of growing in relationship with God, self, others, and all creation.
- ❖ To respond to the needs of our constantly changing communities, as Jesus calls us, in ways that reflect our diversity and cultures as we seek, wonder, and discover together.

▪ **Catechist Focus**

- ❖ To develop new learning experiences, equipping disciples for life in a world of secular challenges and carefully listening for the words of modern sages who embody the teachings of Christ.
- ❖ To hear the Word of God through scripture, to honor church teachings, and continually to embrace the joy of Baptism and Eucharist, spreading the Good News of the risen Christ and ministering to all.

▪ **Leadership Focus**

- ❖ By doing the work Jesus Christ calls us to do, living into the reality that we are all created in the image of God and conducting God's work of reconciliation, love, forgiveness, healing, justice, and peace.

INTERGENERATIONAL CATECHIST LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

SELECTION CRITERIA

Catechist Leaders must meet the following requirements prior to selection for the program:

- A confirmed communicant in good standing, strong Christian faith, and committed to the Episcopal church.
- Nomination by their local Priest, Clergy, and/or The Bishop and recognized for their leadership potential.
- An individual discerning a call to lay leadership. Be able to describe his or her sense of call to this ministry orally and in writing to the Commission on Ministry.
- Demonstrate appropriate social skills for meeting and engaging people of all ages and abilities, including families.
- Demonstrate basic skills such as reflective listening and respect for confidentiality.
- Completion of Lay Eucharistic Minister, Visitor, and Worship Leader training with current licensure.
- Completion of Safe Church Training and a completed background check by the Diocese of Easton.

STRUCTURE

This program is structured over a two-year period in a hybrid format, coordinated by The Bishop's Institute and offered at St. Paul's Episcopal Center in Hebron, MD. Program participants will be expected to attend eight Saturday, immersive retreats (9:00 am – 4:00 pm); four online Zoom sessions (1.5 hours); and the completion of recommended readings. The program will have a fall and spring term each year. Students will attend two retreats and one Zoom session per term (6:00-7:30 p.m.).

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

The instruction of this program will be under the direction of The Bishop's Institute. The instructors will be The Bishop, invited clergy, Bishop's Institute staff, and other church leaders. Guest instructors will be invited based on their expertise related to the curriculum of the retreat session. Retreat sessions will be both didactic and experiential. Participants will be expected to complete assigned readings prior to the retreat date. Four Zoom sessions will be offered to monitor the cohort, encourage their progress, and address any pertinent content or reading for the term.

EVALUATION

Participants will be evaluated, periodically and at the end of the program, based on the following criteria:

- Compulsory attendance through the entire two years of the program.
- Adherence to Christian values and ethics as a member of the learning community.
- Level of engagement in collaborating with peers and instructors during retreats.
- Competency in the Holy Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal, church History, the church's Doctrine, and methods of catechesis. Unit exams (multiple-choice, essay, short answer) will be administered to evaluate outcomes.
- Demonstrated knowledge and skills in Christian Leadership: Relational engagement, public speaking, and group facilitation.

If it is determined that a participant is not meeting the evaluative criteria, concerns will be discussed with the student. A participant will first be given the opportunity to address any concerns in a conference with program staff, and then a determination will be made on the participant's status.

ABSENCE POLICY

If participants are going to be absent, they must inform the Bishop's Institute of the nature of their absence. The experiential component of the program is essential for gaining both the knowledge and skills as a Lay Catechist Leader. While the Bishop's Institute will collaborate with each participant to successfully complete the program, excessive absences may jeopardize a participant's status.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS

If a participant or individual involved in the program has any questions or concerns, they may direct them to the Director of the Bishop's Institute. If there are any concerns that rise to the level of further concern or grievance, then they may follow the grievance process outlined in the constitutions and canons of the Diocese of Easton.

RETREAT SESSIONS

The retreat sessions will be two, three-hour sessions on Saturdays. Each retreat will begin with gathering and opening prayer (9:00-9:30), session 1 (9:30 am-12:30 pm), lunch (12:30-1:00 pm), and session 2 with closing prayer (1:00-4:00 pm). Students will be assigned readings prior to each session. While some books will be required for these sessions, costs will remain low. Open sources (free) will be used online as well as handouts.

SESSION 1: DISCERNING GOD’S CALL TO LAY MINISTRY

▪ Growing Leaders: Reflections on Leadership, Life, and Jesus

In facing the forces that are changing in the Episcopal Church, *Growing Leaders*, is a structured program that focuses on whole-life discipleship and development of leaders. James Lawrence, Principal of the *Growing Leaders* Course (2020), offers a framework to help develop Christian leaders, looking at Jesus’ leadership as a model in the context of theological truths of baptism, the cross, resurrection and the coming spirit, and Christ’s return (p. 22). The following modules will be offered in the *Intergenerational Catalyst Leaders Program*.

