Cupping his hands, Archbishop Desmond Tutu began to describe the fragility of humanity. Blowing gently into his hands, his shoulders hunched, he told how God's breath of life blows continuously, sustaining life in each person. If that breath should stop "even for a nanosecond," he added, life would cease to exist.

Desmond Tutu, Archbishop of Cape Town and Nobel Prize winner, recently met with students and community members of Virginia Theological Seminary for an informal address and question and answer period. With humor and insight, he reminded the group of God's wonderful love affair with all of us.

Christian life is both exhilarating and "fun-fun," he said. Too often we think we must approach it with great solemnity and gloom. But, Tutu said, Christian life is the very opposite of gloomy.

We keep trying to find ways to please God, he said, as if we could control God's love. But there is no way we can come between God and God's love for each of us.

Tutu later talked about the confrontation between Jeremiah and God and Jeremiah's fear of heeding the call to be a prophet. The Lord told Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you." God has known us and loved us for all eternity, said Tutu.

Archbishop Tutu's message of God's love and support for the fragile human race has similarities to Jerome Berryman's "Theology of Childhood." In his story about the theology, Berryman, the founder of Godly Play, calls for us to honor and respect each child in our care because they are beloved by God.

Children, said Berryman, come to us with their own spark, and with their own experience of the God of Power With No Name. They do not come to us empty to be filled with knowledge and information about God. They don't want to know about God, they want to know God.

Children know what they know, Berryman adds, even if they don't have words for it. They have something to teach us if we are watching and listening with our hearts. We honor and respect children, not because they are tomorrow's leaders, but because they are today's children.

Archbishop Tutu remarked on the "radical" ideas of the gospel that makes us all family. How could we hurt or ignore or dishonor a member of our family? As members of God's family, we are all called to reflect God's wonderful love affair with humanity.

—DSL
Editorial

Hurricane Assistance Can Help Children Confront Their Fears

Just as most of us were getting geared up for a new academic year and preparing classrooms for the first day of church school, the Gulf Coast states faced the punishing winds and rain of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita along with the aftermath of flooding.

Many congregations were scattered to evacuation sites in outlying areas. Churches in the path of the storm were completely destroyed or weakened beyond repair.

The rest of us watched the tale of destruction from the safety of our homes, wondering how and what we could do to alleviate the suffering of so many people. Many of us made contributions to organizations that provided immediate aid, such as the Red Cross or Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD).

Churches just outside the areas of destruction began providing shelter and aid. Other congregations throughout the country explored ways they could assist the thousands of evacuees.

The media ran stories about communities and individuals coming to the aid of their neighbors. In one area, children opened a lemonade stand with all profits to go to hurricane relief. Through schools and other organizations, children collected clothing, food and supplies such as diapers to send to evacuation centers.

Despite all of these efforts, more help is going to be needed in the months that follow. An excellent resource to guide relief efforts (see below) has been prepared by members of the National Association for Episcopal Christian Education Directors (NAECED).

The resource includes website addresses from the affected dioceses in the Gulf Coast region along with suggested ideas, contact persons and links. Also included in the materials are Bible passages that speak of God’s people forced to move to a new land and books that focus on fear and the unknown.

We can help our children confront their fears of the unknown through loving acts of service to others. In addition, relationships with specific groups make it easier for children to understand the reality of the event as opposed to surreal images from a television screen.

With our help, our children will truly understand that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1) —DSL

Children Helping Children

As parishes and individuals respond to the destruction of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, children are also eager to help. The National Association for Episcopal Christian Education Directors (NAECED) immediately began offering assistance to colleagues in the affected areas, as well as children and teachers in their own parishes.

Rebuilding in the affected areas is only just beginning. A project that children can engage in now is writing letters of hope, encouragement and God’s love to other children in the Gulf Coast region. NAECED has gathered this and other ideas along with contact information and addresses of dioceses and churches in the region and made them available on the NAECED website (see below).

The NAECED website resource includes prayers, hymns, and scripture passages for liturgies for all ages. In addition, information is available to assist congregations in planning future mission and ministry partnerships with churches and individuals affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

To view the NAECED resources, visit www.ctdiocese.org/newsletters/katresponse.pdf.
Intergenerational Event for Epiphany Invites Congregation to Celebrate the Light of Christ

Plan a special observation of Epiphany this year for every parishioner, from the youngest to the oldest. Intergenerational events mix the energy and enthusiasm of youth with the wisdom and grace of older parishioners. Everyone can experience the stories and activities at their own level while learning from each other.

