



Catechesis in the Parish or Plant

from the Catechesis Task Force

The Anglican Church in North America, 2013

Catechesis in the Parish

- ◆ Why should a church planter or parish rector care about catechesis?
 - ◆ “Surveying evangelical congregations in the Western world today, we believe that what confronts us is a case of being so close yet so far away. Conservative evangelical congregations regularly excel in the number and variety of forms of Sunday instruction and midweek group experiences provided for their adherents. Yet the hustle and bustle ends up like a shower of arrows that all hit the target and yet miss the bull’s -eye.” Packer & Parrett.

How does someone join a church in North America?

Current Approaches...

- ◆ Beginning in discipleship is like trying to jump on a fast-moving train. It's not process-oriented.
- ◆ Many in our congregations are experiencing spiritual congestion.
- ◆ Many are experiencing fatigue - too many programs, not enough time with the family.
- ◆ Instruction tends to avoid doctrinal matters.

Inhibiting Factors

- ◆ The turn away from external authority in Western Culture.
- ◆ Resistance to authoritative instruction within the Christian community. (Bible Stories rather than being grounded in truths about the Triune God.)
- ◆ *Information vs. formation.*
- ◆ Preoccupation.

The Alternative

- ◆ “Simple churches are growing and vibrant. Churches with a simple process for reaching and maturing people are expanding the Kingdom. Church leaders who have designed a simple biblical process to make disciples are effectively advancing the movement of the Gospel.” Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church*.
- ◆ “This will usually involve a transition from the relatively unstructured, even casual, atmosphere of welcome to a more structured and formal process that requires long-term commitment.” *Guiding Principles*

Four Strategies for Implementation

◆ Clarity

◆ Movement

◆ Alignment

◆ Focus

Clarity: Building a Ministry Blueprint

- ◆ We are tasked with building lives!
- ◆ Clarity is the ability of the process to be communicated and understood by the people.
- ◆ What we need is a plan from which everything we do flows.
- ◆ What do we say to people when they come to our door?
How do ministries help move people along the plan.
- ◆ What are the features?

Clarity

- ◆ The Anglican ideal of a blueprint for spiritual formation and discipleship is simple:
- ◆ The Catechism
- ◆ The Prayerbook
- ◆ These set the blueprint for a disciple-making culture.

The Catechisme.

giuer of all goodnesse, to send his grace vnto mee, and to all people, that wee may worship him, serue him, and obey him, as we ought to doe. And I pray vnto God, that he will send vs all things that be needfull, both for our soules and bodies, and that hee will bee mercifull vnto vs, and forgiue vs our sinnes, and that it will please him to saue and defend vs in all dangers ghostly and bodily, and that hee will keepe vs from all sinne and wickednesse, and from our ghostly enemye, and from euerlasting death. And this I trust hee will doe of his mercy and goodnesse, through our Lord Iesus Christ. And therefore I say, Amen. So be it.

Question.



How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church?

Answer.

Two onely as generally necessary to salvation, that is to say, Baptisme, and the Supper of the Lord.

Question.

What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?

Answer.

Movement: Removing Congestion

- ◆ Congestion occurs when spiritual movement is stifled, when people don't grow.
- ◆ When we're not growing, how can we grow?
- ◆ Strategic programming, Sequential Programming, Intentional Movement (short term steps), Clear Next Steps, New Members Class.

Movement

- ❖ The Ancient Catechumenate provides a template for the kind of process this would require.
- ❖ From the Front Porch, From the Font
- ❖ Lifelong discipleship.



Alignment: Maximize Energy

- ◆ This is the task of getting people and ministries to play for the team, to take their part in the simple process.
- ◆ How does the altar guild, or the ushers, or the outreach group move people along the path of spiritual growth?
- ◆ Needs: a passion for the process in leadership, accountability for leaders, multiplication of the process, unity regarding the process, and the alignment of new ministries (expansions and additions).

Focus: Saying No to Almost Everything

- ◆ We need to be able to say no.
- ◆ We also need to be able to eliminate.
- ◆ Stewardship - time and money. No wasting people's time, no wasting their money. No wasting God's time, no wasting His money.
- ◆ More programs equals less growth. Less programs equals more growth.



Do people know where to
“start” in your parish?

