

About This Resource

This program is designed to help participants learn basic skills in analyzing the values and beliefs that give rise to their behaviors and the behaviors of others. Participants look at the Church's core values and assess social issues in light of them. The underlying assumptions of this course are:

- ▶ The core value of the Church is reconciliation (as articulated in the mission of the Church).
- ▶ Social problems are the result of brokenness.
- ▶ All Christians are called to be ministers of reconciliation.

Facilitators

The role of the facilitator is to guide the participants through a process where they will learn from their experience. The facilitators are not the experts on the content. They are the persons who will give and clarify directions, present concepts and information, answer questions, assist participants if they become confused, share perceptions or ask helpful questions to enable participants to gain greater understanding.

It is helpful if facilitators are experienced group leaders, but it is not necessary. Each step has been carefully described, often with suggested ways of presenting that step. Handouts, short talks, and what to write on the newsprint are all given to you. You can use them "as is," or, of course, you can modify them.

If you are not an experienced group leader, you may want to find a partner to work with. It is easier to work with a partner than by yourself. This is especially true if you are doing this as a weekend retreat. Each of you can take a step in turn, thus giving the other person a chance to regroup and look ahead to what comes next. The partner can also catch things the upfront facilitator has missed and fill it in later. While the small groups work is a valuable check-in time for the facilitators to touch base with each other, to "float" around observing the groups and to make sure the groups understand and carry out the task.

It will also be helpful to ask someone you trust to be an observer for you. In a retreat format, this could be someone who will assist with logistics (setup, lunch, cleanup, and so forth). This person's role is to call your attention to things that are happening that you may not notice—someone who is not participating, a group that is off-task or has misunderstood a task or point,

the fact that the room is getting hot, the coffee is finally ready, etc. He or she then comes to you while the small groups work to give report and help you with any logistics.

Finally, remember that participants are responsible for their own learning—you can't make them learn anything they don't choose to learn. You are responsible for leading the course, thereby offering them opportunities to choose to learn.

Beyond Beliefs

Weekly Sessions Schedule

SESSION ONE

Introduction	<i>Plenary</i>	10 minutes
[Optional: Icebreaker	<i>Small Groups</i>	10 minutes]
Talk	<i>Plenary</i>	5 minutes
Exploring A→B→C	<i>Small Groups</i>	10 minutes
Talk	<i>Plenary</i>	5 minutes
Exploring Institutions	<i>Small Groups</i>	15 minutes
Institutional Values	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

SESSION TWO

Introduction	<i>Plenary</i>	10 minutes
Case Study	<i>Plenary</i>	30 minutes
Closing Discussion	<i>Plenary</i>	20 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

SESSION THREE

Changing Behavior	<i>Plenary</i>	25 minutes
Exploring Institutions	<i>Small Groups</i>	15 minutes
Closing Discussion	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

SESSION FOUR

Mission of the Church	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Christian Assumptions	<i>Small Groups</i>	20 minutes
Naming Core Values and Beliefs	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
My Values and Beliefs	<i>Plenary</i>	10 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

SESSION FIVE

Understanding Change	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Ways to Create Change	<i>Small Group</i>	15 minutes
A→B→C Becomes a Cycle	<i>Plenary</i>	30 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

SESSION SIX

Honing our Skills	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Practicing Reflection Skills	<i>Small Group</i>	30 minutes
Closing Discussion	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

SESSION SEVEN

Analyzing Difficult Issues	<i>Plenary</i>	10 minutes
Skill Practice	<i>Small Groups</i>	40 minutes
Closing Discussion	<i>Plenary</i>	10 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

SESSION EIGHT AND BEYOND

Use the same outline as Session Seven
Repeat for as many topics as the group chooses

LAST SESSION

Making connections	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Weaving Connections	<i>Small Groups</i>	15 minutes
Closing Discussion	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Evaluation and Program Closure	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