These events help us see familiar things, such as Epiphany, in new ways and new ideas in old contexts. They need not be elaborate and can provide a welcome change from routine schedules.

Before you begin, think about the space you will need and the number of people you expect. The number of people will determine the range of activities and how many participants can be accommodated at each activity.

Be sure to plan activities that all ages will enjoy. If you provide written instructions at each center, use words as well as pictures so that young children are able to “read” the directions, too.

Look for activity ideas for an Epiphany intergenerational event from the three sessions on Epiphany in the Unit II, Session 5 sections in every guide of the Episcopal Children’s Curriculum for all levels in the Shell, Chalice and Cross years.

Set up an open space with large areas designated around and in the middle of a large room. If you use tables, be sure that young children can reach the tops. Encourage participants to work in pairs or in small groups with an adult or teen matched with each child under age 12.

After participants have had time to work at the centers, plan a final gathering for all to share music, drama and refreshments.

Ideas in the curriculum can be adapted for different age groups. For example, put a piano at the focal point of one of the centers. Encourage participants to look for Epiphany verses of well-known Christmas carols. The selections could be used at the closing gathering.

At another work station, participants can make stars of Bethlehem. Provide pieces of deep blue construction paper to serve as a background. Each person can make a special, large star for the center of the paper using gold foil, bright yellow construction paper, or glue and glitter.

At another station encourage participants to draw pictures or describe gifts that they could give to Jesus, just as the Magi presented their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Encourage them to think of things they can do, say or feel that are loving and caring. Gather the “gifts” in a sack that can be presented at the offertory during a worship service.

Others could decorate candles to symbolize the “Light of Christ” using glitter, self-adhesive stars, and ribbon. Consider constructing in another room a life-size maze that leads to the manger and Baby Jesus. See if participants can find another way out of the maze, as the Magi had to return home by another route to avoid King Herod.

For more ideas about planning and offering an Epiphany intergenerational event, consult the ECC Supplemental Guide: Preschool/Kindergarten. Supplemental guides for every age group can be ordered from Morehouse Publishing through www.morehousegroup.com or by calling 800.877.0012.

—DSL
Expectations are always high during the Christmas season. We look forward to spending time with family and friends, decorating homes, cooking special food, sharing traditions, and celebrating the birth of Jesus.

When the season finally ends, we often wonder what happened. Instead of feeling renewed, we feel let down and tired. The list of things left undone seems longer that the list of things done.

Several resources are available to help us begin the season right with thoughtful Advent preparations and a shift in expectations. Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway? includes timely ideas for putting Christ in the center of the holidays, beginning with the first Sunday in Advent and continuing through the Feast of the Epiphany.

In an opening letter in the booklet, Terry Parsons, stewardship officer for the Episcopal Church, passes along a suggestion used in her own family. “We have stopped asking, ‘What are you getting for Christmas?’ We ask instead, ‘What are you giving this Christmas?’”

Discussions with children centered on decisions about whom they want to give gifts, what a gift might be, and how much to spend if the gift cannot be hand-made. One of Parson’s nephews decided to give the entire family a gift of baby chicks through the Heifer Project (www.heifer.org).

Included in Whose Birthday is a list of suggestions for alternative Christmas gifts including several Episcopal resources. The authors suggest that readers honor friends and relatives with gifts that allow recipients to bring life and hope to people throughout the world.

Advent ideas in the booklet offer individuals, families and small groups a way to remember the reason for celebrating this special season. For each Sunday (Advent through the Feast of Epiphany) three scripture references are provided along with commentaries by different writers, such as Susan Vogt, author and speaker, and Art Simon, founder of Bread for the World. Thoughtful questions are provided to guide and inspire group discussions.

Youth leaders may want to play Christmas Bingo with their youth groups. The game is played at a local mall. After the group gathers at a central point in a local mall, each person is given a “bingo” card to complete. The purpose of the game is to help youth see how the marketplace has encroached on the holiday and our sacred traditions. After a set time, the group reconvenes to talk about what it found. Scripture passages and questions are provided to guide discussions.

