



Faith Formation

Curriculum and
Preparation Resources for
Baptism, Confirmation,
and Marriage

Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI
2017

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Curriculum and Resources for Baptism, Confirmation, and Marriage Preparation

The Curriculum

The intention of this curriculum is to help guide parishes as they plan how they will help others prepare for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and marriage. These celebrations are often seen as the three most significant milestones in a life of a faith, and every member of a congregation has a role to play, both in helping individuals prepare for the sacraments and in supporting them as they live out the commitments that they make.

This curriculum outlines what those roles are—for the family, individual, or couple preparing for the sacrament; for the priest and mentors; and for the wider congregation. Each community will bring a unique flavour to the celebrations. The following pages outline some important things to consider when thinking about the role each member of the community plays in the celebration of the sacraments, as well as resources that might be used to assist in the fulfilment of those roles.

Sacraments Happening Away From Home

People may complete their preparation and receive a sacrament away from home, perhaps in the parish they grew up in or in a church that has particular meaning for them. In these situations, it is important for the clergy involved in the preparation and celebration of the sacrament to be in touch with the clergy in the home parish to ensure that supportive and meaningful follow-up occurs.

A Note on Identifying Parish Mentors

In preparation for baptism, confirmation, and marriage, the role of mentors is to support and strengthen those preparing for a sacrament in their learning and discerning, and also to deepen relationships within the parish community. Mentors may help with aspects of preparation, but their primary role is to be a companion.

When identifying individuals to serve as mentors, it is important to seek out leaders who have received that particular sacrament, and who are actively engaged in their own ongoing faith formation. In particular it is beneficial (when possible) to avoid having family members of those who will be participating in the sacrament serve as mentors.



Baptism

The Baptismal Covenant

—From *The Book of Alternative Services*

Celebrant: Do you believe in God the Father?

People: **I believe in God,
The Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Celebrant: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

People: **I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again
to judge the living and the dead.**

Celebrant: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

People: **I believe in God the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Celebrant: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

People: **I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant: Will you persevere in resisting evil and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

People: **I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant: Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?

People: **I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbour as yourself?

People: **I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

People: **I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant: Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and respect, sustain, and renew the life of the earth?

People: **I will, with God's help.**

Preparing for the Sacrament of Baptism

Outcomes	Responsibilities		
	Candidate/Family	Priest/Mentors	Congregation
Pray That the candidate may develop or deepen a life of prayer	Explore ways of developing/ deepening a life of prayer using parish-provided resources Seek God's guidance about whether the candidate/family is ready to make this commitment	Include candidates/families in the Prayers of the People and personal devotions (resources) Provide resources to help the candidate/family develop/deepen a life of prayer	Include candidates/families in the Prayers of the People and personal devotions
Learn The details and significance of the baptismal covenant About the life and resources of the parish community	Participate in the baptismal preparation offered by the parish	Offer a baptismal preparation course that: a) includes understanding the baptismal covenant; and b) explores opportunities for continued faith formation as a member of the parish community	Renew their understanding of their own baptismal commitments and their responsibilities to support the newly baptized through participation in the preparation of the candidate/family and the celebration of the sacrament
Experience Participation in the life/worship of church community	Attend worship and parish events to connect to parish community	Invite candidate/family to worship and parish events Help make connections to congregation	Be aware of the candidate/family preparing for baptism Provide a welcoming and supportive environment for the newly baptised to grow in their faith and connection to the parish Prepare to engage in follow-up with the newly baptised

Considerations

“Some are concerned that the catechumenate is actually a hindrance to those seeking faith. In their view, requiring preparation for baptism puts up roadblocks to experiencing Jesus’ limitless love; making people “jump through hoops” feels like a negation of God’s free gift of grace in Christ. As a matter of fact, most of those inquiring about faith truly believe that they need to do the right thing to be loved (by God or anyone else). Not preparing them for that radical re-thinking before they’re baptised would be dishonest. Sharing the good news of God’s limitless love will, in our culture at least, necessitate conversion. cursory preparation, that barely gives inquirers the time of day, and certainly does not listen to their deepest hopes and fears, is itself a negation of grace. The catechumenate is one way to help inquirers and parishioners discover that Christian faith is about trust and relationship In the catechumenate, it’s the relationship between those inquirers and their sponsors where the rubber hits the road. Preparation for discipleship thus has less to do with information (though that, as in any relationship is important) than developing trust. If we truly want to create faithful, committed Christians, we must give them ourselves — our hearts and minds, attentive ears and, most importantly, our time. It is that relationship, and a growing trust in the community of the faithful, where grace will be discovered.” (p.3)

From “Custom Designing the Catechumenate for Your Parish”

www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/CustomDesigningtheCatechumenateforYourParish.pdf

Baptism Preparation Resources

Discovery Series: The Baptismal Covenant

www.vimeopro.com/epicentervideos/the-discovery-series/video/168361383

This is an older resource, but it includes a 20-minute video lesson on the Baptismal Covenant as part of a larger Faith Formation series. It includes links to participant and facilitator guides with prompts for small group discussion. The language used makes it more appropriate for families and candidates that have had a moderate level of exposure to scripture and religious terminology. There is a short training video for series facilitators, and each course video comes with complete instructions for leading group work. The Baptismal course can be supplemented with other courses in the series.

