

EFM: Education for Ministry

2013 Report on Education for Ministry in the Diocese of New Jersey

2013 was a watershed year for Education for Ministry. EFM, which to us from the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, did a major overhaul of its entire program. The big red notebooks that were previously used for the four year program are now a memory of the past. Gone is “BOB” or the “Big Old Book” as the Common Lessons and Supporting Materials Resource was once affectionately called. Instead, each student within a given year receives a textbook, several interlude books, and the Reading and Reflecting Guide (RRG).

To roll out the program, Sewanee hosted a several day training in July for all trainers, coordinators and mentors, which I attended. It was well-worth the trip. Not only was it exciting to experience the new program, but it was a delightful blessing to be in the midst of so many who love and support EFM. In order to help our mentors with the new program, I hosted a training program for local mentor in August. Twelve mentors attended, hailing from the Dioceses of New Jersey, Newark, New York, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut attended the event.

EFM continues its program of excellent adult Christian education in a four year model to which students make an annual commitment. Year One students focus on the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), Year Two students focus on the New Testament, Year Three Students are studying Church History, and Year Four students spend their last year in Modern Theology. EFM integrates faith, fellowship, and theological thinking with the life of the believer. Such topics as Worship, Ethics, Community, and individual Ministry are other important components of the seminar meetings.

Another anomaly for 2013 came to us courtesy of Superstorm Sandy. The Annual Mentor Training which had been scheduled for the beginning of November 2012 at Stella Maris on the beach of Long Branch had to be canceled and rescheduled in January. 19 mentors participated in the January training. A second training was held in November of 2013; 24 mentors participated in the November training. The 2014 Mentor Training Event will be at Stella Maris on November 2-4, 2014. Both Basic/Inservice and Formation will be offered.

There are currently four seminar groups meeting in various parishes of the Diocese. EFM seminar groups are located at Trinity, Princeton; Christ Church, Shrewsbury; Christ Church, Toms River; and the Church of the Good Shepherd, Pittman.

We would love to begin EFM in other parishes in our Diocese. When it comes to adult education, I believe EFM has been the best kept secret of the Episcopal Church. Come unmask the secret. We welcome all who are interested in exploring more about their faith and practice. If you believe your parish or convocation might be interested in EFM, please give me a call; I am available to assist you in any way. You may contact me at 732-741-2220 or email ChristChurchShrewsbury@verizon.net.

Faithfully submitted,

The Rev. Lisa Sauber Mitchell
Diocesan Coordinator