

Together We Grow
Report to 185th Convention (2007)
Ms. Suzanne Boyd, Champion for Christian Formation

I am glad that Dwayne has given us a vision of the future. I hope that you can see how Christian Formation will fit into that picture.

Can't you see yourself enjoying a lively discussion between Marcus Borg and Barbara Brown Taylor while not leaving your convocation?

When the teleconference is done we have supper and talk in small groups about what we heard and what it means to us.

This is real! It can be done!

If you look at the new *together we grow* handout you can see that things have changed since last year.

One of the objectives and many of the strategies for Christian Formation have been amended.

There are three objectives and seven strategies for reaching our goal. I can already see how some of the strategies need re-working. It will be a continuous process.

I'm not living in another world. I know that some of you think that the goals and objectives we have set and the strategies to achieve them are not going to happen.

I can see your faces. I can hear your voices.

We have tried to make changes so many times but nothing has happened.

Is anything that is being done relevant?

Will it make any difference to me and my parish?

My answer is only if you want it to.

Together we grow! This is not an idle statement. Without each person, without each church, without each convocation, it won't work.

If we step out in faith anything can be done.

We may need many steps to reach our goals. The Chinese proverb says a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

We have taken the first step. Let's not stop in our tracks. The proverb doesn't say that we have to keep on stepping. Yet we know we must.

Some steps in our strategies have already been taken.

The strategies dealing with youth activities have begun under the auspices of Gina Jenkins our Youth Director. Talk with Gina about some of the wonderful things that are happening.

As you can see our new objective involves college ministry. Ways to see a chaplain and program and each school will be part of our focus for the new year.

Part of the communication audit addressed Christian Formation. That information is just the beginning. Now we will need to dig deeper to have the data we need to start a diocesan database of resources. We want to have information on Sunday School material, programs for retreats, Lenten studies... the list is endless.

Our dream is this:

You need a Lenten program for adults. You pull up our diocesan web site.. you look at the CF page and find programs for lent.

You see several programs that are interesting and seem to fit the needs of your church... you know this based on the reviews given by other churches in the diocese who have the program.

You pick one that seems perfect. You call the person listed as a resource for this program and talk about what worked and what didn't. You decide you would like to try the program and arrange to borrow it from them.

How simple!

What we want to do is make sure that each church and mission has the resources needed to offer meaningful growth opportunities for its members.

I believe that we already have many of the resources that we need here in the diocese.

We just need to use them.

The Christian Formation portion of Strategy to Action and the Commission on Christian Formation are meeting together. We are passionate about finding ways for all of us to share our gifts, our resources, and our experiences with each other.

The only way for this to happen is for us to work together.

Some parishes may think that they have little to offer to the whole but this is not true. Each of us has something to share. We just have to do it!

I bet you are asking how?

As a beginning we need a database of resources and people.

This information will be available on the diocesan web site, at convocation meetings, conventions and person to person.

We will need a person or people who have a commitment to getting this work done..

So where are we going to get someone when our budget is so tight?

I believe that we can find someone.

Maybe several people... maybe volunteers for now and gradually a part-time person and our goal is a full-time Christian formation Coordinator for the diocese.

The question is not can we do it but **will** we do it?

We are going to continue working..

we will continue expecting the best.

God does the most un-expected things.

I wonder why we expect so little?

Will you help?