

Teaching Notes

Faith Formation in a Multicultural Context (The Rev. Laurel Mathewson)

Learning & practicing the life of Christ together, in the midst of our real (& God-given!) diversity.

1) Introductions (10:30-10:40)

- Opening prayer -- prayer for the church (BCP)
- Who, what, where?
- What is your experience or interest in multicultural formation?

2) Practical Challenges (10:40-10:50)

- Language barriers (Adult Bible study, Sunday school, all aspects of worship)
- Differing assumptions and expectations of what is most important in formation
- Different cultures around parenting / family norms (example of VBS - Cathedral) ... often unknown until we run into them (we live out of our own assumptions)
- Extension: Particular assumptions / models based on middle-class norms (example: transportation, computer access and english-language skills for all)
- Other challenges from your community?

3) Practical Opportunities / Strategies & Resources (10:50-11 a.m.)

- First and foremost: Listen! Observe! Pay attention with humility!
- Translators, paid and unpaid
- Sunday school resources that “communicate” across languages (i.e., Holy Moly)
- Modifying programming based on community/ cultural priorities (i.e., First Communion courses at SPC, women’s Bible Study at St. Luke’s, timing of youth group and youth activities)
- “Meeting the minimums” with thoughtfulness (i.e., Nursery “sign-in” at St. Luke’s)

4) Theological Challenges (11-11:05)

- We are faced with our own (cultural and personal) false idols (i.e., order, timeliness, cleanliness, advance planning): “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens

are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9)

- Age-old challenges to life in diverse community (see St. Paul’s letters): pride, impatience, resignation to the false divisions of the world: Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

5) Theological Opportunities (11:05-11:15)

- “Galatians 3:28 (The Voice (VOICE)): “It makes no difference whether you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a freeman, a man or a woman, because in Jesus the Anointed, *the Liberating King*, you are all one.”
- Church as practice spaces for the Kingdom of God, for Kingdom living and witness (this is true in worship and in all other aspects of community life, too)
- We are confronted with multi-faceted sin *and* the invitation to redemption through Jesus (also multi-faceted)
- Examples: diverse perspectives in Women’s Bible study -- we learn more about God AND God’s world and Word
- Human challenges force emphasis on what is most essential about life in Christ: love, joy, humility, forgiveness
- Christian life is all about transformation. Where does transformation come from? Challenges worthy of our lives, and our faith: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”(Romans 12:2)

6) Closing Prayer (11:15)

- (from the New Zealand BCP) Eternal God, you have promised your salvation to all peoples, and have given us a vision of a great multitude around your throne, from all nations and tribes and languages: Help us as we bring this vision into our time and place; be with us as we undertake this work, and enable us to hear and speak new words of hope and praise; through Jesus Christ, the living Word.
Amen.