

# WRESTLING WITH THE BIG QUESTIONS

## SESSION II: SUMMARY

### **Hospitality in Teaching & Learning: Embracing Questions, Challenges, Doubts & Diversity (Sat. afternoon).**

Tell stories about two different moments, events, or situations in your own life in the church: (1) A moment when you felt safe to explore your own authentic experience of faith, or confusion, or doubt, or dissent in your own way. (2) A moment when you did not feel such safety and may even have felt at marginalized or excluded. Then reflect on what you have heard in this session and Session I, asking two questions: (1) How can education in the church become more hospitable to the diverse ways in which people engage the faith journey? (2) What are some of the obstacles to such hospitality in the church and how might we overcome them? (Text: "The Road to Emmaus," Luke 24: 13–35)

#### **What have you heard / learned:**

- Hospitality
  - Central to teaching and learning
  - Is currently not part of our institution (ie – not a safe place) – many stories where lack of hospitality were experienced in the church
  - Respect the learner
  - Open to diversity / other denominations – mutual respect
  - Honoring gifts
  - Respect the ministry of ALL the baptized
  - Needs to be taught
  - Is part of building a community
- Importance of small group / intergenerational learning
- Children, people of color, women especially have stories of exclusion; have experienced inhospitality, exclusion and
- Redefine leader – not just 'top down'
- There is a resistance to change in our churches that stops hospitality from fully occurring

#### **Practical implications:**

- Lay leadership needs to be empowered more
- Examine barriers to hospitality in our congregations – is there a tool for this?
- Begin educating leadership in hospitality / safe space / community building – Bishops, clergy & vestries (Formation aspect of vestry meetings, House of Bishops, clergy training and diocesan training)
- What are the needs of the small church? This is rarely addressed
- Learning how to reflect on our faith – the Gospel is about hospitality
- Intergenerational events – communities across generations
- Build community during education events
- Use of language can be inhospitable / exclusionary
- Hospitality / teaching during sermon time – sermon skills need strengthening to be authentic
- Discernment of gifts of the entire community
- Eucharists that include storytelling / sharing after the sermon

- Curriculum that includes / takes into account:
  - Diversity – culturally, racially, age
  - Storytelling
  - Different modalities
- Education for all – not just those who can ‘come’ to church (nursing homes, home, wider community)
- Baptismal Covenant as center of congregational life and ministry – equipping people for discipleship
- Open Communion – Eucharist available to all
- Value of education in the life of the community is needed more
- More creativity with music, liturgical dance, storytelling, arts
- New vocabulary for “formation”
- Take seriously the spiritual experiences of children
- Need for reconciliation in our congregations
- Parental support and education
- Training for educators
- Learn and appreciate newer ways of communication using various technologies (follow the lead of youth)
- Need education models that fit between Alpha, Via Media and DOCC, EFM.
- Power & authority need to be shared by all (move away from hierarchical model of power with clergy)
- Teach the basics

**Also needs to be shared:**

- There is a need for clergy to have a safe place for their doubts/challenges – there is a need for circles of trust among clergy
- Clergy need to learn how to create a space to nurture the Spirit – teach how to practice prayer and study the Word
- Need to be more empowering of our members