

Yesterday . . .

The early Christians understood that they needed to be in an ongoing program of learning and formation in order to remain true to the life Jesus Christ was calling them to live. They encountered daily temptations in the world around them and found that a discipline of prayer and study as well as regular attendance at the Eucharist assisted them. In all of these, they were supported in fellowship with other Christians.

Today . . .

- ✦ What have you inherited from our biblical tradition that gives you joy?
- ✦ What do you receive from your faith community that nourishes your desire to learn?
- ✦ What needs tending?
- ✦ What will help you continue to grow?
- ✦ What gift would you like to pass on to others?
- ✦ What are you doing (or what might you do) to find strength and support to live faithfully every day?
- ✦ Do you attend to your need for ongoing Christian formation?
- ✦ Have you developed holy habits (the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of the bread and the prayers)? If not, can you imagine how you might develop them?
- ✦ Does your congregation offer opportunities and resources for all ages to learn about God and the love of Christ?



For more information about **"Theological Education for All"**

www.TEforALL.org

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Theological Education Sunday

Inherit

Receive

Tend

Grow



The occasion to rededicate ourselves to life-long education and spiritual formation, supporting our individual ministries and our missionary task:
to continue the spread of Jesus' light in the world

What is Theological Education?

“Episcopalians seek to know and do the truth by means of the creative interplay of Scripture, tradition, reason and experience.” (John Booty) Theological education is learning about God and exploring what it means to be fully human and to follow Jesus Christ, to be equipped for faithful living and effective servant leadership.

Learning about God takes place in classrooms, but also at home, places of work, by a hospital bed and walking along a forest path. In community, Christians of all ages study Scripture and reflect upon encounters with the Risen Christ in daily life in a search for knowledge, wisdom and transformation. Each congregation has a mission to provide theological education for all of its members and its community.

“Christian education is an ongoing process whose purpose is to support the people of God as they seek to live out the Baptismal Covenant and to express their unique calling as followers of Jesus Christ.” *Called to Teach and Learn* (The Episcopal Church USA, 1994)

Theological Education Sunday*

- ✚ Acknowledges and gives thanks to those who work with children, youth and adults in educational settings, sharing their gifts of knowledge, patience, enthusiasm, and eagerness to learn and grow.
- ✚ Is an occasion for the Church to encourage all members to participate in the search for the knowledge of God.
- ✚ Recognizes that learning is a life-long process and every congregation needs to equip lay people for their ministry in the world through theological education.
- ✚ “Is a time to lift up meaningful opportunities for the growth in Godly knowledge, understanding and wisdom of people of all ages.” *The Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop, Episcopal Church USA*

* Established at the 1997 General Convention, which called upon the Presiding Bishop to designate one Sunday each year as Theological Education Sunday. (A200)

Called to Teach and Learn

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. *A Collect for Education* (1979 BCP p. 261)

The Old Testament is the call and journey of God’s chosen people to a covenantal relationship. The New Testament continues this understanding of call to all God’s people through the church, *ekklesia*, meaning those who are “called out” to be the body of Christ, a part of the new covenant. Paul notes the characteristics of one who is specifically called to the ministry of teaching: the one who has the ministry of traditioning, of passing the stories, teachings and lore that make community unique.

Christian education is “traditioning,” passing on the meaning of the faith community from one generation to the next - a task that reminds us of the past which we have inherited and binds us to future generations. We receive the teachings of our tradition, and by tending to our learning in community, we grow spiritually. We are then equipped to pass on to future generations the story of what it means to be God’s people.



O Eternal God, bless all schools, colleges, and universities, that they may be lively centers for 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. *Prayer for Schools and Colleges* (1979 BCP p. 824)

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Hymns for Theological Education Sunday

Hymnal 1982

528 Lord, You Give the Great Commission

536 Open Your Ears, O Faithful People

587 Our Father, By Whose Name

628 Help Us, O Lord, to Learn

632 O Christ, the Word Incarnate

707 Take My Life and Let it Be

Lift Every Voice and Sing

64 I Love to Tell the Story



Theological Education in the Episcopal Church:

A Renewed Vision

- ✦ A four-year project whose goal is to inspire all Episcopalians to think theologically and to call all congregations to be places of intentional theological reflection and learning.
- ✦ A time for recognizing and celebrating those places where life-changing Christian learning is experienced and valued.
- ✦ Provides a web portal that identifies resources and provides additional ideas for celebration and conversation about transformational learning in congregations
- ✦ A collaborative educational effort of seminaries, dioceses, parishes and educators around the church in preparing all Episcopalians for faithful living and effective servant leadership.
- ✦ A means to enhance local efforts to empower all persons for ministry as articulated in the vision of “Called to Teach and Learn” a manual of the Episcopal Church for the planning and implementation of Christian education programs in various contexts.