Beyond Beliefs
Retreat Schedule
Friday Evening to Sunday Lunch

FRIDAY EVENING

SESSION ONE

Introduction	<i>Plenary</i>	10 minutes
Icebreaker	<i>Small Groups</i>	10 minutes
Talk	<i>Plenary</i>	5 minutes
Exploring A→B→C	<i>Small Groups</i>	10 minutes

Dinner

45 minutes to one hour

SESSION ONE, CONTINUED

Talk	<i>Plenary</i>	5 minutes
Exploring Institutions	<i>Small Groups</i>	15 minutes
Institutional Values	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

SESSION TWO

Introduction	<i>Plenary</i>	10 minutes
Case Study	<i>Plenary</i>	30 minutes
Closing Discussion	<i>Plenary</i>	20 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

Compline or Evening Prayer

SATURDAY

Breakfast

SESSION THREE

Changing Behavior	<i>Plenary</i>	25 minutes
Exploring Institutions	<i>Small Groups</i>	15 minutes
Closing Discussion	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

SESSION FOUR

Mission of the Church	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Christian Assumptions	<i>Small Groups</i>	20 minutes
Naming Core Values and Beliefs	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
My Values and Beliefs	<i>Plenary</i>	10 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

Lunch

45 minutes to one hour

SESSION FIVE

Understanding Change	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Ways to Create Change	<i>Small Group</i>	15 minutes
A→B→C Becomes a Cycle	<i>Plenary</i>	30 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

SESSION SIX

Honing our Skills	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Practicing Reflection Skills	<i>Small Group</i>	30 minutes
Closing Discussion	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

SESSION SEVEN

Analyzing Difficult Issues	<i>Plenary</i>	10 minutes
Skill Practice	<i>Small Groups</i>	40 minutes
Closing Discussion	<i>Plenary</i>	10 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes

Dinner

One and one half hours

SESSION EIGHT

Use the same outline as Session Seven

Compline or Evening Prayer

SUNDAY

Breakfast

LAST SESSION

Making connections	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Weaving Connections	<i>Small Groups</i>	15 minutes
Closing Discussion	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Evaluation and Program Closure	<i>Plenary</i>	15 minutes
Alternatives/Additions		30 minutes to one hour

Closing Eucharist

Lunch

Beyond Beliefs

Program Design

SESSION ONE

Introduction

Plenary

10 minutes

Introduce yourself and your partner(s); begin with worship or a prayer.

Explain the purpose of the program and underlying assumptions of the program:

Print the purpose and assumptions on newsprint before the session begins; during the next activity, move the newsprint to a spot where it can be seen during the training.

The purpose of this course is to help participants learn basic skills in analyzing the values and beliefs that give rise to their behaviors and the behaviors of others by identifying the Church's core values and assessing social situations in light of them.

The underlying assumptions of this course are:

- ▶ The core value of the Church is reconciliation (as articulated in "The Mission of the Church").
- ▶ Social problems are the result of brokenness.
- ▶ All Christians are called to be ministers of reconciliation.

Review the schedule and explain that much of the learning will occur during discussion times in small groups or in plenary sessions.

Explain that it is helpful to agree on how we will work together. The program has norms that clarify how productively to use your time together. Post the norms below and read them. You may want to add some of your own. Ask the group if there are any additional norms they would like to add (for example, smoking or no smoking). A copy of these norms are in the handout masters.

Program Norms

- ▶ Observe time intervals. When the facilitator calls time, stop the small group activity as soon as possible.
- ▶ Every group member will be given an opportunity to participate in the activities.
- ▶ Everyone's contribution is valuable and deserves to be heard and respected.
- ▶ Speak for ourselves only ("I want..." rather than "We should..." "They say...").
- ▶ Be responsible for our own learning.
- ▶ Add your own norms:
 - ▶
 - ▶

Introductory Icebreaker

Small Groups

10 minutes

Use this if your group members do not know each other well or if you are doing this program as part of an overnight retreat.

Ask each person to find two others, introduce themselves and tell about something, preferably in the last month, that has happened in the world that really offended them and explain why. This incident could be something they heard about on television, read in a newspaper, or experienced at work or in their community.

