

LET YOUR EXPERIENCE TEACH

A Process for Theological Reflection

And

Faith Formation

The unexamined life is not worth living

The unlive d life is not worth examining

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NAME: _____

PROGRAM: _____

Let Your Experience Teach

General Description

Let Your Experience Teach (LYET) is designed to engage our experiences with our knowledge and faith of Jesus Christ. The process, known as *theological reflection*, allows for both the evangelization (lived experiences) and catechetical (knowledge of scripture, tradition etc..) aspects of faith formation to be joined in examination. In this process of examination the participant grows more deeply into a life of discipleship by more deeply correlating their lives as lives lived out in an active faith in Jesus Christ through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Process

Tell the Story

An idea or event in ministry is chosen. This may be assigned or chosen, based on an experience of service at work, in the family, or community. The event should have had some emotional impact. The participant tells the story of the event and identifies one aspect of the story to focus on. Detail is important.

Feelings and Thoughts

Focusing on the one aspect of the story the participant chose, they will now express their feelings and thoughts on that point.

Feelings and Thoughts are different. Feelings are *emotional, what we feel*. (happy, sad, mad,..) Thoughts are *what we think*.

Mental Picture or Image

The participant focuses on the feelings and thoughts and correlates ***an image, a mental picture or a metaphor*** to those feelings and thoughts. This part of the process requires some creativity, but it is critical to understanding more deeply the experience. Time and quiet should be used in this part of the process.

Scripture and Tradition

The participant looks at the focal part of the story and determines what aspect of Scripture and/or Tradition correlates to it. There may be multiple aspects of Scripture or Tradition that apply, but it is best to focus on one thematic aspect.

In this part of the process we are beginning to consciously engage our lived experience with our catechetical knowledge.

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Culture

The participant now draws out from a personal experience to a communal experience. All experiences are lived in a social/cultural context.

What influences does our culture/society play on the issue of the story being addressed? These influences are: economic, political, social. These influences are both negative and positive.

The participant identifies these influences and expresses how they are operating in and affecting their lived experience.

Belief

Based on the examination of the story, the participant expresses what they now **believe** about the issue.

Questions/Insights

The participant reviews what **questions** have been raised for them and details what **new insights** they have discovered through the examination.

New Ideas & Actions

Finally, the participant engages what **new ideas** have entered their mind **and heart**.

Based on these new ideas, what **action(s)** does the participant expect to take as a result of this process of examination?

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General Directions

1. **Prayer** – Always take time to pray and center oneself through regulated breathing before starting the examination process. This should take around 5 minutes.
2. **The Experience** – Before writing down anything, thoroughly reflect on the experience.
3. **Respond to questions (in order)** – Write down responses to the questions in the order given. As necessary, take time or rest between questions.
4. **It about the process, not the answers** – It is through the process of examination that growth and further action occurs. There are **no** right or wrong answers.

Let Your Experience Teach

Participant's Worksheet

NAME: _____

PROGRAM: _____

DATE of WRITING: _____

SESSION (if applicable): _____

1. **Tell the Story** – (Be detailed, Circle the part you want to focus on)

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2. Feeling and Thoughts

a. What were you **feeling** at this time?

b. What were you **thinking** at this time?

3. Image, Mental Picture or Metaphor (Describe your feelings and thoughts)

4. Scripture/Tradition (What aspect of scripture or tradition applies)