Another resource to help you keep focused is a poster, Slow Down. Quiet. It’s Advent! The 17 X 22 inch poster from Morehouse Publishing is a 28-day Advent calendar with ideas for keeping faith with the season. It suggests doing good deeds, praying, being thoughtful during the holiday rush, writing notes, or meditating about the real meaning of Christmas.

The poster is sold in packs of 25 ($10) and can be ordered by calling 800.877.0012 or through www.morehousepublishing.com.

Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway? ($3) can be ordered through www.SimpleLiving.org or by calling 800.821.6153.

—DSL
Teachers Receive a Spoonful of Gratitude

On the Third Sunday of Advent last year, each church school teacher at St. Anne’s Episcopal Church, Annapolis, Maryland, received a wooden spoon decorated with a red bow. A message from Meg Kimble, director of Christian formation, was attached:

The Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory now and for ever. Amen.

(Book of Common Prayer, p. 212)

This Sunday was traditionally known in the English church as “fruitcake Sunday” because of the first two words of this collect. Homemakers were to go home after church and begin their Christmas baking.

I am so blessed to have you as a Church School teacher. This little gift is to say Thank You and to celebrate that as a teacher you are a little like a spoon. God gave us the recipe, the children are the ingredients, the Holy Spirit provides the leavening and the spice, and you with God’s help, are the spoon that mixes everything together. Without your love and commitment, none of what we do here for our children could come together.

Thank you for all that you have given to our children at St. Anne’s. May the blessings of Christmas be with you now and through the New Year.
“Wisdom’s Branches are Glorious and Graceful” is the theme of the Episcopal Schools Celebration 2005-2006 (ESC), sponsored by the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES). Episcopal schools recently celebrated the theme, found in Ecclesiasticus 24:16, at school convocations and chapel services.

The Rev. Peter G. Cheney, Executive Director, believes the theme “points to that vital dynamic within our missions as Episcopal schools through which we empower our students—and all with whom we work and serve—to seek and find a place of peace and grace that only God can provide.”

In a letter to Episcopal school leadership, the Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop, notes that the ministries provided by the schools “make a critical difference in many lives, and bring Christ’s loving and empowering presence to students and their families from a wide variety of backgrounds and communities.”

Griswold goes on to say that the theme, “Wisdom’s Branches are Glorious and Graceful,” helps us realize that “as we humans surrender our wills to God’s love and will we discover within ourselves a precious gift—a form of wisdom that brings us to a glorious and graceful state of being.”

The quest for wisdom, says Cheney, cannot really be pursued until the “worldly avenues of so-called success” are exhausted. At that point, a deep hunger within the human spirit is discovered, along with the realization that external strivings will never satisfy it. These strivings, he notes, provide the energy that allow humans to launch themselves into the human fray.

In the Episcopal Church and the Anglican community at large, formal education has always been a dimension of the Church’s mission and service. The church continues to support efforts of administrators, teachers and leaders to build school communities where wisdom’s branches are glorious and graceful.

There are more than 1,000 Episcopal schools in the United States, the Caribbean, Central and South American and the Pacific Basin. These encompass early childhood, elementary, middle, secondary and comprehensive schools, parish, cathedral, diocesan, religious order and independent schools that can be coeducational, single-sex, day, boarding, military or Montessori-based.

Over 800 parishes and cathedrals in the Church have a school as part of their ministry. Episcopal schools serve over 160,000 children, who represent significant socio-economic, racial, cultural and religious diversity.

On average, about 25 percent of the students in Episcopal schools are Episcopalians; a large number of students come from other Christian denominations, non-Christian traditions, or with no formal faith background.

If your parish has a day school or preschool that is not affiliated with NAES, plan your own celebration. Contact NAES (see below) for resources and information about becoming a member.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EPISCOPAL SCHOOLS
815 Second Ave.
New York, NY 10017
800.334.7626, ext. 6134
info@episcopalschools.org
www.episcopalschools.org

COLLECT FOR EPISCOPAL SCHOOLS

God of knowledge and wisdom, we pray to you for all the schools across the country and the world that are part of the Episcopal Church. We remember them in their variety and in their differences and in what they share. Give us open doors, open minds and open hearts that we might accept, learn and love everything and everyone whom you have given us. Help us to share our lives and what we have and to learn from all those who are in school with us. We pray in the name of Jesus who opened his arms to young and old. Amen.

