

## Your Pledge Makes It Possible: Formation Ministries

Our diocese is blessed with a rich history of excellent formation and education ministries and we are able to build on this solid framework as we re-imagine formation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Formation ministries in Southern Virginia includes: Adult, children and family ministry, professional support and development, formation and education programs and trainings, parish assistance and consultation, resources, stewardship, liturgy, advocacy ministries such as anti-racism and aging, and leadership development in collaboration with other staff.

The Christian Education Network or CENet meets monthly for support and sharing with those who work in Christian Formation. We also offer quarterly programs on formation that are designed for the larger community. Recent programs include “*Christian Formation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*” with Lisa Kimball; “*Ministering to and with Aging Population*” with Dorothy Linthicum, and coming in January - “*Curriculum Development*” with Sharon Pearson.

- “CENet is important because it offers the opportunity to cultivate collegial relationships with others who are willing to share their experiences, ideas, and challenges, and the meetings are often the catalyst to step outside the safety zone of ‘how we have always done things.’”

Resource Centers have changed greatly in the last few years and today much of the useful curricula is digital. Diocesan funds provide video curricula as well as books and printed curricula that parishes may borrow. This is particularly important for smaller parishes with limited budgets. Resources are listed on the website for review or use.

*Godly Play* is a children’s curriculum centered on story-telling that provides effective formation for any size group. A number of parishes in our diocese use some form of *Godly Play*. Trainings are offered twice a year with a nationally accredited trainer.

- “Thank you for the Godly Play Training. Our church administrator was receiving calls all morning with folks raving about the session – so much positive energy has come out practically overnight!”



Diocesan wide formation programs, featuring nationally known speakers, are provided to clergy and lay leaders at little cost. The most recent offering was the Stewardship Conference with Susan Vick. Representatives from 32 parishes attended. Local training workshops, such as *Bishop’s Days for Parish Leaders* and *Gift’s Discernment* are also underwritten to allow for greater participation. Other collaborative

programs include *Vestry Training* and *New Vitalities Coach* training.

Diocesan EfM (Education for Ministry) membership fee to Sewanee allows adults to take this four year course at \$100 off the annual tuition. Approximately 250 people currently benefit from this. Additional assistance to EfM mentors and participants is also available.

Consultations with parishes and vestries, especially those with limited staff and resources, are a vital part of Formation Ministries and are a part of diocesan work that many do not see or hear about. Fostering the programmatic health of all our parishes benefits the entire diocese.



- “I can’t tell you how much your visit meant to us. Having someone from the diocese to visit with us was very special. The teachers left filled with motivation.”
- “Those who attended Caroline Black’s presentation about lay leadership training were inspired to action and excited about the training ahead.”
- “We were looking for lay leadership training assistance to support implementation of our strategic plan. Caroline Black came to our rescue with a well rounded program encompassing basic leadership skills within a spiritual framework. We eagerly anticipate this training!”

Repairers of the Breach, the task force empowered by annual Council to study our response to the sin of racism, is concluding its work with a video presentation at council 2013. The video and accompanying study guide, funded by Formation Ministries, will enable all parishes to engage this difficult subject with suitable materials.

Safe Church training is mandated by General Convention, and a necessary reality of our life in the church. With diocesan funds, we are able to offer an honorarium to our trainers and provide the highest quality trainings.



Scholarships for continuing education for laity help many take advantage of programs offered here and elsewhere. Parishes may also access these funds for program support in their own parishes.

- “Because of the financial support from the diocese, we were able to reimburse people who have been buying supplies for our quarterly children’s formation event out of their own pockets. The support funded our last event and will fund the one coming up in September.”
- “LPM tuition is \$600 per year. This is sometimes a large amount for musicians who may be serving part-time in a small parish. The Diocese has helped several students who have gone through the two-year program with a third of the tuition costs. Thank you to the Diocese for its support of the students in this program.