

Formation for Mission

any age, any number, any size, any where....

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An Open Invitation!

Let us hear from you!

The Christian Education and Formation commission wants to hear YOUR questions, understand YOUR concerns and listen to YOUR solutions.

When we listen and share, everyone benefits....and this as close to Dear Abby as we can get! Send your thoughts to [Judy Kile](#), CEFC Chairman.

"The Lord be with you!"

We begin a service with "The Lord be With You" as a call to worship - likewise, let's make a deliberate effort to call people back to ministry and mission as a congregation in the fall. We can easily get *into* the summer routine - but it's hard to get back out. Start Up Sunday, Rally Day, Sign-up Sunday, Ministry Fairs - whatever we call our "kick off" event can be more than signing kids up for Sunday School.



The event can highlight various ministries within the congregation: what was done in the past AND, more importantly, what we hope to accomplish in the coming year. This can include outreach, Sunday ministries such as LEMs, LEVs, Choir, Acolytes, Ushers, Coffee Hour Hosts, etc., as well as Christian Formation programs such as weekly bible studies, opportunities for fellowship, special programs and Christian Education for all ages.

One might include ministries outside the congregation in which members are invited to participate such as feeding ministries, health clinics, reading, Tutoring, and meeting basic needs of the community. This gives the congregation an opportunity to acknowledge the ministry of its members outside the walls and calendar of the Church and invite others to join.

A possible "To Do" list for person(s) organizing a kick off event - which, by the way, could be anyone, might begin by gathering ministry leaders to coordinate the kick-off. Discuss your goals and expectations by paint a picture of rally day that might include tables set up with ministry displays with pictures; calendars; handouts with a description of the ministry, contact information, commitment time, pictures of past year's events; future plans, etc. Create a festive atmosphere that encourages people to attend - food on the tables (maybe a chili cookoff), opportunity to chat with people at each ministry table, a special "Kids table", giveaways. Decide how you want to set up the kick-off. Do you want tables, banners, decorations, food?

The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Come on board and take charge! Sometimes it's time to step up. And, may your event - in whatever form it takes - be a successful and faithful beginning to a great year for the Glory of God and the good of God's people.

Listening to the call...



During this summer as you enjoy your family, visit with friends, explore new places on vacation or simply sit under the stars in an evening marked by a day of solitude or rest - listen. Listen to the sound of the cicadas calling each other into relationship, listen to the children resisting bedtime in one last attempt to catch a lightning bug, listen to the last crackling of the campfire. What can be heard in those sounds are the ways God reaches us through the temporality of our lives. As you listen this summer there may be a call for you, an inner desire to move from a life of discipleship to one of worker.

When we are being ministered to, we are developing a love of God that

increases our faith and belief. When we are ready to minister to others, we are ready to give back out of the fullness of that love to our neighbor in the form of service. Balancing these two loves we begin to walk on the two feet of love.

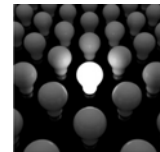
We long to give what we've been given, to respond to God's love for us by looking at our gifts to see what God may need or can use. There may be a feeling of unworthiness to serve or a reluctance to name our gifts. Paul can help us look at these gifts and to know these gifts are given to us for the growth of the community. A reading of 1 Cor. 12:7-12 can be helpful in remembering what various gifts the Church uses. Another way to acknowledge your giftedness is to ask a few friends what gifts they see in us and what they value in us.

Listen and pray under the night sky - Which of your talents or gifts do you feel good about and are willing to use? Would you be willing to accept a spiritual responsibility in your church community? Are you walking on the two feet of love? Perhaps this summer you discovered a new gift and are ready to make a change in your service, let your community know ahead of the fall schedule so others can increase in your place.

As you listen, pay attention to what you hear about your time commitments, your willingness to serve, and balancing your life. When Rally Day comes to your parish, seek out the Coordinator, offer your gift and ask for assistance where it will best serve others. When we offer our selves to God, the Holy Spirit enters in and moves us into a life of service to accompany our life of prayer. Holy Listening; a gift of solitude and rest.

Best Practices - good things going on in our diocese!

Small Group Bible Studies Have you had difficulty finding a good time to offer "Bible Study"? Do you hear too many people reply that the time just isn't suitable for them? One church experienced some success by first recruiting group leaders, doing some training in group leadership, and then letting the leader/host pick the time and place to offer the Bible Study. The church was able to ultimately offer a variety of days and times. (Only two actually formed into small groups, but that was two more than previously met.) There are a variety of small group Bible Study curriculums available - many with inexpensive booklets that explore a chapter or theme in 4- 6 week intervals. These are discussion based; no one person needs to be an authority. One surprise came when a member with physical disabilities saw this as an opportunity to be involved in a church ministry in her own home - and successfully led a small Bible Study group for many years in her home. Sometimes our "best practice" may be to rethink how we go about doing something - in this case, we started by determining the "what" and "who" before even considering the "when"!



Book Club -



This section will contain titles and a little bit about the book to peak your interest. We hope that eventually this can develop into an online discussion forum, but for now, the purpose will be to simply suggest a book recently read by either members of the commission and/or something that one of our readers suggests.

Prepare to be challenged in reading *Church in the Inventive Age*. Author Doug Pagitt is the founder of Solomon's Porch, a leading edge Christian community in



Minneapolis. In the book, Pagitt says that "The narrative of our faith is strung together by change," and he urges us to consider how cultural shifts, such as the use of the internet and social networking, have already changed how we live and worship together. With revolutionary ideas such as "Divorce your furniture" and classic questions like, "What does it mean to follow God in our circumstances?" [The Church in the Inventive Age](#) invites us to engage fully in missional life in what the author sees as a distinctive new era. This slim volume would be very suitable for group discussion. The Rev. Russ Johnson has copies available for \$10 each, or 5 for \$45. Contact Fr. Russ by email at rjstp@planetkc.com, or by calling St. Peter's Church: (816) 942-1066. Solomon's Porch website: www.solomonsporch.com

The [Boy in the Striped Pajamas](#) by John Boyne. Written for young readers, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* is a good book for upper elementary aged children and teens, but our adult book club recommends this read as well. The author describes it as a fable - It is a story told from the point of view of a naive 9 year old boy who happens to be the son of the commandant at Auschwitz during the Holocaust. It is a story about fences - those we put up to keep others away - those that keep us from seeing what's really happening. This would be a good selection for a church book club discussion and/or a good read for the youth at your church. It has been made into a movie - another possibility for a discussion springboard!