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever ever. Amen. *Proper 28* (1979 BCP p. 236)

Resources for Theological Education Sunday

A Litany

Leader: Today we remember all those who work with children, youth and adults in educational ministries. We give thanks for their initiative in creating vital connections between our life experiences and the wisdom of our faith tradition and stories.

People: We celebrate those who have been called to the ministry of teaching: in our churches, schools, seminaries and all institutions of learning. We give thanks for our Sunday school teachers, youth group leaders and adult formation leaders.

Teachers: Relying on God for guidance and help, we dedicate ourselves to the tasks of teaching. We will give ourselves gladly and sincerely to this work of the church family, doing our best to live, to study and to exemplify the life of a disciple of the Great Teacher, Jesus.

People: We, the people of this church, pledge our active participation in and support of the educational work of the church, seeking always to continue our own learning and growth as Christians. We will pray with and for the church’s teachers. We will strive by personal example to testify our love for Christ and God’s kingdom, God being our helper.

Leader: Gracious God, grant us grace to recognize with a grateful heart those people in our life who guide us to you so that we might understand how we can live more faithfully everyday, coming to know you better. Awaken us to your will for us and bless us with readiness and courage to learn all that you would have us know. We ask this through your holy name, which our ancestors spoke and honored long before us.

People: Amen.

Resources for Support and Learning

The Episcopal Church Office of Children's Ministries and Christian Education www.episcopalchurch.org/myp

coordinates Christian Education resources and support for all dioceses and congregations. Among its resources are:

- ✦ Lesson Plans for Congregations, a free downloadable lectionary resource for children and adult education
- ✦ Educational Inquiry, a process for engaging communities in visioning and developing educational ministries
- ✦ A web site highlighting and linking to model practices in parishes and dioceses across The Episcopal Church, including programs for theological education in dioceses and seminaries for baptismal ministry in daily life for all ages

The Episcopal Council for Christian Education (ECCE)

<http://64.89.140.177/myp/provmap.html> consists of Provincial representatives who advocate and lift up best practices for life-long formation by:

- ✦ Implementing General Convention resolutions
- ✦ Developing program resources
- ✦ Supporting Provincial education networks
- ✦ Linking the Office for Children's Ministries and Christian Education, the provinces and dioceses of the Episcopal Church in the USA (ECUSA)
- ✦ Highlighting ECUSA programs such as The Children's Charter, Called to Teach and Learn, and advocacy and education events

The National Association of Episcopal Christian Education Directors (NAECED) www.naeced.org

is a non-profit organization working to provide members and the Episcopal Church with professional support, networking, resources, and leadership development by:

- ✦ Providing a forum for Christian Educators to explore issues of professionalism in ministry
- ✦ Encouraging Christian Educators to seek out and embrace practices of spiritual reflection, theological studies and excellence in professionalism.
- ✦ Providing members with tools and resources for their ministry.

The Seminaries of The Episcopal Church

www.teforall.org/seminaries.html offer theological education through a variety of programs and resources. These eleven accredited seminaries each have a website that highlight their unique contributions, including web-based learning, spiritual formation, as well as degree & non-degree programs.

- ✦ Theological Education for All <http://www.teforall.org>

The Episcopal Church Office for Ministry

Development www.episcopalchurch.org/ministry/about.htm

promotes effective, healthy, and sustainable ministerial leadership. OMD works with the Standing Commission on Ministry Development and organizations around the Episcopal Church to encourage life-long learning for the *laos*—the people of God including clergy and lay professionals— in order to better equip persons for Christian life and for service in the name of Jesus Christ. Among the initiatives in which OMD is a key partner:

- ✦ Ministry in Daily Life <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/mdl/>
- ✦ Faith and Wisdom <http://www.faithandwisdom.org/>
- ✦ Fresh Start <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/research/freshstart.html>
- ✦ *Hear God's Call* website for exploring vocation (coming soon)
- ✦ Pilot Project for Continuing Education for New Priests

Liturgical Resources for congregations:

In The Book of Common Prayer

- ✦ Collect for a theologian and teacher p. 248
- ✦ Collect for all baptized Christians p. 252
- ✦ A Prayer of Self-Dedication p. 832
- ✦ The Renewal of Baptismal Vows p. 292-294
- ✦ A Form of Commitment to Christian Service p. 420-421

Scripture for Reflection on "Ways of Traditioning"

- ✦ The Shema *Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20-25*
- ✦ Known by God *Psalms 71:5-6*
- ✦ An Historical Psalm *Psalms 78:1-8*
- ✦ Jesus Teaching *Matthew 5:1, 19; 11:1*
- ✦ Teaching in Jesus' Name *Acts 5:17-21, 25-29, 40-42*
- ✦ The Role of a Teacher *1 Timothy 4:11-16*