Talk

Plenary

5 minutes

Describe the purpose of this first session:

- ▶ Introduce participants to the concept that assumptions lead to behaviors that result in consequences.
- ▶ Provide an opportunity for participants to explore this link in various institutional settings.

Say the following in your own words:

Often we look at how people behave and wonder what causes them to behave that way. When we look at groups of people, we can easily make assumptions about individuals based on their group membership or presumed group membership. When we look at social issues and how to

resolve them, understanding why people behave in certain ways becomes more important as we think about how to change behaviors.

We will begin by looking at the links between our assumptions, our behaviors and the consequences of those behaviors. We will look at ourselves, as individuals and as the Church; at other institutions; and at other groups as a way to help us learn how to analyze what is happening and think about what our response as Christians might be. We will also learn how to develop effective ways to create change. But before we begin, we need to have some common language and understandings about how things work.

Distribute handout: **Definition of Assumptions, Behaviors and Consequences**. You may also project this handout as an overhead.

Important points to cover:

- ▶ Our assumptions about the world are our **values, attitudes and beliefs**. They are our presuppositions about what is true, right, just and fair. Our assumptions include what *I* value (what's important to *me*) and my attitudes towards almost everything in the world.
- ▶ We often forget that the assumptions of other people most likely are very different from our own. We can't understand why some people act in certain ways until we understand what their assumptions are. We need to know what they value, what they believe, what they understand to be true. And we can't really understand our own behaviors until we can identify and name our core values, beliefs and attitudes.
- ▶ How we act is based on our own core values, beliefs and attitudes. And our actions result in consequences. So there is a clear link between what we value and believe, how we act, and what consequences we experience as a result.

Exploring A→B→C

Small Groups

10 minutes

Ask each person to find two partners. They can be the same partners as in the introductory exercise, if you used that. Invite them to tell of a time when they *knew* that someone's values or beliefs were different from his or her statements. Then invite the partners to share *how* they knew that. Urge them not to use names; just describe situations. Give the following example or make up your own:

- ▶ Someone talks a great deal about valuing children and complains about people who don't provide adequately for their children and don't spend

time with their children. When a child “gets in trouble,” this person talks about the responsibilities of the adults in the child’s life. Whenever the subject of children comes up, this person is very vocal about the need for parents, teachers and institutions to support and care for children. Looking at this person’s behavior reveals that the individual consistently votes *against* any legislation that provides benefits to children or strengthens protection for children, especially if it will raise taxes or reduce his or her income or benefits in any way. This individual’s own children are grown, and there is no community memory of this individual’s being more than a minimal caretaker. Currently, there is no evidence of any ongoing relationship with other children, and the person does not talk with or relate to children encountered at church or in the community. Whenever an opportunity to become personally involved with a child or to become personally active in helping children is presented, this person is noticeably absent. Most of the talk about valuing children comes when a child is noisy or needs help, at which point this person speaks up but does not interact with the child in any way. We can conclude that the stated value of caring for children is overridden by another value. The primary belief seems to be that parents are responsible for keeping children fed, clothed and quiet. This person’s core value may well be “my peace and security” (undisturbed by unruly children) and “my money” (which should not have to go to pay for the children of others).

Invite each person to take just a couple of minutes to relate a similar story and to discuss what clues they would use to decide what a person’s real values, beliefs and attitudes were in that situation. Do not have people leave the room; just turn in their seats and talk.

Talk	<i>Plenary</i>	5 minutes
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After 10 minutes, call time and ask them to regroup. Say the following in your own words:

We can often discern people’s core values, beliefs and attitudes by looking at their behavior. Usually their behavior will tell us more than their words. The old adage, “Actions speak louder than words,” is quite accurate. So, when we look at what people really value and believe, we have to look beyond what they say.

