

LAY CATECHIST COURSE FOR LICENSURE - SYLLABUS

Purpose: The focus of this seven-session course is to prepare the lay catechist to teach/form God's people, leading to licensing as a lay catechist in the Episcopal Church according to Canon III.4.8. Candidates are advised to refer to their local diocese for certification.

Prerequisites:

- Completion of "Becoming Beloved Community: Racial Reconciliation" (or any other anti-racism training as required by their diocese)
- Familiarity with the Bible and its application to daily living (Theology/Ethics)
- Knowledge of the Episcopal Tradition, including its history/polity and worship/liturgy (Anglican Identity)
- Being a baptized, confirmed, and active member of an Episcopal community

Format: Sessions will entail independent study (reading, watching, listening, and/or writing) and online discussion (asynchronous) paired with online group learning and collaboration (1.5–2 hours, synchronous).

Final Project: Develop one or more of the following:

- A four-session baptismal preparation program for parents and godparents of infants or young children with fully developed session plans
- An outline for a nine-month confirmation preparation program for youth that includes goals, objectives, and experiential components for each session to coincide with the Baptismal Covenant
- An outline for a catechumenal program for the baptism, confirmation, reception, and/or renewal of baptismal vows for adults (over 16 years of age) in a congregation or intentional community

SESSION 1: THEOLOGY OF FORMATION

Acts 2:37-47

Christian formation is the lifelong process of growing in our relationship with God, self, others, and all creation. Every experience in our lives can provide us with the opportunity to express our faith; the challenge we face is recognizing these opportunities and learning ways to live a countercultural life in a secular world. This session will enable the student to develop and articulate their own theology of Christian formation as well as the ability to integrate catechetical areas in their teaching (liturgy, service, witness, pastoral care, and education) from an Episcopal perspective.

OUTCOMES

- The ability to develop and articulate one's own theology of Christian formation
- The ability to articulate the Episcopal Church's core teaching / focus of formation

SESSION 2: FAITH DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE AGE SPAN

1 Corinthians 12:17-20

Faith formation is a lifelong, developmental process that includes physical, cognitive, psycho-social, moral/ethical, and spiritual stages of growth. Each age and stage (from childhood through adulthood) has its own needs and characteristics for growing into a life of faith. This session will offer an overview of major developmental theories with the student integrating their learnings into practical applications of nurturing the spiritual life of children, youth, and adults through formation opportunities.

OUTCOMES:

- To understand the various developmental stages of the life span from infancy to senior adulthood (biological, cognitive, psycho-social, moral, physical, spiritual, personality, etc.)
- The ability to appropriately apply developmental theories to (reach and) teach all age levels, with a focus on faith formation

SESSION 3: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Matthew 7:24-28

In a faith formation setting, curricula are the resources used to support the growth of an individual's knowledge and love of God. This session will focus on how to discern the needs of a congregation or age group, then evaluate as well as design curricular resources for all ages and stages of faith. The student will also gain the ability to design and implement a lesson plan for their own setting.

OUTCOMES

- The ability to evaluate and design curriculum for all ages and stages of faith
- The ability to plan and execute a lesson plan

SESSION 4: DELVING INTO SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Christian formation is grounded in the Word of God. This session will give the student the ability to lead a variety of processes for the study of Scripture individually and in small groups (children, youth, and adults) along with tools for theological reflection across the age span. The student will be able to relate the arc of the Salvation Story to children, youth, and adults in developmentally appropriate ways.

OUTCOMES:

- The ability to lead a variety of processes for the study of Scripture individually and in groups (children, youth, and adults) along with theological reflection (with youth and adults)
- The ability to relate the arc of the Salvation Story to children, youth, and adults in developmentally appropriate ways

SESSION 5: SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION: BAPTISM

Romans 6:3-4

This session will focus on the Catechumenal process following an overview of the history of baptism from the early church to today. The student will develop sessions for the preparation of Holy Baptism for children, youth, and adults to include the ongoing formation of parents and sponsors from an Episcopal perspective.

OUTCOMES

- To be able to design and implement baptismal preparation
- To articulate the movements / components of the Holy Eucharist liturgy
- To name the responsibilities and function of a catechist per their own diocese

Session 6: Sacramental Preparation: Confirmation

Romans 12:1-8

The purpose and rite of Confirmation has held a variety of understandings over the centuries. This session will offer an overview of the history and theology of confirmation leading to the student articulating their own theology of confirmation. The student will design a program of confirmation preparation for youth and/or adults based on the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer and their diocesan guidelines / protocols.

OUTCOMES

- To be able to design and implement confirmation preparation (including reaffirmation and reception) for youth and adults
- To be able to discern, train, and support mentors for baptismal renewal/affirmation

SESSION 7: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Ephesians 4:1-16

This session will focus on the care and feeding of the catechist along with administrative tips to support their ministry. A tool (“lay competency grid”) for determining how to assist others in growing in a life of faith will also be utilized, with the student applying it to one’s own context (parish or diocese). Spiritual practices and initiatives of the Episcopal Church will be explored along with other resources to fill the “catechist’s toolbox” for ministry.

