

## Prayers

### For A Parent of Children, Youth

Our Father in heaven, thank you for gifting me with children. Guide me as I teach them (*him, her*) to trust and to risk, to respect and to challenge, to think and to wonder, to know and to love you. Let me not rob them of their childhood journey, but value their inquisitive minds as they explore and create in self-discovery. They are not a carbon copy of me, but are made in your image as loveable and capable beings with their own gifts and dreams. Support me as I exercise virtuous living, practice what I teach, and explain what I practice. Let me not betray their trust nor dampen their hopes. Help me to be a faithful, patient teacher. Through Jesus Christ, who came among us as a child, I offer my prayer to you. Amen.

### For Education (1979 BCP, p. 261)

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom: Enlighten by your Holy Spirit those who teach and those who learn, that, rejoicing in the knowledge of your truth, they may worship you and serve you from generation to generation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### For Schools and Colleges (1979 BCP, p. 824)

O Eternal God, bless all schools, colleges, and universities (and especially our seminaries), that they may be lively centers of sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom; and grant that those who teach and those who learn may find you to be the source of all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### For the Will to Grow and Learn

O Jesus Christ, Teacher Divine, continue to grace me with the desire for learning. Grant me the wisdom to embrace new ways to grow and to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit as I seek to continue to mature into your likeness and purpose. May I be open to learning as long as I live; and prepare me for the life which is to come. Amen.

*These materials were written and prepared by the Rev. Gus Boone, Canon for Lifelong Christian Formation and Ministry in the Diocese of Western North Carolina.*

For further information and resources: [www.teforall.org](http://www.teforall.org)



## Theological Education Sunday

February 3, 2008

### *Celebrating Christian Formation Across The Lifespan*

Today we celebrate and give thanks for all laity and clergy who accept the responsibility for teaching in the Episcopal Church: those who parent children in our homes, those in local congregational, diocesan, and national church formation ministries, those in Episcopal-sponsored Childcare Centers and Preschool Programs, Episcopal Schools, Seminaries, Colleges, and Universities, and those who teach and guide in Episcopal Retirement and Care Centers.

## What does Theological Education Have To Do With Me?

### *Christian Theological Education informs my life journey in learning to love and serve Jesus Christ!*

- It helps me *shape foundational religious attitudes* which begin forming in infancy, toddler-hood, and preschool years.

These attitudes are Godly gifts which include: trust and dependability, hope, predictability, appreciation, care, self-respect, love, mutuality, cooperation, wonder, inquiry.

- It helps me *gather information about Christian faith* by:
  - \* **exploring the stories of God** acting in the lives of people in Holy Scripture, religious history, and others in my world today.
  - \* **participating in the music, prayers and rites of the church** as they inform me of God's presence in life transitions (including my death), of God's love, purpose, and participation in my daily life, and of my call to learn and grow as a servant of Jesus Christ.

\* **participating in the servant life of the church** where I learn what it means to make and maintain relationships in the faith community, learn how to give to and receive from others, and learn to develop and utilize my individual gifts and talents through Christian service.

- It helps me *learn essential faith skills* including the ability
  - \* to read, understand, and utilize Holy Scripture  
to listen, to think, and to express my faith  
to make meaning of experience through theological reflection
  - \* to make moral decisions  
to pray and to worship  
to exercise care, patience, respect, flexibility, wisdom
  - \* to develop a discipline of daily faith practices  
to live out the Baptismal Covenant  
to develop a discipline of responsible stewardship



### Christian Theological Education informs CORE FAITH ISSUES:

As we grow through the various phases of life, age-related experiences demand a deeper understanding of the core faith issues which a continuing Christian theological education addresses:

IDENTITY	how I see and understand myself today
COMMUNITY	how I live into current and future relationships
AUTHORITY	how I utilize personal power and authority
PURPOSE	how I understand and live my life's purpose

The depth and dimension of the core faith issues change as we grow from one life phase into another, thus the need for the church to offer continuing quality support in lifelong faith formation for everyone.

### An Exercise in Formation

A helpful way to understand the core faith issues is to explore in some depth the following set of questions. This may be done individually or in small reflection groups. Select one issue per group session.



Answers are readily available from at least two sources for each core faith issue: the voice of secular culture and the voice of religious training and experience. What does each of the two voices have to offer in exploring this faith issue? Which voice do I listen to most often? Which voice do I trust? Has this faith issue surfaced at any time during my life journey so far? Where is this issue operative in my life today?

**Who am I ?** The core faith issue of *identity* sometimes shifts and changes across my life journey. In what way is Christian training informing my exploration of this core faith issue?

**Who are They ?** The core faith issue of *community* emerges as I move from one group to another. What is Christianity teaching me about my relationships and responsibilities to others in my family, my neighborhood, church, workplace, and throughout the world at large?

**What sources of power influence my life?** The core faith issue of *authority* also challenges as I move through life. What does Christianity teach me about power and authority, my own and that beyond myself, as the basis upon which I make responsible choices for myself and others?

**What am I supposed to do with my life?** The core faith issue of *purpose* seems to confront me as I grow from one phase of my life into another. How is Christian training informing my sense of what I am supposed to do with my life? What will my sense of purpose be when I enter into an older age or become disabled along life's way?

What Holy Scriptures come to mind when exploring each core issue?