Institutions and organizations, just like people, operate out of certain assumptions. They have core values, core beliefs and primary presuppositions that are built into what they do. We are going to look at various institutions and see if we can identify the core value, core belief and primary presupposition of each one. We don't necessarily have to all agree on what these are. The purpose of doing this is to get us to think about what are the values, beliefs and attitudes that guide the actions of people and organizations. So, we'll look at the following institutions:

Show overhead or newsprint with the following:

- ▶ Government
 - ▶ Education
 - ▶ Health care
 - ▶ Judicial system
 - ▶ Industry
 - ▶ Social service
 - ▶ Religious
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- ▶ *Core value* (what is most important to the organization).
 - ▶ *Core belief* (what the organization believes is true or right). Core beliefs often have presuppositions (assumptions about reality that underlie those beliefs) that are inherent in the core belief.

Pick one institution + *Religious* to give as an example.

Show overhead or newsprint with the following. Select one of the examples given, or do your own.

- ▶ The *core value* of governmental institutions is *order*. Keeping order is more important to these institutions than anything else. That value is based on the *belief* that *order is necessary* and that it is *best created by laws*. This belief is based on the presupposition that *destructive chaos will result without laws*.
- ▶ Education: *Core value* = information and reasoning. *Core belief* = educated people are better citizens and will live a better life. Presupposition= education is good for everyone.

Always include the following:

- ▶ The Christian religion (other religions may differ): *core value*: reconciliation (Prayer Book, page 855: "The Mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ" defines our core value), *Belief*: God is love, created all things and has the power to create wholeness out of brokenness. *Presupposition*: all things were

created to be “at-one” with God and each other. (Explain that this is not the definitive answer and that we will discuss this further, but for the moment this is just to get us thinking.)

Exploring Institutions*Small Groups***15 minutes**

Ask if anyone has another institution they want to add (make sure it is a general institution, a system, rather than a specific organization). Then ask participants to select one of the institutions and form small groups. Give a maximum number--usually five or six; set the number according to how many participants you have. If you have lots of people, you may want to have two groups work on the same institution). Point to various parts of the room to assign a gathering place for the different institutions, and ask participants to select another group if their first choice already has more than five or six people.

Tell them to take a sheet of newsprint, markers and spend the next 15 minutes composing a statement of the core value, belief and presupposition for their institution. Bring back the newsprint and pick a reporter to tell the rest of the group about their work.

Institutional Values*Plenary***15 minutes**

Invite each group to make its report. Some groups may report being confused about what a value is, what a belief is and what a presupposition is. This is not really important. Get them to focus on identifying what this organization values, believes, understands to be true, sees as reality, etc. Do not get into a semantics debate.

After all groups have reported, engage them in a discussion about the differences between the values and beliefs of the various institutions. Ask as many questions as time allows:

- ▶ Where do you think these institutions first got their values and beliefs?
- ▶ How do their assumptions affect what they do?
- ▶ What happens if you live and work within an institution that has assumptions about life that are very different from your own?
- ▶ What would happen if an institution’s assumptions changed radically?

Concluding Points

- ▶ Different institutions have different core values and beliefs; they may all be good, but they are different.
- ▶ These differences in values and beliefs lead them to act differently in society. We will explore this further when we look at how different institutions go about creating change.

Ask the group to do a homework assignment:

- ▶ Write your personal assumptions: two or three *core values* and *core beliefs*. What is most important to you? What do you believe is right or true? What are beliefs you have that, if they were proven wrong, would fundamentally change your life or who you are?
- ▶ Ask people to write this down and bring it to each session. They will be adding to it and revising it as they go along.

Alternatives/Additions

30 minutes

To extend this session to 90 minutes, use the introductory exercise (10 minutes); give the small groups 20 minutes to do the institution exercise and take 20 minutes to do the concluding discussion. Give them 10 minutes to do the homework assignment (if you are using the retreat format), or, if you are using weekly sessions, use the remaining 10 minutes for a more relaxed pace to the session!

SESSION FOUR

Mission of the Church

Plenary

15 minutes

Begin with worship or an opening prayer.

Review previous sessions.