Children Can Tap into Natural Compassion To Find Joy of Giving

By Elaine Ward

Stewardship comes from the abundance of the heart, the joy of having and the joy of sharing. We are called to act with compassion and charity for others, and to provide our children with an opportunity to discover the joy of giving.

Children are compassionate. An observation of preschool children found that 67 out of 77 children helped or comforted one another during a 40-minute free play. Frequently, however, we deprive them of opportunities for sharing.

Children learn loving behavior through experiencing and watching that behavior among adults and their peer groups. Stories showing love in action are also instructive. Praising children’s actions reinforces caring behavior, such as, “It made Sarah happy when you shared the toy.”

Stewardship is servanthood. Jesus called himself a servant. He knew that love is better than knowledge and called us to become as little children. The unconditional love a small child gives to others illustrates the power of love. In terms of the world, children may be nonproductive, but in God’s kingdom they produce the best there is.

Teaching Stewardship

We can begin teaching stewardship to our youngest parishioners by making it part of their lives through small, but meaningful acts. The key is planning activities that allow children to experience the joy of giving themselves.

One way to do this is to pick a theme, such as respecting the value of having adequate food. When children become aware that some people go without food, church-sponsored food drives take on new meaning. We can also teach them to respect those who grow and bring food to us. Below are suggested activities that will provide opportunities to talk and learn about stewardship:

1. In the spring, plant vegetable seeds in small paper or biodegradable cups that can be transferred to a larger pot or garden at home or on church grounds. Decorate the wall with pictures of farmers and farmland. This activity provides an opportunity to talk about the importance of people who grow food and God’s gift of life.
2. Enjoy a “picnic” indoors or outside, depending on the weather, that the children distribute themselves. Sit on a blanket and encourage the children to share a few crackers or a small bowl of cooked rice. Ask the children to divide the food evenly, giving a small portion to each person. Serve with water. Explain that this “meal” might feed a child in places where there is drought and famine for a whole day.
4. Contribute to a mission project your church sponsors that involves food. Talk about stewardship and sharing with others. If the project involves another country or area, such as hurricane relief for the Gulf Coast states, display maps and pictures.
5. Compare the food we eat with food eaten in places where there is famine or want. Cut out pictures of food in magazines and glue them to several paper plates. Draw grains of rice on another plate. Compare the plates and talk about the food we eat and sometimes even waste. (Note: Do not substitute real grains of rice because their use diminishes the value of food.)
6. Tell the story of Elijah being fed by the ravens and the widow in I Kings 17. Talk about our responsibility of sharing with others.

Out of joy, thanksgiving and praise we offer ourselves and our gifts to the world. Stewardship is not only about giving time and money, but also about molding us into the kind of people we want to become.
By Pamela Mers

It was a privilege to attend the June 2005 Christian Formation Conference at Kanuga Conferences in Hendersonville, North Carolina. A dynamic team of leaders assembled by conference coordinator Owene Courtney challenged participants to explore new avenues of ministry within the theme, “The Family of God, Gathering around the Table.”

A highlight of the conference was the resource center designed by Frances Rumsey of Christ Church, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, who transformed a corner of the cavernous meeting space into a family library—using her own living room furniture! The result was an inviting space to peruse new educational resources and to gather informally.

Keynoter Dick Hardel nourished the group’s professional spirits with laughter combined with a commitment to transforming faith. Music director Horace Boyer connected participants with the cultural history of spirituals and led the group in spirited gospel singing.

Worship leaders created liturgies that nurtured personal faith, including a Taize healing service. Workshop leaders were veterans in Christian formation who have both vision and an understanding of the basics. From intergenerational events to urban ministry for youth (and much more), attendees from all over the country brought home more ideas than they can ever implement.

There is a strong sense of community at Kanuga. About half of the attendees returned from former years; they greeted familiar faces with the genuine welcome of old friends. The other half of the group were welcomed for the first time.

After the first worship service, the Kanuga spirit helped form new community. The fellowship was encouraged with daily Bible study with the same small group. Designated seating at meals that changed each day created a family table for three meals. “Families” were encouraged to share and learn new family graces.

