

# Talking Points for The Charter for Lifelong Formation

I. Through The Charter, we are **invited** to a life of prayer, service, education and worship; **inspired** to experience our faith journey through the lens of worship, scripture, reason and tradition; and are **transformed** to live into our baptismal promises, serving, witnessing, empowering and holding all accountable.

**The Charter provides an intentional opportunity** to plan and support our lifelong formation. It provides a framework for dioceses to organize their formation ministries and programs.

Faith formation for people of all ages informs, forms and transforms people and communities by providing an encounter with Christ and promoting discipleship.

- **To inform**, we impart knowledge of the Christian faith so that who we are and how we live is shaped and influenced by what we know.
- **To form**, we nurture people's identity and lifestyle as disciples of Christ.
- **To transform**, we promote the personal and social transformation of the world according to the kingdom of God that Jesus preached.

**The Charter allows us to engage all generations** in more active participation in church life; to equip and support families, especially parents, to practice the Christian way of life at home and in their daily lives; to transform the church community into a community of lifelong learners; and to utilize the whole life of the church as the faith formation curriculum through church year, feasts and seasons, sacraments and liturgy, justice and service, prayer and spirituality, and community life.

The premises of Christian formation – holistic integration of learning, the importance of context, the need for interdependence and cooperation, and the value of relationships and dialogue – all inform how we conduct the Church's mission. Mission then involves sharing stories as well as building hospitals, social transformation as well as personal service.

An important part of being Christian in a multi-faith society is to understand one's faith enough to be able to live in the world honoring that faith while honoring and affirming others' faith. Christian formation and theological education courses are essential to instilling that deep understanding and knowledge to empower Christians to be able to say what they believe in.

II. *A Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation* has been proposed that will call upon the Episcopal Church to advocate and engage in lifelong Christian formation through leadership, resources and support for all ages and at all levels of the church.

The Church needs this Charter to provide clarification in what is meant by lifelong formation. This Charter enhances the Children's Charter, and emphasizes formation and learning for adults.

III. **The Charter acknowledges that faith formation happens!** Be it intentional or unintentional, every life experience is an opportunity to live out our Baptismal Covenant. The question for the teacher/learner, learner /teacher is how we bring this revelation to the surface for adults who are living in a world counter to Christ's teachings, a society which puts the secular life above a spiritual, faith-filled life.

Formation is foundational to everything we believe and do. Education is a part of formation, but it is not the only part. Stewardship, outreach, hospitality, and liturgy are all part of our formation as Christians.

We are aware that formation encompasses learning, action and reflection, that formation is ongoing, and that it is both formal and informal. Christian formation has increasingly moved to relational models that build upon the learner's experience, the value of telling one's story as well as recalling and reflecting upon Biblical stories, nurture and support in local congregations and communities, and hands on experiences in mission and service.

*Compiled from the input of 20+ Episcopal Christian Educators – April 6, 2009*