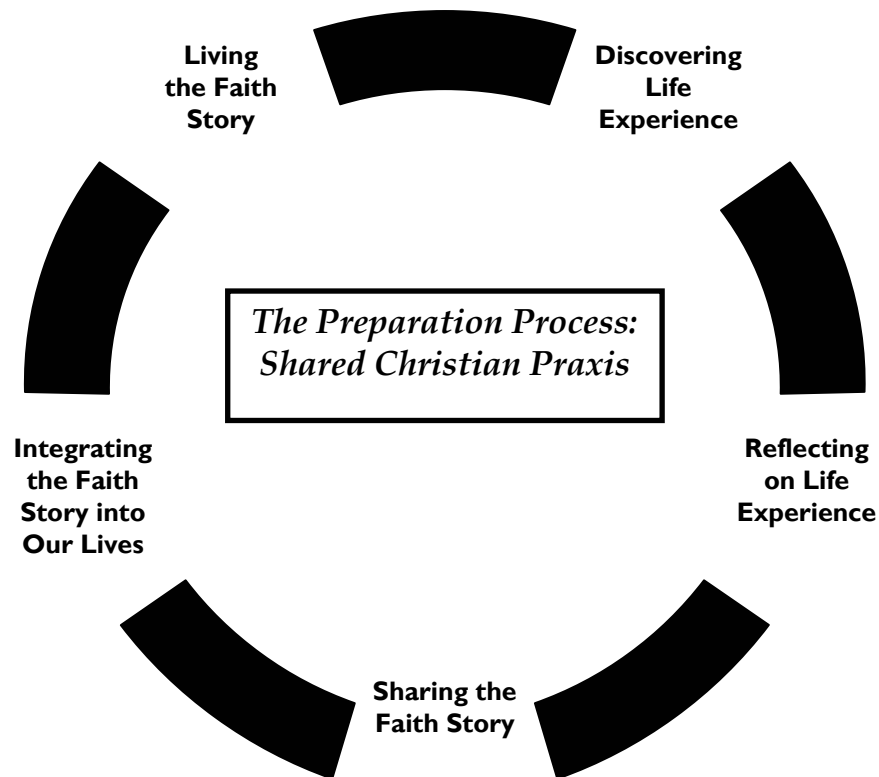


Shared Christian Praxis Learning Process

The Shared Christian Praxis methodology of Thomas Groome (*Christian Religious Education*, Harper and Row, 1980) is well suited for designing preparation learning experiences. It provides a process for helping the learner develop the *know-how*, *know-what*, and *know-why* for a particular event. Here is a chart that provides a brief overview of the five movements of praxis, suggested methods, and the connection to designing preparation experiences for events.



1. Discovering Life Experiences

The first movement of the learning process engages the learners in discovering how the topic or concept of the learning experience is already present in their own life experience. It then invites them to express their experience, as well as the experience of their family, community, and ethnic culture. Learners are encouraged to express what they already know about the topic or concept, how they feel about it, how they understand it, how they now live it, or what they believe about it.

Depending on the topic or concept, learners may need to participate first in a “simulated” experience to help them discover their own life experience. The learning design will need to incorporate this initial experience.

Focusing Questions

- *What method(s) will you select to engage the learners experientially in the topic or concept?*
- *What method(s) will you select to engage the learners in expressing their own life experience (knowing, feeling, action) in regard to the topic or concept?*

Suggested Methods

- reflection questionnaires
- storytelling
- drama/role playing
- making and describing something
- symbolizing or miming
- role playing
- case study
- creative expression (art, sculpture, painting, etc.)
- dramatic presentation
- field trip
- movie/video
- simulation game
- demonstration
- brainstorming
- video clips/slides/ music

Application to Generations of Faith

The first movement allows us to do two things:

First, we provide an activity which grounds the event in the life of the learner. For example, in a Eucharist session we share stories of important family meals.

Second, we draw out the learner's experience of a particular sacrament, Church year feast or season, prayer or spiritual tradition, or justice and service event. We surface their current knowledge of the event, their feelings of participating in the event, and their lived response (actions) as a result of their participation in the event.