Many participants brought their families with them. The children were a particular blessing to the conference. They were fully immersed in their

Continued on p. 9.
During the Christian Formation Conference at Kanuga, participants looked at different ways that churches can work with families—from one member to many—to enrich the faith journey of every parishioner.

At one workshop, a group talked specifically about making churches more welcoming to families with children. Below are some of the ideas discussed at the workshop:

- Provide children’s worship packets (often in canvas bags for different age groupings, filled with crayons, books and paper) located in an area that is accessible to children.
- Allow children to experience the liturgy of the Word in their own way, either by staying to listen or leaving to hear the Word of God read by peers and/or presented as a story.
- Develop a children’s worship booklet, written with larger type and illustrated; keep copies in pew racks.
- Display “Pew Cards” in the racks with tips for adults—for both those who attend worship with or without children.
- Encourage children to be junior ushers and altar guild members.
- Provide a separate children’s seating area with adult supervision.
- Place rocking chairs at the back of the church for parents with fussy infants or toddlers.
- Provide the text of sermons on a website for parents who are busy with young children.
- Remove the stigma of parents’ leaving worship with a fussy child by providing a “quiet area.”
- Distribute copies of the Children’s Charter, a statement about the care and ministry to and by children, and post it in accessible place. (Download at no cost from www.episcopalchurch.org/44385_48685_ENG_HTM.htm.)
- Provide an art board for children’s contributions created during worship.
- Schedule “Children’s Sundays” once a month to give children opportunities to usher, work with the altar guild, and be lay readers. —DSL

Welcoming Families In Worship Services

During the Christian Formation Conference at Kanuga, participants looked at different ways that churches can work with families—from one member to many—to enrich the faith journey of every parishioner.

Everyone was challenged to offer the best formation possible to transform, inspire and empower people in the name of Christ. Kanuga continues to be a place for Sabbath and renewal for those workers God has called to teach.

Pamela Mers is co-creator of Cornerstones Publishing, Inc., which produces workshop rotation materials. She participated in the Kanuga Christian Formation Conference this year.
Creating sacred spaces in the home can call us into God’s presence throughout the day. What does a sacred space look like? It could be anywhere. Where in your home do you find a sense of solace or peace?

Set it apart by placing objects there that draw you to God, such as candles, icons, a cross, plants or flowers. Consider using different colored cloths for different seasons in the Church year.

If it is a space shared by the household, encourage family members to contribute items that they find along their daily paths: a beautiful fall leaf, a drawing, a poem.

A youth created a sacred space on a shelf in her bedroom. A friend created space in his home office where he prays daily using a service from a website—a saint’s icon is his computer desktop background. A family uses an entry hall table, gathering there each morning to pray before everyone leaves for the day. Find a space, create, worship and enjoy!

—Anne Kitch

Note: The item above is a regular feature in Episcopal Teacher targeted for families. Feel free to download (www.vts.edu/cmt) or photocopy for church newsletters or bulletins.
The Birth of Jesus Foretold

The prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of Jesus Christ. Isaiah knew that Jesus would be called a peacemaker, but that He would also be called by other names.

Use the code to find out what Isaiah said Jesus would be called.

**CODE:**

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ABCD/FGHLMNOPQRSTU/VWXYZ
Z/XYWVUTSRQPONMLKJIHGFDCEBA
```

```
Z M W S V D R O O Y V
```

```
X/ZOOVW D LMWVIUFO
```

```
XLFMHVOLI NRTSGB
```

```
TLW VEVI0ZHGRMT
```

```
UGSVI KIRMXV
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```
LUKVZXV
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**Isaiah 9:6, NIV**

Eternal Prince of Peace

Answer: And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

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Catechism of Creation
Is Helpful Guide for Congregational Study

The ongoing debate about the intersection of scientific theory and church doctrine has escalated in recent months with the advocacy of teaching “intelligent design” alongside the scientific theory of evolution in America’s public schools.

The conversation is muddled at times by confusion about the definition of Intelligent Design. Is it the same as creationism? How does it differ from biological evolution? Is it scientific theory, theology, or both?