The purpose of today's session is to deepen our understanding of the assumptions-behaviors-consequences cycle in the Christian community. Before we can look at others, we need to understand ourselves. The Church operates on certain assumptions that are contained in the Scriptures, Creeds, liturgy and teachings. When accepted and internalized by its members, these core values and beliefs lead to identifiable behaviors.

Turn over a sheet of newsprint on which you wrote beforehand:

The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. (BCP, p. 855)

Explain that while other organizations need to define their mission, the mission of the Church is a given—albeit perhaps stated in different ways. In the Episcopal Church, the mission of the Church is “to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.” This is sometimes stated as continuing Christ's ministry of reconciliation. It is expanded and given more detail in the Baptismal Covenant (BCP, p. 302).

The *core value* of the Church is reconciliation and wholeness. When people internalize this value, they are made whole (healed) and they create healing and wholeness in what is broken in their lives and in the world.

Discuss the concepts of brokenness, wholeness and the mission of the Church. Ask question like:

- ▶ If the purpose of the Church is to restore unity with God and each other in Christ, what is *salvation*? What is *sin*? (Salvation = wholeness; sin = brokenness.)
- ▶ What are ways we can be “out of unity with God and each other”? What are examples of that brokenness?
- ▶ How are people restored to unity?

- ▶ How is Christian unity or reconciliation different from other kinds of unity or reconciliation? (It is “in Christ”.)

Christian Assumptions

Small Groups

20 minutes

Ask the group to divide into small groups. Give each small group one or two of the following items. Make sure each of them is given to some group.

- ▶ The three renunciations and the three affirmations on pages 302-3 of the Prayer Book.
- ▶ The Creed on page 304. Give one question to each of three groups. If you do not have enough people use two groups, give the first group the first two questions and the second group the last question. Or if you have very few people, give the entire Creed to just one group and ask them to focus on the three sections, rather than on each line in the Creed.
- ▶ Each of the five questions after the Creed (pages 304-5). Give one question to each group.

Ask each small group to write one *core value* and one *core belief* reflected in their selection. Tell them it will be difficult to pick just one, but ask if they can distill one value and one belief that is most important. Tell them that by *core* you mean *essential*, that is, those things without which the Church would become something other than the Church. (If one group is doing the entire Creed, tell them to do one value or belief for each section.)

Ask them to write their value and their belief on a sheet of newsprint and select someone to read it.

Naming Core

Values and Beliefs

Plenary

15 minutes

Ask each group to post and read its newsprint.

Engage the group in a discussion about whether this list summarizes the essential Christian values and beliefs or whether there are others they feel must be added from the Scriptures, Eucharistic Prayers, etc. Urge them to keep the list as short as possible. Tell them it is easy to expand the list, hard to hone it down to a few elements. Get them to name each item in two or three words. Keep it simple. Refer them to the mission statement and reconciliation as *the* core value and main business (purpose for existing).

There usually is a difference between my personal values and beliefs and the values and beliefs of the Church. Note that each may be worthy, but they are different. Give an example. (My core value might be happiness; the Church's is reconciliation). Ask the group to give examples.

Note that each of us belongs to a variety of families, groups, systems and institutions that have their own values and beliefs. This generates a mixture of values and beliefs, some of which may or may not be core values and beliefs of the Church.

Ask each person to review his or her personal values and belief statement and spend a couple of minutes in silence, making changes or additions.

Ask people to comment on what they learned about themselves or the Church.

Ask the group to do a homework assignment:

- ▶ Identify two situations in the coming or past week in which you sought to change your own behavior and two situations in which you sought to change someone else's behavior.
- ▶ Write why you wanted to change the behavior and what you did to create the change.
- ▶ Compare what you did with your personal values and beliefs statement. Did your behavior match or did it seem "out of character?" How did you feel about what you did?

Alternatives/Additions**30 minutes**

To extend this session to 90 minutes, give participants 20 minutes to identify and write about their personal situations (homework). Then ask them to pick a partner and discuss their situation, what they did and how they felt about their actions. Close by asking the whole group what they learned from this session.