

Saint Luke the Evangelist

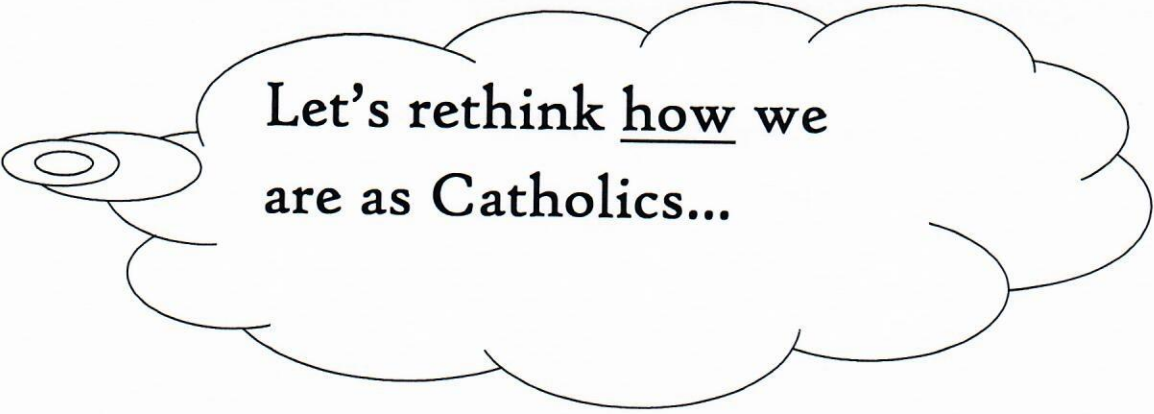
8 Atkinson Depot Road Plaistow, NH 03865 TEL (603) 382-8324 FAX (603) 382-1113

Discipleship is a lifelong journey.

Lifelong faith formation provides opportunities and experiences throughout the entire life span to strengthen our relationship with and knowledge of God. A commitment to lifelong faith formation serves to enhance our understanding of Scripture and of our Tradition. It sustains us in living as disciples of Jesus Christ.

As a reminder of last week's discussion, some principles that will guide our community in our process of renewing lifelong faith formation:

- The centrality of Sunday Liturgy as the “source and summit” of our lives as Christians
- The need to connect worship – learning – service
- The desire to be flexible for family schedules while at the same time providing quality religious education and excellent materials for students, parents and parishioners
- A need to dissociate our religious education programs from the “school system” and the “grade level mentality”
- A clear focus on the meaning of the Catholic experience



Let's rethink how we
are as Catholics...

We have become used to thinking about learning our faith through a classroom instruction model. This model assumes that it is enough for young people to learn facts about the Faith, perhaps once a week during their formative years. After that classroom time... that's it!

Let's face it... deep down we have always known that takes much more than a class for people to develop a strong foundation in their Catholic faith. **Lifelong faith formation** emphasizes that the community is at the heart of all faith formation. "Faith is communicated by a community of believers and the meaning of faith is developed by its members out of their history, by their interaction with each other, and in relation to the events that take place in their lives." (Nelson, C.E., *Where Faith Begins*, Virginia John Knox Press (1967) p.10)

The life of our Church is centered in events that have the power to educate and transform individuals and the whole community. As Catholics, these include Church year feasts and seasons, sacraments and liturgy, justice and service, prayer and spiritual traditions, and community life. We know that these events are important to us, but we have to constantly learn how to participate in them so that we can understand them more fully. Only then will they have the power to change us both personally and as a Parish community.

Lifelong faith formation is a process of growing in the faith that begins with Baptism. Immersed in the life of the Trinity, we are adopted sons and daughters of God our Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit. Like all human relationships, developing and deepening our relationship with the Trinity happens gradually and over time. **Lifelong faith formation** provides opportunities and experiences throughout the entire life span to strengthen our relationship and knowledge of God, Jesus and the Spirit; to enhance our understanding of Scripture, Tradition and doctrines of our faith; and to sustain us in living as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Catechesis is no longer for children only. If we are to be a church of true disciples, we all need to enter into the process of deepening our faith by continually learning and experiencing what it means to be a Catholic Christian.