1. **Engage in Today’s Context:** Challenges we face, characteristics of Christian Leadership, and Stages of Life.
2. **Know You Are Chosen:** “The starting point for any Christian Leader is discipleship.” One who is a Christian leader must live by Jesus’ words, exercise spiritual discipline, address internal issues, and have clear expectations.
3. **Discerning God’s Call:** Exploring values, rules of life, understanding God’s purpose for us, identifying our spiritual gifts, and developing a personal life statement.
4. **Christlike Character:** Working on your character as a leader, leading a holy life, and facing Godly change as a leader.
5. **Core Competencies :** Leading yourself and others, Kingdom values, and following the vision of how God is calling us to lead.
6. **Leadership:** How to help others to grow as disciples, being leaders in the church, home, work, and community.

Participant Resources:

Participants will be given a guidebook, based on *Growing Leaders*, to preview before the session and that they can keep for their own reference.

▪ Adaptive Leadership in Changing Times

As we face a post-pandemic world and changing demographics in the Episcopal Church, it is a challenging time to form new leaders. New leaders need to be trained to cultivate skills and approaches that are both savvy, grounded, and transformed in Christ. Tod Bolsinger, M. Div., Ph.D., Director of the Church Leadership Institute at Fuller Seminary, and author of *Tempered Resilience-How Leaders are Formed in the Crucible of Change* (2020), has offered ideas on adaptive leadership that speaks to contemporary Christian Leaders. Adaptive Leadership, according to Bolsinger, includes developing leaders who are tempered. In other words, tempered like the ironworks forged by blacksmiths which are both strong and flexible. Participants will learn about six facets of a tempered leader:

- o **Working:** Leaders are formed in leading.

- o **Heating:** Strength is forged in self-reflection.
- o **Holding:** Vulnerable leadership and relational security.
- o **Hammering:** Stress makes a leader.
- o **Hewing:** Resilience takes practice.
- o **Tempering:** Resilience comes through a rhythm of leading and not leading (E-book-Location 79).

Participant Resources:

Participants will be given a handout on the book: *Tempered Resilience-How Leaders are Formed in the Crucible of Change* (2020) by Tod Bolsinger.

SESSION 2: CATECHIST AND CHRISTIAN FORMATION

▪ The Catechist: Ancient and Present Day

The focus of this session will be an introduction to catechesis, the role of the catechist, and understanding the ancient and modern catechumenate. The Biblical basis of baptism and confirmation will be examined.

Participant Resources:

Students will be given selected articles to read on catechesis prior to class. read selected chapters 1-5 (Beliefs and Practices, Baptismal Beliefs and Practices, Eucharistic Beliefs and Practices) from *Walk in Love-Episcopal Beliefs and Practices* (2018).

▪ Catechetical Areas from an Episcopal Perspective

The focus of this session will be on the *Charter of Lifelong Christian Formation* (2009) to help understand the “lifelong process of growing in relationship with God, self, others, and all creation.” Participants will be able to assess their own Christian formation in the context of one’s life experience. The charter will also be used as a tool for understanding a lay catechist’s role in working with parishioners.

Participant Resources:

Students will be given a copy of the *Charter on Lifelong Christian Formation* (2009).

Sessions Two through Four are the core content for the knowledge and competencies required by the Episcopal Church for licensure as a catechist (Canon 4; Sect. 8). The curricula are based on research from doing a cross-sectional analysis of the following diocese who offer lay catechist licenses and transparently list the information online: Kemper School for Ministry in Kansas (Cost

750\$), Diocese of Northern California, Diocese of Washington, Bexley Seabury Course syllabus for Leaders course that many dioceses use for their catechist licensure (Cost \$300), and the Ministry of the Laity School for the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast.

Participants will need a copy of *The Bible* (NRSV), the *Book of Common Prayer*, the *Hymnal*, and *Book of Occasional Services*. These resources are available online; however, students may want to have their own personal copies available. There are several books listed under the sessions which students will be required to purchase at nominal costs.

SESSION 3: HOLY SCRIPTURE AND INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES

This session will provide a basic overview of the Old and New Testament and how the Bible is viewed by the Episcopal Church and utilized in the lay ministry of a Catechist.

- **Old Testament: Becoming God's Disciples**

Examination of the Old Testament will include understanding the structure, how it was written, and the seminal characters in the story. Old Testament: The Torah (Pentateuch), The Prophets (Major and Minor), and the writings (Chronicles, Poetry, and Wisdom Literature).

- **New Testament: Jesus' Ministry, the Apostles, and Discipleship**

Examination of the New Testament will include highlights of the four sections: The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and the Arc of Jesus' Passion Narrative, the book of Acts and the early church and work of the Holy Spirit. The Epistles from Paul, Peter, and others. Finally, Revelations by John and God's final judgment.