Unlocking Baptismal Preparation

www.unlock-urban.org.uk/resources.php

Developed by a group in the UK, this is a simple, accessible course to prepare the families and sponsors wishing to have a child baptized. It is specifically designed to engage newcomers without requiring them to have any prior church experience. The entire “toolkit” is available here: www.unlock-urban.org.uk/pdf/BaptismToolkit.pdf

Starting Rite: Spiritual Nurture for Babies and Their Parents

Jenny Paddison

Church House Publishing, 2015

ISBN-10: 0715147269

ISBN-13: 978-0715147269

“When Anglican priest Jenny Paddison became a mother, there were numerous activities for new parents and their babies on offer: baby yoga, baby massage, baby swimming – but nothing from the church. In response, she created this five session programme that connects with the immense sense of wonder and joy that new parents experience and provides spiritual nurture from the outset, recognising the innate capacity for spirituality with which we are born. Starting Rite is designed specifically for babies up to a year old and their parents. It provides a complete practical companion to offering the programme locally, including story scripts, simple songs, ideas for multi-sensory play, as well as lists of equipment needed and how to create a welcoming atmosphere. It explores Christian themes through activities like peek-a-boo, blowing bubbles and splashing in water. Starting Rite enables local churches to offer a welcome to all new parents, and can also be used as a baptism preparation course.”

A black and white photograph of a forest floor. The foreground is filled with a dense layer of dry leaves, twigs, and pine needles. In the background, several thin tree trunks are visible, slightly out of focus. The word "Confirmation" is written in a white, elegant script font across the middle of the image.

Confirmation

Confirmation

—From *The Book of Alternative Services*

Presenters: **I present these persons for confirmation.**

The bishop asks those who have been presented to renew their baptismal commitment.

Bishop: Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil?

Response: **I do.**

Bishop: Do you renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?

Response: **I do.**

Bishop: Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

Response: **I do, and with God's grace I will follow him as my Saviour and Lord.**

After all have been presented, the bishop addresses the congregation.

Bishop: Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?

People: **We will.**

Bishop: Let us join with those who commit themselves again to Christ and renew our own baptismal covenant.

....

Bishop: Strengthen, O Lord, your servant *N* with your Holy Spirit; empower him/her for your service; and sustain him/her all the days of his/her life. Amen.

Preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation

Outcomes	Responsibilities		
	Candidate	Priest/Mentors	Congregation
Pray That the candidate may develop or deepen a life of prayer	Explore ways of developing/ deepening a life of prayer using parish-provided resources Seek God's guidance about whether the candidate is ready to make this commitment	Include candidate in the Prayers of the People and personal devotions Provide resources to help the candidate develop/deepen a life of prayer	Include candidate in the Prayers of the People and personal devotions
Learn The details and significance of confirmation About the life and resources of the parish community	Participate in the confirmation preparation offered by the parish or region. Explore the commitments made in confirmation	Facilitate or support a confirmation course that a) includes understanding what confirmation is; the commitment that is made in confirmation b) explores opportunities for continued faith formation as a member of the parish community	Renew their understanding of their own commitments and their responsibilities to support those preparing for confirmation through participation in the preparation of the candidate as appropriate and the celebration of the sacrament
Experience Participation in the life/worship of church community	Attend worship and parish events to connect to parish community	Invite candidate/ family to worship and parish events Help make connections within the congregation	Be aware of the candidate preparing for confirmation and attend the confirmation in support of their candidate Provide a welcoming and supportive environment for the newly confirmed to grow in their faith and connection to the parish Prepare to engage in follow-up with the newly confirmed.

Considerations

The Bishop recommends that the age of confirmands will normally be 15 or higher. It is recognized that the age of confirmands will sometimes vary from this norm. Those who have been admitted to the Communion by right of their Baptism shall be provided an opportunity for Confirmation in late teenage years and emphasize the concept of strengthening for Christian service. The tendency to reduce the age of Confirmation as a way of keeping young people in Church or to avoid admitting children to Communion before Confirmation is discouraged strongly. Confirmation is a life commitment for which one should be well and carefully prepared.... Confirmation will continue to provide a significant opportunity for teaching. Great care should be taken in the preparation of candidates for Confirmation. Parishes should aim for a year's preparation; three months is a required minimum. This time of preparation should be shared by laity and priest. This will give an opportunity to work with, and get to know, the confirmands in the parish, and vice versa. Both the confirmands and the Parish benefit if the group is kept together as a study group after confirmation.

