

## Marriage and Family Class | January 30<sup>th</sup>

### Word Made Flesh within Families, Stages of Development & Faith Formation

The word became flesh: how do these teachings, theology, ethics take flesh in our lives? How are they lived out?

#### Parental Promises at the time of Baptism

- ) to live with them among God's faithful people
- ) bring them to the word of God and the holy supper
- ) teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments
- ) place in their hands the holy scriptures
- ) and nurture them in faith and prayer

*So that...*

- ) your children may learn to trust God
- ) proclaim Christ through word and deed
- ) care for others and the world God made
- ) and work for justice and peace

#### Martin Luther: heads of household as primary faith educators

- ) We must let them see us living our faith, wearing our faith—made flesh in us

#### Engaging questions: types of questions children ask

From *Making a Home for Faith*, by Elizabeth F. Caldwell, pg. 61

- ) Informational: what were the names of the disciples?
- ) Analytical: Why were Joseph's brothers so mean to him? Why did Jesus tell so many stories? These are exploratory questions, looking for deeper meanings that relate to their lives.
- ) Experiential—Come from reflection & observation based off their own experiences, trying to reflect on, process them.
- ) Wonderings about the mysteries of God: Where does God live? What does God look like? Can I see God?— the point of these is wondering together, embracing the mysteries of faith

#### Stages of Development come alongside Stages of Faith Development

From *Childhood and Society* by Erik Erikson

Infancy and childhood stages:

- ) Trust vs. mistrust
  - o Faith formation: learning to trust God & others
- ) Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt
  - o learning that they have autonomy (independence) & will discover ways to use that independence to serve

- Scripture: Creation stories; Matthew 3.13-17 Jesus' baptism; John 3.16-17

) Initiative vs. Guilt

- finding a sense of purpose through taking initiative and making choices
- Faith formation: helping them apply their initiative to addressing needs of others (justice) & sharing faithful stories of hope that this is possible
- Scripture: Hebrews 11.1 faith is the assurance of things hoped for... following stories are of how disciples live into such faith; Romans 8.24-25

Puberty and youth stages:

) Identity vs. role confusion: everything gets questioned again

- their primary concern is how they appear to others vs. how they feel about themselves
- Faith formation: there is a growth toward adult ethics, maturity; a need for ritual and creeds to live by as adult identity takes shape
- Scripture: Psalm 139 for God's formation of us & accompaniment in all things; Gen. 1.27-31 made in God's image; Jn 1.12 power to become children of God

) Intimacy vs. Isolation—young adults, having confirmed some sense of identity, are now ready to connect that identity with others

- willing to commit to affiliations & partnerships—to learn to live into such commitments
- Scripture: John 3 Nicodemus & his uncertainty about intimacy/identification with Jesus; Freedom of a Christian is to serve; Brene Brown on vulnerability

Adult Stages:

) Generativity vs. stagnation (productivity, creativity)

- Faith formation: generativity is using the gifts God has given each of us as co-creators in the world, for the good of the world
- Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12.12-26 one body, many members; Luke 10.1-11 when we go out to serve

) Ego integrity vs. despair

- a recognition of what has been done in one's life with the circumstances as they are/were, & the ability to stand by one's life/lifestyle (integrity)
- Faith formation: Our integrity as Christians lies in Confession & Forgiveness (Psalm 32)

**Discussion Questions:**

In what ways was your faith nurtured as a child in the home of your upbringing? In what ways was it not? What do you want to carry forward for your children/grandchildren, and what do you need to leave behind?

What faith questions do you remember from your childhood or youth? Who was a conversation partner to you in your faith upbringing?

What faith questions has your child asked recently? What might be some deeper themes or questions behind this question?

What stage of development is your child or grandchild in? How can you name and reflect with them on this shaping of their identity as part of their theological and faith formation?