Participant Resources:

Students should bring their Bible to this session. Students are to read elected articles related to the Old and New Testament prior to class from the free, open-source online textbook: *Studying the Bible: The Tanakh and Early Christian Writings* (2019) Gregory Eiselein, Anna Goins, & Naomi J. Wood, Kansas State University.

- **Becoming an Intentional Disciple in Today's World**

This section will focus on how to live into the Word of God and Jesus Christ. Looking at how a Lay Catechist can utilize the New Testament as an intentional disciple of Christ. Intentional discipleship involves we can emulate Jesus--by his teachings and character. We will look at how Jesus made the disciples and trained them. (*Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making*, 2016).

SESSION 4: CHURCH HISTORY, POLITY, AND DISCIPLESHIP

Participants will be introduced to a brief history of Christianity, the emergence of the Anglican Church and important historical documents, and development of the Episcopal Church in the United States. They will explore the important foundations of the Episcopal faith.

- **Short Survey of Christian History**

Key Events and Figures; Cultural and Social Contexts of Christianity.

- **The Anglican Church**

Historical Documents of the Church and Polity (Operational Structure and Governance); 5
Marks of Mission of the Anglican Church

- **The Current Episcopal Church**

Hierarchy at the national (Presiding Bishop, General Convention, House of Bishops, Canons), Diocesan (Bishop, Convention, Standing Committee, Diocesan Council), and parish (Rector, Bylaws, Vestry) levels.

Participant Resources:

Students must purchase and read selected chapters from Robert Bruce Mullin (2014). *A Short World History of Christianity*. Revised Edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press. *Walk in Love* (2018): The Church, Chapters 13-16).

SESSION 5: ANGLICAN SPIRITUALITY

This section will provide an overview of the roots of our Anglican faith, and we will dive into the content and practical uses of the Book of Common Prayer in the life of Episcopalians and the role of a Lay Catechist.

- **Brief History of the Book of Common Prayer**

- **Outline of *The Book of Common Prayer* (1982):**

- Services of the Church
- Church Calendar-Seasons of the Church, Principal Feasts, Sundays, Holy Days, Days of Special Devotion
- The Daily Office-Morning, Noon, Evening Prayer, Compline, Devotions
- The Great Litany
- Collects: Traditional, Contemporary

- Liturgies for Special Days
 - Holy Baptism
 - Eucharist: Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Table
 - Pastoral Offices
 - Episcopal Services
 - Lectionary & Daily Office
- **Focus on the Hymnals of the Episcopal Church**

Understand how the Hymnal music is structured with the seasons and feast days of the church.

Participant Resources:

Book of Common Prayer, A Hymnal. Students will purchase and have selected readings from *The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education* (2016): Part I (The Calendar of the Church Year) and Part II (*The Revised Common Lectionary* for Christian Education). Welcome to the Book of Common Prayer (2005).

SESSION 6: CHURCH DOCTRINE: CREEDS, CATECHISM, AND OUTLINE OF FAITH

Participants will gain insight into the doctrine of the Episcopal faith. They will investigate key facets of the outline of faith, how it reflects on the religious experience of parishioners, and in their own life. The class will have engaged exercises and discussions about each of the concepts in the Catechesis and the role of the Catechist.

- **Creeds: Early Church and Today: Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed**
- **Catechism: The Outline of Faith**

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|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Human Nature | 8. The Creeds | 16. Holy Eucharist |
| 2. God the Father | 9. Holy Spirit | 17. Other Sacramental Rites |
| 3. The Old Covenant | 10. Holy Scripture | 18. Christian Hope |
| 4. 10 Commandments | 11. Church | |
| 5. Sin/Redemption | 12. Ministry | |
| 6. God the Son | 13. Prayer and Worship | |
| 7. The New Covenant | 14. Sacraments | |
| | 15. Holy Baptism | |

Participant Resources:

Students will read the Outline of Faith in the Book of Common Prayer, *The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education* (2016): Seasonal Guide to the Outline of Faith. *Walk in Love* (2018): Basic Beliefs (Creeds, the Bible, Salvation, Grace, and Prayer), Chapter 13-16.

SESSION 7: METHODS OF CATECHESIS

Participants will gain knowledge how learning theory and life span development intersect with theology in the formation of Christians.

- **Human Learning and Life Span Development**

Focus on basic behavioral, cognitive, and affective approaches to learning. Gain insight into how there are different developmental learning tasks in childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, adulthood, and late adulthood.

- **Theology of Education Ministry and Formation**

Focus on the learning process related to Bible study and Episcopal beliefs and traditions. Be able to understand how distinct stages of faith impact belief and practices of an individual or family.

- **Designing Curricula that is Appropriate to Age and Faith**

Identify and analyze different curricular resources for different age groups. Examine how to develop an individual or group lesson plan.