- from the Diocesan Guideline on Confirmation

www.nspeidiocese.ca/page/confirmation.aspx#.WP9QRCMrLRO

Confirmation Preparation Resources

Discovery Series

vimeopro.com/epicentervideos/the-discovery-series/page/1

This is an older resource, but it includes a 20-minute video lessons on various Faith Formation topics that can be used in any combination to support confirmation preparation. There is a facilitators' training video and links to participant and leader guides with prompts for small group discussion. The language used makes it more appropriate for families and candidates that have had a moderate level of exposure to scripture and religious terminology.

Leader Resources: Catechism Curriculum

www.leaderresources.org/Catechism

This is a simple, practical, flexible plan for teaching the themes of the Anglican Catechism. There are 18 weeks of lesson plans with materials and activities for four age groups (Grades Primary-3, Grades 4-6, Junior-Senior High, Adults). The High School and Adult lessons are ideal for Confirmation preparation. A sample is available here:

www.leaderresources.org/assets/images/SAMPLES/Catechism_Curriculum.pdf

Redeem the Commute

www.redeemthecommute.com/courses

This collection of resources was created by Redeemer Church in Ajax, Ontario, which was an Anglican community in the Diocese of Toronto (more can be found about them here:

www.freshexpressions.org.uk/stories/redeemerchurch and here: www.redeemerajax.ca).

Selections from the "Christianity 101" and "Following Jesus" series can be mixed and matched to create a Confirmation program that is right for your participants.

Living the Questions

www.livingthequestions.com/xcart/home.php?cat=366

"LtQ2 is an open-minded alternative to studies that attempt to give participants all the answers and instead strives to create an environment where participants can interact with one another in exploring what's next for Christianity. Featuring thirty acclaimed scholars, theologians and other experts, LtQ2 consists of 21 sessions which may be offered in sequence or as three independent flights of seven units each.... LtQ2 includes downloadable and printable leader and participant guides with weekly readings and discussion questions. Each session may be conducted in one hour or expanded to include a meal and personal sharing. The 20-minute video segments include conversations with leading voices of faith, digital stories illustrating aspects of an evolving faith, and concrete spiritual practices and disciplines."

This is a slightly older resource, and it may be most appropriate for candidates that have had a moderate level of exposure to religious terminology. It does, however, seek to create a space where questions are welcome, and it draws from the traditions of many Christian denominations to explore the basic tenets of the Christian faith. An introductory video and sample of one of the session guides are available here (www.livingthequestions.com/xcart/home.php?cat=366) and here

(www.livingthequestions.com/xcart/files/dvd/ltq2/Session%209_The%20Prophetic%20Jesus.pdf).

Youth Emmaus

Stephen Cottrell, Sue Mayfield, Tim Sledge, Tony Washington

Church House Publishing, 1991

ISBN-10: 0715141848

ISBN-13: 978-0715141847

“Youth Emmaus is a course designed to help those aged 11 to 16 explore the basics of the Christian faith. This is no easy task - but Youth Emmaus offers a winning combination of meaty leaders' notes, cool handouts for group members, great cartoons and graphics and a free CD-ROM stacked with other useful resources. The material is fully road-tested and ideal for youth groups and as a confirmation course for young people.”

Alpha

www.alphacanada.org

“Alpha is a series of interactive sessions that explore the basics of the Christian faith. Typically run over 8-12 weeks, it allows anyone to explore life, faith and God in a friendly, open and informal environment. In each session there's food, a short talk, and discussion in small groups.” The website offers video training for facilitators and three courses of video presentations that can be mixed and matched to suit each group of participants. “Every session begins with food, whether it's a three course meal or a light snack. Eating food together creates space for people to connect, relax and build friendships....The talks are designed to engage guests and inspire conversation. They explore the big issues around faith and unpack the basics of Christian faith....The discussion allows people to share their thoughts and questions about the talks without being corrected or judged. Our training helps host and helpers facilitate this discussion time and keep it a positive and comfortable experience for guests.”

A black and white photograph of a bouquet of peonies. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The petals are layered and detailed. The word "Marriage" is written in a white, elegant script font across the center of the bouquet. The background is dark and out of focus, with some light-colored wooden planks visible at the bottom left.

Marriage

The Wedding

—From *The Book of Alternative Services*

Celebrant: *N* will you give yourself to *N* to be her husband: to love her, comfort her, honour and protect her; and forsaking all others, to be faithful to her so long as you both shall live?

