

# Adult Education Mini-Course

## Session One

*A series for persons planning Sunday Morning Adult Education in an Episcopal Congregation*

These "courses" are designed to give you short, relevant, immediately applicable pieces of information and reminders you can launch into your planning and praying immediately. They will not overwhelm you with strategies, resources, and possibilities. We think you might already be surrounded by those. So take these in slowly. If you have one or two others willing to interact with these questions as they pertain to your adult ed options, invite them into the conversation. Maybe do this over coffee, over lunch, or during a Christian Ed meeting. Then spend some time in reflection. Think about how these insights might impact and inform what you are currently doing. We will ask the same series of questions along the way.

### Welcome. Breathe. Begin.

#### WHAT WORKS

What is the best time you've had – thinking, praying, laughing, learning – on a Sunday morning in a class designed for adults? What do you think were the critical elements that created such an atmosphere? Still holding that time, how do you think the following elements impacted the success of the gathering?

- The leader
- The curriculum
- The participants
- The space
- The time on the schedule
- The coffee & pastries
- The availability of childcare
- It got you out of teaching Sunday school
- Other factors?

#### Seven things to Remember about Adult Learners – Part One – (#4-#7 will be in the next two sessions)

1. Adults are people with years of experience and a wealth of information.
2. Adults have established - if not well articulated - values, beliefs, and opinions.
3. Adults are people with bodies influenced by gravity.

#### THE QUESTIONS:

- What does this have to do with the leaders of my Adult Ed options?
- What does this have to do with the materials we are using?
- What does this have to do with the needs of the adults I mean to be serving?
- What does this have to do with the space (and other hospitality awareness) in which we gather?
- What does this have to say about the parishioners who felt directly invited, or indirectly un-invited, to the gathering?

**This mini-course is designed to help a team of people evaluate and plan an adult education program. There will be two more sessions, following this one, in the next editions of the LeaderResources Adult Education Electronic Newsletters. LeaderResources provides consultants and trainers who are willing and able to come help your congregation find ways to do their best in planning Christian Formation for all ages. We're just a call away!**

# Adult Education Mini-Course

## Session Two

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#### WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

Eugene Peterson says "The overall picture that emerges from the data on adult motivations for learning is that adults are pragmatic learners who pursue education for its practical utility to them... If we are to serve a 'voluntary learning force' we will need to understand, better than we do now, the real motivation of adult learners."

**Generally acknowledged needs of adults:** Spiritual, Relational, Moral Guidelines, Integration

#### Our Task as Bearers of, and Witnesses to, the Gospel

It has been said that ordained persons in the orders of bishop, deacon, and priest, are tasked with calling out in all persons their episcopal, diaconal, and priestly ministries. The examinations of these orders call us all to boldly proclaim and interpret the Gospel of Christ, enlightening the minds and stirring up the conscience of the people, to proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that our lives and teachings should show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself. There is a balance that must be held between our ministries as the "deciders," regarding how the gospel is put-forth on Sunday mornings for adults, and the needs that adults bring in, according to E. Peterson's comments above.

#### Seven things to Remember about Adult Learners – Part Two – *last one will be in the next sessions*)

4. Adults are people whose style and pace of learning has probably changed.
5. Adults relate new knowledge to previously learned information and experiences.
6. Adult have a deep need to be self-directing.

#### THE QUESTIONS:

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- What does this have to say about the parishioners who felt directly invited, or indirectly un-invited, to the gathering?

**This three-session mini-course is designed to help people evaluate and plan adult education programs. Watch for Session #3 in the next edition of LeaderResources Adult Education E-Newsletters. Call 1-800-941-2218 or visit us at [www.LeaderResources.org](http://www.LeaderResources.org). We offer many adult ed programs – let us help you find exactly what you're looking for.**

# Adult Education Mini-Course

## Session Three

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#### Four ways to create a culture in your congregation that supports adult study:

- Communicate that learning is intrinsic to faith development. Lift up ongoing study, including adult education, as an essential function of any Christian community.
- Reinforce the expectation of study participation from the pulpit and with new members.
- Make Bible study a part of other church activities such as committee meetings and mission activities.
- Use scripture meaningfully in worship. Don't assume your worshippers know the context of the passage read. Use sermons as an opportunity to teach the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

#### Seven things to Remember about Adult Learners – Part Three – (#1-#6 are in previous sessions)

7. Adults tend to have a problem-centered orientation to learning.

#### WHO IS INVITED? WHO IS NOT?

On Sunday mornings we see the largest percentage of our adults on a regular basis. So it would seem understood that whatever is offered in the way of Bible Study, video series, book group, or even topical groups, they are *all* invited to attend. But everyone knows that isn't true, because they wouldn't all fit inside the classroom. What are the unspoken assumptions in your congregation about who is – not invited – but *expected*, to show-up?

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1. From the Lewis Center for Church Leadership [www.churchleadership.com](http://www.churchleadership.com)