

Christian Education and Formation

Growing is always in season....

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Gone are the days when Christian Education is understood as what happens only on Sunday Mornings for children. While Sunday morning remains a critical timeframe in the life of the church and for congregational learners and disciples, Christian Education embraces diverse context and a wide variety of participants. This [Christian Education course](#), offered in December through the [Missouri School of Religion](#), will focus on the call of congregations and leaders to equip young and old in the development of their spiritual lives as individuals and in community. With a look at our own experiences of growth and deepening, we will also consider scriptural encouragements, learning styles, rites of passage, small groups formulation techniques and spiritual gifts identification processes.

[Diocese of West Missouri](#)

[WEMO Youth Link](#)

[National Episcopal Church](#)

[Holy Women, Holy Men blogspot](#)

[Lesson Plans for Small Congregations](#)

[House of Grace](#)

St. Mary Magdalene's
Episcopal Retreat House and
Spirituality Institute

Quick Link Back -

This is YOUR open invitation to let us hear from you! The Christian Education and Formation commission wants to hear YOUR questions, understand YOUR concerns and listen to YOUR solutions. When we listen and share, everyone benefits....and this as close to Dear Abby as we can get! Send your thoughts to [Judy Kile](#), CEFC Chairman.

Beginning Anew....

The new Church year begins Sunday, November 28th (Year A, Daily Office Year One). The seasons of the year give us opportunities to "try out" some different liturgies, less used options in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist or even combining Morning Prayer with Holy communion (Matins and Mass). The beginning of a new year, the four weeks of Advent, might be used to educate your membership or refresh their learning regarding the Eucharist, the meaning of the season or the Church year. The leadership might let the rest of the congregation in on "why" we do what we do in various aspects of our common life. Four weeks is not a long time yet long enough to help each of us in our formation as human beings, Christians, Episcopalians.

As leaders we sometimes assume our sisters and brothers in the pews already know this "stuff". If they do then you will confirm their understanding. If they do not, you will provide knowledge they can use as they fulfill their mission and ministry. We are never too young or too old to learn about ourselves or our God or the practice of our faith.

Below are three websites you might check out for information regarding Advent and advent wreath services. My hope is that the information found at these sites will spark your creativity and maybe increase your knowledge. One of the liturgies might be just what you are looking for! May the Lord our God bless your plans for the new year.

Frank C. Sierra+, Rector of St. Philip's, Joplin

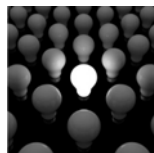
[Advent Service](#)

A simple Advent Service to conduct at home.

[The Christian Season of Advent](#) Including the Colors of Advent, the Spirit of Advent; Evergreens and The Advent Wreath; Celebrating Advent; An Advent Reflection; Music for Advent.
[Advent](#)

Various websites for resources for the season of Advent:
Advent Candle/Wreath Liturgies; Advent Candle Liturgy; Six Weeks of Service Plans for Advent and Christmas.

Best Practices - good things going on in our diocese!



At St. Michael's, Independence, we use volunteers to staff our children's chapel which occurs following the gospel and concludes following the peace. The children ages 3 yrs through 3rd grade are assisted each week by one adult and one teen helper. The Morehouse Curriculum for Children's Chapel is lectionary-based, experiential, and user-friendly. The curriculum provides the adult volunteer with background on the lessons and also provides several options for activities which require minimal planning time. The basic structure of the curriculum includes telling of the gospel story in a simple version, a simple prayer and activities which engage the children. (It provides simple directions for an altar

and candle lighting etc if desired). The curriculum provides more than enough material to use in a 20 to 30 minute time period. The curriculum even provides lists of items needed for each craft or activity and the kids love having something to bring back into worship with them. The curriculum is divided into 4 quarters and you can order one quarter at a time or all 4 quarters and the cost is very reasonable.

What's been happening in your parish that has made a positive impact? Send in your Best Practices, along with any pictures, to [Judy Kile](#), CEFC Chairman.

Book Club -

BOOK CLUB

This section will contain titles and a little bit about the book to peak your interest. We hope that eventually this can develop into an online discussion forum, but for now, the purpose will be to simply suggest a book recently read by either members of the commission and/or something that one of our readers suggests.

The Story of the Other Wise Man, By Henry van Dyke

Originally printed in 1895, this short holiday tale is worth the quick read. It tells the story of a fourth wise man who misses the rendezvous with the other Magi because he stops to help a man lying across the road. He spends his whole life searching for the Christ child, spending his treasures, but ultimately finding his King and knowledge that his real treasures were accepted. There is an illustrated children's book available under the title *The Other Wise Man*. The original novel, *The Story of the Other Wise Man* is available in libraries as both adult and juvenile fiction.



The Christmas Jar, by Jason F. Wright

Another short holiday tale that is worth reading - and remembering - year round is the story of a young, aspiring newspaper writer determined to find the source of a much-needed, but anonymous, gift. The search leads her to an unusual family with a long-standing Christmas tradition and becomes a journey that will change her life forever. It might change yours, too. Destined to become a classic, this heartwarming story will remind you how much we are all

connected and how each moment is a God moment.