OUTCOMES

- Exhibit an understanding (and know where to find) key Episcopal/Anglican resources (An Outline of the Faith/The Catechism, The Baptismal Covenant, The Apostles’ Creed, etc.) and how to use them in faith formation and sacramental preparation
- The ability to interpret the lay competency grid and apply it in one’s context

TEXTS used by SESSION

All Sessions:

- *The Book of Common Prayer*
- *NRSV Study Bible* (Oxford or Harper Collins)

Session 1:

- *Called to Teach and Learn* (The Episcopal Church, 1994) – supplied in pdf form
- *Discovering Called to Teach and Learn* (The Episcopal Church, 1996) – supplied in pdf form
- *Fashion Me a People* by Maria Harris (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989)
- *The Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation* (General Convention, 2009) and supportive documents from General Convention – supplied in pdf form
- *The Episcopal Christian Educator's Handbook* by Sharon Ely Pearson (Morehouse, 2013)

Supplemental reading:

- *Informed by Faith: A Spiritual Handbook for Christian Educators and Parents* by Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones (Cowley Publications, 2004)
- *Liturgy as Formation* from “Will Our Faith Have Children?” Episcopal Church formation conference in 2003 – supplied in pdf form
- *Christly Gestures: Learning to Be Members of the Body of Christ* by Brett P. Webb-Mitchell (Eerdmans, 2003)

Session 2:

- *Called to Teach and Learn*
- *Will Our Children Have Faith? 3rd ed.* by John H. Westerhoff III (Morehouse, 2012)
- *A Children's Charter for the Church* (Episcopal Church, 1997) and supportive documents – supplied in pdf form
- *The Episcopal Christian Educator's Handbook*

Supplemental reading:

- *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith* by Catherine Stonehouse (Baker Books, 1998)
- *Making a Home for Faith: Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Your Children, revised edition* by Elizabeth Caldwell (Pilgrim Press, 2007)
- *Leaving Home with Faith: Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Youth* by Elizabeth Caldwell (Pilgrim Press, 2002)
- *Child by Child: Supporting Children with Learning Differences and Their Families* by Susan Richardson (Morehouse, 2011)
- *Please Understand Me* by David Kiersey and Marilyn Bates (Prometheus, 1978)

Session 3:

- *Fashion Me a People*
- *Will Our Children Have Faith?*
- *Called to Teach and Learn*

- *The Episcopal Christian Educator's Handbook*

Supplemental reading:

- *To Dance with God: Family Ritual and Community Celebration* by Gertrud Mueller Nelson (Paulist Press, 1986)
- *Faith Formation with a New Generation* edited by John Roberto (Lifelong Faith Associates, 2018)
- *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship* by Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross (Intervarsity Press, 2012)

Session 4

- *The Dream of God: A Call to Return* by Verna J. Dozier (Seabury, 2006)
- *The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education* edited by Sharon Ely Pearson and Robyn Szoke (Morehouse, 2009)
- *Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer* by Rowan Williams (Eerdmans, 2014)
- *The Episcopal Christian Educator's Handbook*

Supplemental Reading

- *The Pilgrim Series: The Bible* ed. by Cottrell, et. al. (Church Publishing, 2016)
- *In Dialogue with Scripture* (The Episcopal Church, 1994)
- *Equipping the Saints* by Verna Dozier (Alban Institute, 1985)

Session 5

- *Called to Teach and Learn*
- *Living as a Prayer Book People* by John H. Westerhoff (Morehouse, 2004)
- *Celebrating the Rites of Initiation* by James Turrell (Church Publishing, 2013)
- *The Episcopal Christian Educator's Handbook*
- *Being Christian*

Supplemental reading

- *The Catechumenal Process: Adult Initiation & Formation for Christian Life and Ministry* (The Episcopal Church, 1990)
- *Pilgrim Series: Turning to Christ* ed. by Cottrell, et. al. (Church Publishing, 2016)
- *Living Water: Baptism as a Way of Life*, revised edition by Klara Tammany (Church Publishing, 2021)
- *Preparing for Baptism in The Episcopal Church* by Anne E. Kitch (Church Publishing, 2015)
- *Using the Catechumenate with Parents (and Godparents) in Preparation for the Children's Baptism* – link to pdf

Session 6

- *Signed, Sealed, Delivered: Theologies of Confirmation* by Sharon Ely Pearson (Morehouse, 2014)
- *Celebrating the Rites of Initiation*
- *The Episcopal Christian Educator's Handbook*

Supplemental Reading

- *Leaving Home with Faith: Nurturing the Spirituality of Youth* by Elizabeth Caldwell (Pilgrim Press, 2002)

Session 7

- *The Episcopal Handbook, revised* (Morehouse, 2015)
- *Living Faithfully as a Prayer Book People*

Supplemental reading

- *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* by Parker Palmer (Jossey-Bass, 1999)
- *Speaking Our Faith: Telling the Old, Old Story* by Kit Carlson (Church Publishing, 2018)
- *Note to Self: Creating Your Guide to a More Spiritual Life* by Charles LaFond (Forward Movement, 2018)
- *Walk in Love: Episcopal Beliefs and Practices* by Scott Gunn and Melody Shobe (Forward Movement, 2018)