Participant Resources:

Read *The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education* (2016): The Learning Process.

SESSION 8: BEING AN INTENTIONAL DISCIPLE IN TODAY'S CHURCH

The focus of this session will be the “nuts and bolts” of running a church. Catechist Leaders will be able to understand church administration and how to evangelize as community ambassadors. They will learn to lead small groups in the church and community for the mission of evangelism in the Episcopal Church. Participants will learn about:

- **Church Administration: Understanding Functions and Roles of a Parish**

Learn about the organizational chart and roles for a large vs. small parish. Common functions of worship, administration, evangelism (outreach), parish life, communications, finances, facilities.

- **Facilitation Skills in Guiding an Intentional Faith-Based Small Group**

Small group facilitation is a foundational skill that Catechist Leaders may use inside and outside the church. As a method of evangelism “...intentional faith-based small group is to build trusting relationships with God and one another. When we meet each other for conversation, practice, and prayer, we learn how to love. Call it a small group, discipleship circle, neighborhood group, life group or cell gathering – whatever the name, a small group provides space for prayerful support and accountability as we seek to live the Jesus Way” (The Episcopal Church, *Intentional Faith-Based Small Groups*, 2018).

Participants will complete *Centered: A Christian Discipleship Experience*, an Intentional Small Group Leader Training series of videos and exercises to prepare leaders of intentional faith-based small groups. This is a small group facilitation program, based on the *Jesus Shaped Life* and *The Ways of Love*, which looks at small groups as a strong way to gather and practice evangelism in the Episcopal Church. According to Greer, Spellers, and McKenney, *Centered: A Christian Discipleship Experience Participant Guide* (2022): “Particularly in this present moment, when pandemic has stripped away many of the trappings that usually surround the church, small discipleship groups and neighborhood circles may be the most effective and accessible way for us to walk the path to love, freedom, and abundant life that Jesus laid out” (p. 4). Participants will complete watching these webinars individually, a zoom session by the Bishop’s Institute will focus on what participants learned. The experience will culminate in participants facilitating a small group session during the day retreat.

Participant Resources:

Participants will have the opportunity to simulate facilitation of faith-based small groups, after having watched the introduction on *Small Groups Overview* and how to facilitate small groups in *Centered: A Christian Discipleship Experience*.

Small Groups Overview Video Links (16 minutes) Underline=Hotlinks

- [1. Why Do Small Groups Matter? - Building Intentional Small Groups \(episcopalchurch.org\)](#)
- [2. How Do Small Groups Change Lives? - Building Intentional Small Groups \(episcopalchurch.org\)](#)
- [3. What Kinds of Small Groups Are There? - Building Intentional Small Groups \(episcopalchurch.org\)](#)

Centered: A Christian Discipleship Experience Video Links (40 minutes):

Underline=Hotlinks

Session I: Introduction

In this session, you will be introduced to the concept and purpose of faith-based small groups. Together, your cohort will explore why building trusting relationships with God and one another is important to the Christian life and how to form those relationships with time-tested practices for gathering.

Session II: Leading Small Groups

In this session, we learn more about the practice of small group ministry leadership. During your time together as a learning cohort, you and the other leaders in this training will discuss topics like leading groups, creating group covenants, and handling group management.

Session III: Leading Centered

This session is specifically geared toward leaders of *Centered: A Christian Discipleship Experience*. Centered is a discipleship series guiding small, gathered communities to get deeply rooted in love with God and one another, so that we all may grow to look, act, and love more like Jesus. The experience sessions during which church members, neighbors, and friends gather to share a meal and grateful prayer; watch a short film and discuss related questions about God, belonging, and living a meaningful life; and support each other in committing to intentionally follow Jesus and his Way of Love.

▪ **Putting it All Together: Intentional Disciples of Christian Hope**

Participants will have a wrap-up session to process their experience in *The Intergenerational Catechist Leader Program*. They will have an opportunity to review what they have learned and how they will apply their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the future as a Catechist Leader.

SUMMARY

The Intergenerational Catechist Leadership Program, offered by the Bishop's Institute, in the Diocese of Easton will offer a new opportunity for laity to become licensed Lay Catechists. Lay Catechists will be able to offer an expanded ministry in Christian formation of individuals who seek to be confirmed or received into the Episcopal faith. Lay Catechists will be nominated by their clergy leader, who has solid leadership experience in lay ministry, a calling and discernment to serve others through teaching and counseling. Lay catechists will participate in sessions focused on Christian Leadership, content knowledge in scripture and church history, the Book of Common Prayer, Anglican Spirituality, and practical leadership skills. After a two-year program of retreats and hybrid sessions, students will complete this program of distinction, as Intergenerational Leaders for the future growth, in the Diocese of Easton.

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