To help answer these questions and facilitate congregational study, the Episcopal Church’s Committee on Science, Technology and Faith has written A Catechism of Creation: An Episcopal Understanding. The committee is composed of lay and ordained scientists and theologians who are convened by Dr. Sandra D. Michael, professor of biology at Binghamton University in Binghamton, New York. Dr. Michael is also an Episcopal layperson.

The document is a clear and concise statement presented in a question-and-answer format that congregations can use to identify key terms, explore historic and contemporary opinions, and examine the Episcopal Church’s positions in relation to those of other Christian traditions. A helpful bibliography accompanies each section.

A Catechism of Creation is divided into three sections that suggest a variety of approaches for parish study. Using jargon-free language, the authors begin by stating that “a theology of creation” consists of “rational and prayerful reflections on revelation” of God’s work in the world. God’s creative activity is examined through the perspectives of the writers of Genesis and the Bible’s Wisdom literature.

In Part II, “Creation and Science,” the writers contend that “the Bible is not a divinely dictated scientific textbook.” They differentiate between a “scientific theory” and a “theology of creation.”

Of particular interest is the section clarifying the differences between biological evolution, intelligent design, and creationism. These complex terms, frequently confused in the larger public conversation, receive appropriate treatment by the authors without talking down to the audience. Throughout each section they give the position of the Episcopal Church.

In Part III, “Caring for Creation,” the committee observes that Christians “are commissioned to model for all humankind how to love and serve the earth,...according to the teachings contained in Scripture.” They explain that all creatures are connected through a vast ecological system and are interdependent in God’s creation.

A Catechism of Creation is a valuable resource for bringing clarity and rational reflection to an important conversation that is attracting attention in the broader American society. With creative leadership, it will result in a timely study by adults and older youth who want to unpack the issues, explore Anglican positions, and ask questions about the relationship between science, faith, tradition and scripture.

The document can be downloaded at no cost at www.episcopalchurch.org/science.

—GJK
Guidelines for confirmation have been developed by a task force in the Diocese of Connecticut as a resource for parishes as part of the lifelong formation process (see box). The guidelines are designed to help churches develop programs that will equip confirmands to follow Jesus the rest of their lives.

Three years ago at a fall retreat clergy focused on ministry to children and youth and reviewed the spiritual development of children. At the end of the day, the overwhelming question coming from the group was, “What is The Episcopal Church’s stance and practice of confirmation?”

Task Force Appointed
A task force was appointed to study ways that confirmation could be supported by the diocese and how local preparation could be strengthened. Clergy and educators in parishes were surveyed by phone, e-mail and in person about confirmation and its preparation. The group researched the theology of confirmation in Christian history, prayer book revisions, General Convention resolutions, and canons of the Church.

Task force members and two diocesan bishops met together to review curriculum from several publishers and to discuss theories of faith development, especially those that related to “making mature decisions.”

Best Practices
Lists were compiled of best practices within the diocese and other areas along with hoped-for outcomes. When asked the question, “What would you like of each candidate that is presented?” Bishop Andrew Smith, stated that they understand and are able to promise “to follow Jesus Christ for the rest of my life.”

The task force began to develop suggestions for ways that parishes could prepare candidates to make that promise with conviction. Candidates should be engaged in ongoing, faith-forming education for discipleship, service and mission—continuing their journeys of faith within the context of a supportive faith community.

The task force agreed that a diocesan curriculum would not be developed, although members agreed that the core curriculum for confirmation is the Baptismal Covenant. They also recognized the importance of balancing instruction about the Episcopal Church and an Anglican expression of faith.


Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut
Guidelines for Confirmation, Reception & Reaffirmation

1. Candidates for confirmation should be in the tenth grade or 16 years or older.

2. Preparation should be a minimum of one academic year (September – May) with a preference for two years of preparation prior to the Rite of Confirmation with opportunities for on-going formation and education for all ages post-confirmation.

3. The Faith Community should take an active role in supporting confirmands through prayer, recognition and serving as mentors to journey with each candidate.

4. Clergy and lay persons should share leadership in the preparation of candidates for confirmation, reception and reaffirmation.

5. The Deanery is a source of support and companionship in preparing confirmands through retreats, mission opportunities and the Rite of Confirmation service.