2. Reflecting on Life Experiences

The second movement in the learning process allows the learners to reflect together on what they have expressed in the first movement about their own experience. This will sometimes be intuitive as well as analytical. Movement Two engages reason, memory, and imagination. This is often done by sharing an actual story of their experience or an action they have taken. Learners are invited to reflect critically on the meaning of their own experience, share the consequences of their present experience, and make implications for the future.

Focusing Questions

- *What method(s) will you select to engage the learners in reflecting critically on their life experience?*
- *What method(s) will you select to engage the learners in sharing their life experience?*

Suggested Methods

- personal reflection and group sharing on movement one activity
- reflection questionnaires
- group discussion activities
- journaling
- creative expression through art or drama
- brainstorm lists
- compare and contrast activities
- agree – disagree continuums

Application to Generations of Faith

We invite the learners to reflect on their experience of the event and share their responses through a variety of methods from discussion through creative expression. We also begin the process of connecting their life experience to the faith tradition.

3. Sharing the Faith Story

The third movement in the learning process presents the faith story of the Catholic community in response to the topic or concept of the learning experience. The faith story is the whole faith identity of the Catholic community. Here learners explore the story of faith that comes to us from Scripture, Tradition, the teachings of the Church, and the faith-life of Christian people throughout the ages and in our present time.

Focusing Questions

- *How will you creatively and imaginatively present the faith tradition? What method(s) will you select?*
- *How will you use Scripture, Tradition, and contemporary Church experience? What other resources will you use?*
- *Does your presentation reflect the most informed understanding of the Catholic community?*

Suggested Methods

- presentation/ guest speaker
- guided study
- video presentation, music
- directed reading/paired reading review
- research project
- field trip
- group project
- demonstration, panel
- interview
- dramatic presentation

Application to Generations of Faith

*The third movement helps the learner develop the **know-what** of the event. We help the learners to develop a fuller understanding of the scriptural and theological foundations of the particular event. The sources of this understanding from the event and its source material (e.g., the Lectionary, the Introduction to the Rite, Catholic social teaching)*

4. Integrating the Faith Story into My Life

The fourth movement in the learning process provides learners with an opportunity to correlate their experience and faith to Scripture and the Catholic faith tradition. The purpose of the fourth

movement is to enable the learners to integrate the wisdom of the Catholic faith tradition back into their own lives and to appropriate its meaning in their lives – to make it their own.

Focusing Questions

- *What method(s) will you select to engage the learners in a dialogue between their life experience and the Catholic faith tradition?*
- *How will you help them express their questions, challenges, and learning?*

Suggested Methods

- reflection questionnaires
- compare and contrast activities
- creative expression through writing, drama, case study, media, and artwork
- group discussion activities
- imagination activities where learners envision how they can live the learning

Application to Generations of Faith

*The fourth movement helps the learner develop the **know-why** of the event. We help learners to grow in their understanding of the meaning and significance of the event for their lives as Catholics. We help them to enrich their experience (movements 1 and 2) with the wisdom of the faith tradition (movement 3).*

5. Living the Faith Story

The fifth movement in the learning process is designed to help the learners translate their learning into a lived faith response. Learners can be engaged in developing specific plans for the coming weeks, in individual or group action projects which involve them in living their faith (in the faith community, school, family, community), in prayer experiences which celebrate their responses, and in journaling activities where they can reflect on how they are living their faith.

Focusing Questions

- *What methods will you use to engage the learners in deciding on what action to take as individuals, in their communities and in the world?*
- *What methods will you use to prepare them to live their faith?*

Suggested Methods

- skill development
- developing Christian practices
- journaling
- creating action plans, checklists, mission statement
- service projects and application projects
- practice activities
- prayer experiences
- teaching project – sharing with others

Application to Generations of Faith

*The fifth movement helps the learner develop the **know-how** of the event. We help learners acquire the ability to participate competently in the event and to live its meaning in their lives as Catholics. The fifth movement translates understanding into lived response and often includes the development of practices and skills for meaningfully participating in the event.*