

## **Guidelines for Homegrowing a Confirmation Preparation**

- Klara Tammany

Confirmation is intended to be an adult affirmation of faith. It is not just about membership in the Episcopal Church. It is about conversion of heart, and about mission and ministry; as much about forming and transforming people's lives, as it is about information. Someone said that at baptism, we become bearers of the Light, and at confirmation, we must become sharers of that Light.

When planning programs to prepare people for that affirmation, treat them as adults - including any youth who will be confirmed. Jane Regan, in her book *Toward and Adult Church* states that adults learn best when in sustained conversation over time, with other adults, about things that matter. That conversation needs to be grounded in Baptism, and must lead to transformation, of individuals, the community and the world. It is only in that context that evangelization can happen.

In teaching and experiencing the mysteries of faith, lectures in classroom settings are not the most effective methodology. An old Chinese proverb says: I hear, I forget. I see, I remember. I do, I understand. A general rule of thumb for a group, over time, is to spend 25% of the time in prayer and reflection, 25% in presentation, 25% in conversation, 25% in just hanging out together or doing things together.

The first step in planning is to always listen to the participants. Discover what are their greatest passions and concerns, what are their needs, hopes, desires, fears. Build from there, beginning by creating a safe, hospitable space in which the group can dwell. Be very intentional about building community between those in the process of preparation, and between them and the sponsoring community. Possibilities include mentoring, providing times for retreat and reflection, group projects.

From that grounding, add content. Most importantly, always immerse people in scripture through telling, reading, studying, and sharing the stories of faith. Then connect those stories with people's lives. The following suggestions are additional options to consider including in times of preparation. You can be creative about delivery - use the web for example.

- An understanding of the theology of Baptism and the ministry of the laity.
- A basic grasp of the history and polity of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.
- Familiarity with the Book of Common Prayer.
- Experiences of service/outreach.
- Encounters with working for justice and peace.
- Varied and deep experiences of worship and prayer.

The enclosed bibliography suggests materials from which you can draw. Many of the resources are available on loan from our diocesan Resource Center. The diocesan Missioners for Christian Education and Formation, and for Youth Ministry, are available to assist your planning. They can also share with you some creative approaches from other churches in the diocese.