6. The Bishop is an integral part in the preparation of confirmands.

7. Components for preparation should include:
   + Scripture
   + The Book of Common Prayer
   + Service and the life of the baptized
   + Mission and community
   + Prayer
   + Faith and practice – to include participation in worship, stewardship, Christian ethics, moral decision making and theological reflection
   + Episcopal polity

On-line in Spanish, English
Diocese Writes New Confirmation Guidelines

By Sharon Ely Pearson

The task force agreed that a diocesan curriculum would not be developed, although members agreed that the core curriculum for confirmation is the Baptismal Covenant. They also recognized the importance of balancing instruction about the Episcopal Church and an Anglican expression of faith.
Confirmation
Continued from p. 13.

the Christian faith with putting faith into practice. The group discussed explanations and rationale for each suggestion and identified resources to assist clergy and other baptized adults who oversee instruction and preparation. With some adjustments, the guidelines were presented to the diocese during the 2005 Easter season.

The 2005 Fall Clergy Day will again visit the topic of Confirmation and the new guidelines. Clergy and Christian educators will explore the guidelines at three regional workshops. To support one of the suggested practices, three overnight retreats for confirmands are scheduled, with a bishop present at each.

The Guidelines were developed as a gift to the Church. They are posted on the diocesan website, http://www.ctdiocese.org/resources/christianed/christianed_childguidelines.shtml, and can be downloaded. Summaries are available in French and Spanish. A wealth of resources to supplement and support each guideline are also listed.

Sharon Ely Pearson is Children’s Ministries & Christian Education Coordinator for the Diocese of Connecticut and was a member of the Bishop's Task Force on Confirmation. She wrote her thesis for the Master of Arts in Christian Education about confirmation. She can be contacted at spearson@ctdiocese.org or 860-233-4481, extension 126.

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Looking for a way to earn a Masters Degree in Christian Education during the Summer?

Come to Virginia Theological Seminary!

Students can earn a Master of Arts in Christian Education (MACE) degree by spending two to four weeks in residence at VTS during the summer. The degree can be completed in three to seven years.

During residency, students experience study in Bible, Church history, theology, ethics, liturgy and Christian education. They spend the year that follows working and reflecting on what they have learn before returning for further intensive work during the summer term. Courses are taught by members of the VTS faculty and qualified adjunct instructors.

For more information, visit www.vts.edu/cmt or send in the coupon on the facing page.
Children of the Dancing Sun
Advent’s Promise: Waiting in Hope
The United Church of Canada, 2004
800-288-7365
www.united-church.ca/resources
Cost: Guide, $14.95, Story Cards (60) $9.95

Inspired and developed within First Nations communities of Native Americans, Children of the Dancing Sun, Advent’s Promise: Waiting in Hope is an excellent resource for any congregation. Designed for children ages 5 through 12, it also can be easily adapted for intergenerational groups of all ages. The materials honor the Christian faith and nurture respect for cultural understanding of First Nations people.

Dancing Sun is flexible and teacher-friendly, designed to assist leaders in the season of Advent to model generosity and love, two traditional teachings of the native culture. It also empowers children to claim their own power and build positive relationships.

Each session addresses waiting and hoping in the midst of change, connecting First Nation cultures, Christian teachings, and real life experiences.

Sessions begin with a gathering and community worship. Storytelling, both biblical and from First Nation traditions, are featured along with activities designed to help learners relate to their own experiences and community issues. At the end of each session is a celebration of learning and a challenge to live the story in the community.

Children of the Dancing Sun aspires to speak to the entire child—mind, body, spirit and emotion. It would be an enriching Advent program in any congregation.

—Lori Daniels, curriculum specialist, Center for the Ministry of Teaching
Thinking about a Career In Youth Ministry?

There’s an advanced degree program designed with you in mind.
Virginia Theological Seminary offers a unique opportunity to earn a Master of Arts degree in Christian Education with a concentration in Youth Ministry during summer terms while interacting with young people at Kanuga Conferences, Inc. in North Carolina.

Most students in the program are currently employed or volunteer as youth ministers. Churches who wish to employ a youth minister are encouraged to hire a person and support him or her in the program for professional education and training.

For more information contact the Center for the Ministry of Education at 703.461.1885 or cmtcirc@vts.edu.

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