**Mentor & Confirmand Conversations**

**Conversation #1: Sharing Your Faith Story**

The main goal of the first conversation between mentor & confirmand is to share with them the difference that God makes in your life. It doesn’t have to be a dramatic story of conversion; each Christian has a story to tell about our relationship with God. Hearing someone else describe how they encounter God helps us see what being a Christian looks like, beyond simply attending church.

“Youth, seeking to enter adulthood, are looking for guides or mentors, who can show them adult forms of life that radiate with the love of Christ. Youth are not simply looking for information about religion—they’re looking for how ideas are embodied, how faith is lived out, how following Jesus impacts an adult’s perspective and actions. They’re looking for adults who embody and practice their theology with a particular way of life—a way that mirrors the freedom and passion of Jesus Christ.”

- Mark Yaconelli from the Youth Ministry and Spirituality Project

**Questions That May Help You as You Prepare...**

* Who has influenced you the most in your faith? What about them or their life inspired you?
* How does being a Christian shape your life and your purpose in life? How does being Episcopalian in particular shape you?
* When and where were you baptized/confirmed? What do those milestones mean to you today?
* Describe turning points in your life and relationship with God or seasons when you have especially grown in your faith.
* What part of our liturgy and worship do you connect with most? What does receiving the Eucharist mean to you? What does it look like to be a faithful adult member of the church?
* How do you and your family make faith part of your daily life at home?
* Do you have a favorite Bible verse or story?
* Do you have a favorite Christian book or author?
* Do you have a favorite hymn or Christian songs? What lyrics in that song speak to you?
* Describe a moment or experience when you’ve felt God was present with you.
* How do you tend to encounter God? Some examples may be through reading the Bible, listening to sermons at church, personal prayer time, reading a devotional, listening to or performing music, reading, serving, being in nature.
* What spiritual gifts do you believe you have? How did you discover them? How do you try to use them to bless others?

**A Few Ideas:**

* Pray about this as you prepare your story. Ask God to remind you of the ways that he has been at work in your life. Ask God to be at work as you share your story.
* You may want to consider what life was like when you were your confirmand’s age; what did faith mean to you then, and how has it changed since then? If you could talk with the 13 year old you and tell them something about God or being a Christian, what would it be?
* Bring pictures to show them. Those can help youth connect with your sharing about your past.
* This doesn’t have to be a monologue! Since this is a one on one conversation, give them room to ask you questions.

**Conversation #2: Listening to your Confirmand’s faith story**

We will be giving the confirmands a few different prompts; they can choose one, but each of them ask the confirmand articulate why they are choosing to be confirmed, whether they focus on stating what they believe, sharing their faith story, or talking about what confirmation means to them. The confirmand can read what they have written to you or summarize. Listen carefully and respond to what they have shared. Ask them about their questions about God, church, and faith. What in class or our reading has interested them most or raised questions for them? What is their favorite thing about church and their least favorite thing? Remind them that you are praying for them.

“Another important general way religious congregations may better engage youth is through simple, ordinary adult relationships with teenagers. Adults other than family members and youth ministers could be intentionally encouraged to make better efforts to learn teens’ names, to strike up conversations with teens, to ask meaningful questions of youth, to be vulnerable themselves to youth in various ways, to show some interest in teens, to help connect them to jobs and internships, to make themselves available in times of trouble and crisis, to work toward becoming models and partners in love and concern and sacrifice. This would no doubt resound positively in broader areas of youth religious belief, commitment, and practice and in youth outcomes more generally. None of this takes a Master of Divinity degree. It is simply a matter of appreciation, attention, effort, and continuity from ordinary mature adults...”

- Christian Smith, Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers

**Sharing a Brief Faith Story**

From St. George’s Adult Confirmation class; by Seawell Brandau

**Brief** – It really need to be brief, not over five minutes because 1) in being brief you will focus on the important parts, and 2) the attention span of the hearer wanes quickly if you overtell.

**Faith** – It is about your faith, how an event impacted or changed you. A few sentences on the “before;” a few sentences on the event; and a few sentences on what happened thereafter. Remember the hearer can always ask you follow up questions if he or she wants.

**Story** – Keep it in story form; that is not overwhelming and not preachy. Again the hearer can relate it better to his or her own life.

**Possible story starters:**

A godly person or role model
An answered or unanswered prayer
A disappointment of failure
A chance encounter
Something someone said to you Something you learned
A challenge
A heartache
An “ah-ha” moment
A “mountain top” experience
A health crisis
A death in the family
A terrible argument
A song or some music which touched you An experience at worship
An experience from centering prayer
A small group experience
When you broke something
A Lenten experience

You probably have many more than one “Brief Faith Story.” Think about them. Develop them. (Maybe even there is someone in your family to whom this story could be important. Think about an opportunity to share without overwhelming the hearer. Always respect the hearer and leave room for the Holy Spirit to work.

**Preparing to Tell Your Faith Story**

Charles Fulton and Susie Miller

*A Resource from the Diocese of Iowa*

1. Draw a time line from left to right on a sheet of paper, the left being your birth the right being the present.

2. On the time line mark and identify (by year) significant events that were turning points in your life.

3. Above the line describe the context within which the event occurred. What else was going on in your life at that time?

4. Below the line describe your awareness of God at that point. Was God present or absent?

5. What was God doing with you in that event – comforting, challenging, provoking, teaching, giving, providing, loving, affirming, etc.?

6. Look at the whole time line. Are there patterns in the turning point events of your life? What initiates turning points? What is required of you? How were you different after these events?

7. What are the patterns in your experience of God and your relationship with God? Is there a consistency in God’s actions and responses in your turning points?

8. Imagine telling someone about your insights into God’s presence and working in your life. Tell your story of how God has come into your life and what has been the result when you have recognized God’s presence. Tell the story to yourself, then tell your story to a friend and
listen for the response your story will trigger in your friend.

9. Tell your story to someone outside a faith community

10. Commit to inviting God into your life as your lifeline lengthens into your future, regularly engaging the Gospel with others.