Groom: **I will.**

Celebrant: *N* will you give yourself to *N* to be his wife: to love him, comfort him, honour and protect him; and forsaking all others, to be faithful to him so long as you both shall live?

Bride: **I will.**

Celebrant addresses the family of the bride and groom.

Celebrant: Do you, members of the families of *N* and *N*, give your blessing to this marriage?

Family: **We do.**

Celebrant addresses all present.

Celebrant: You are the witnesses to these vows now being made. Will you do all in your power to support and uphold this marriage?

People: **We will.**

Groom: **I *N* take you *N* to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish for the rest of our lives, according to God's holy law. This is my solemn vow.**

Bride: **I *N* take you *N* to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish for the rest of our lives, according to God's holy law. This is my solemn vow.**

Celebrant: Dear friends in Christ, let us ask God to bless this ring, that it may be a symbol of the vow and covenant *N* and *N* have made this day. Blessed are you, God of steadfast love, source of our joy and end of our hope. Bless this ring given and received that it may be a symbol of the vow and covenant *N* and *N* have made this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

Groom: ***N*, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow. With all that I am and all that I have, I honour you in the name of God.**

Bride: ***N*, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow. With all that I am and all that I have, I honour you in the name of God.**

Celebrant: *N* and *N* have joined themselves to each other by solemn vows, signified by the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring. I declare that they are husband and wife, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

People: **Amen.**

Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage

Outcomes	Responsibilities		
	Couple	Priest/Mentors	Congregation
Pray That the candidates may develop or deepen a life of prayer	Explore ways of developing/ deepening a shared life of prayer using parish-provided resources Seek God's guidance in preparation for making this commitment	Include couple in the Prayers of the People and personal devotions (resources) Provide resources to help the couple develop/deepen a life of prayer When the banns of marriage are published, also include encouragement and resources for parishioners to pray for the couple.	Include couple in the Prayers of the People and personal devotions
Learn The details and significance of marriage	Participate in the marriage preparation offered by the parish or region Take time outside of the marriage preparation course to talk about various aspects of living a life of faith together	Facilitate a marriage preparation course, or support a regional course that a) includes developing an understanding of the marriage covenant, b) helps the couple have conversations about their personal history, understanding of life, faith, and the world, finances, and hopes for the future, and c) explores opportunities for continued faith formation as members of the parish community	Renew understanding of their responsibilities to support the couple preparing for marriage
Experience Participation in the life/worship of church community	Attend worship and parish events to connect to parish community	Invite the couple to worship and parish events Help make connections within the congregation	Be aware of the couple preparing for marriage Provide a welcoming and supportive environment for the newly married to grow in their faith and connection to the parish Prepare to engage in follow-up with the newly married

Considerations

Marriage Preparation is the Church community's way of giving support and guidance to you as you approach your wedding. We believe that couples contemplating marriage owe it to each other to think and talk through many important aspects of married life before the wedding. Issues such as the place of God in your marriage, communication, budgeting, and whether you will have children need to be examined. Also, you will have the opportunity to face honestly the potential stressors in a life-long relationship and to identify and celebrate the strengths of your relationship.

- *Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI*

www.nspeidiocese.ca/page/Marriage.aspx#.WP4u6CMrLRO

Marriage Preparation Resources

Alpha Marriage Preparation Course

www.themarriagecourses.ca

This course is a 5 session program based on the same principles as Alpha – it's designed to be trusted, adventurous, authentic, gracious and open. It covers: communication, commitment, resolving conflict, keeping love alive, and shared goals and values. It's an easy-to-run, video-based program centred around a meal or snack and there are TONS of resources to support the program. Based on Christian principles, but very suitable for couples with little to no church experience.

Prepare-Enrich

enrichcanada.ca

The couple completes an online survey, and the facilitator receives a report outlining areas of agreement and disagreement in areas including communication, personal stress profile, and marriage expectations. This provides a helpful place for starting conversations that will be relevant to the couple. There is a group program available as well for working with multiple couples at once. Particularly effective for use with couples that facilitators do not know well. Facilitators need to complete training, which can be done in person or online.

Redeem the Commute Marriage Course

www.redeemthecommute.com/project/marriage

This resource is designed for couples to do on their own outside of a formal course, so this could be something that couples are encouraged to do independently, or pieces from this resource could be used in the development of your own program. It isn't designed intentionally as marriage prep, so there may be things missing from this that you will want to supplement from elsewhere. It's a 34-day program with a video or audio component for each day and then a discussion question and occasional worksheets.

Conclusion

We hope that this resource has been helpful as you've journey alongside those preparing for these sacraments, deepened the connection between those individuals and your parish, and has encouraged ongoing faith formation for everyone involved.

We'd love to hear from you about how you used this, what worked well, what didn't, and what is missing – e-mail acolp@nspeidiocese.ca

Thanks you for using this resource!