



SPRED

Archdiocese of Chicago

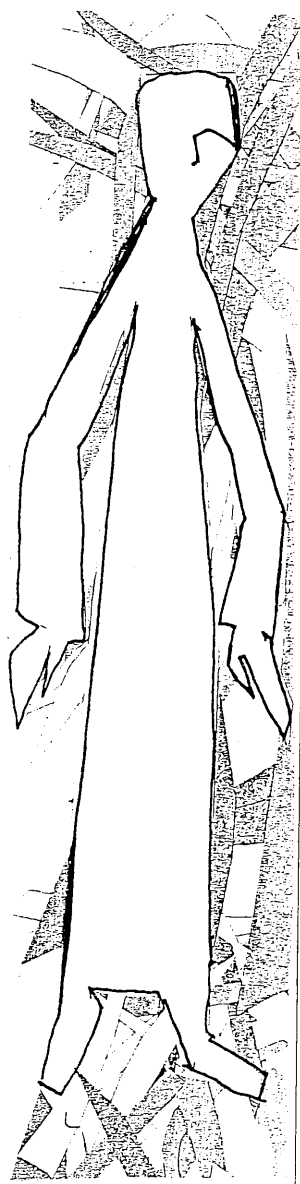
SPECIAL RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

2956 South Lowe Ave. Chicago, Illinois 60616

312-842-1039 www.spred.org

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LITURGICAL EVOCATION

Initiation into a life of faith for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities involves many elements. How these elements are worked into a whole is really an art form. To have the art form flow easily each element needs to be looked at closely and placed in a creative order.

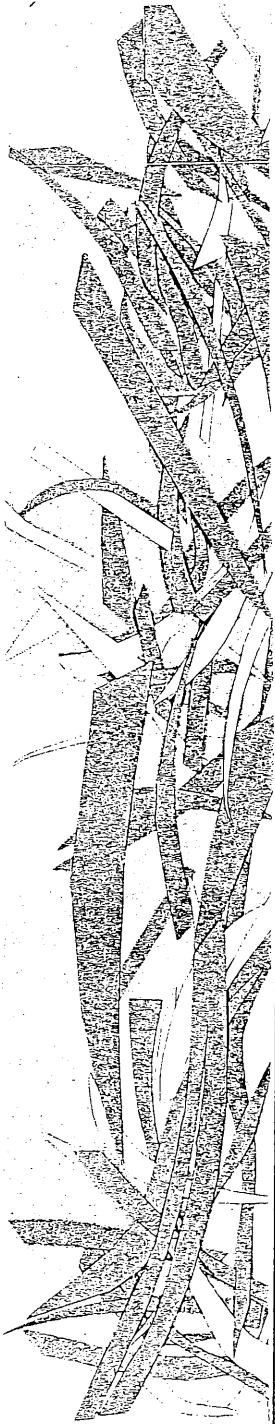
What are these elements that are part of the initiation process of faith development? In Spred, the over-arching framework is the Method Vivre. The progression is from an evocation of a human experience to an articulation of how one responds to one aspect of the evocation. With these elements firmly in place the group moves to the cornerstone of the catechesis, the liturgical evocation. This is the bridge moving toward the biblical evocation, the message and personal expression.

The key to being able to use these elements is the facility with which one constructs an evocation.

In the evocation of the human experience, the catechist begins by establishing a clear focus, helping the group to pay attention, to become aware. This is achieved by consciously calling into play all the senses. We see... The color is... It has a scent... It has a sound... It has a taste... We can touch ... Totally attentive to the focus, the catechist leads the group into a constellation of memories, unique to each person. When there is a resonance in each one, according to each one's capacity, the leader begins to move toward a unifying point.

The evocation is the calling to mind of a memory. This dimension of memory is the beginning of the symbolic process. When this process is activated, the leader can gently articulate the significance of the memories in the group and put this significance in a unifying light. Although the memories are unique, all together we see that... When there is a verbal or non-verbal assent, there needs to be a pause, while all this sinks in. This is the phase of the interiorization. The interiorization provides a platform for the next step, the liturgical evocation.

The liturgical evocation moves the process forward by being a true evocation, an evocation of the community of faith. As an evocation it needs to focus on a memory also, a memory of a past liturgical event that has actually been celebrated by the members of the group. Making up something cuts the symbolic flow. In order to stay in the symbolic flow established by the interiorization, it is key to stay with an evocation common to the group so as not to break up the flow into individualized bits again. If that happens, the catechist re-works the process on the spot to achieve a kind of harmonious sense of the community that is agreeing to a common memory.



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To work through this common memory, all the senses are again called into play. "Remember when we were.... Remember what it looked like.... The colors, the windows, the walls, the altar, the candles, etc. Remember what we heard... the music, the prayers, the bells. Remember what we smelled...the flowers, the incense. Remember what we felt, the holy water, the oil, the hands of others for the kiss of peace. Remember what we tasted, communion bread, communion wine. Remember where we walked...processions. Remember what we did and remember who we are.

This cultivation of mindfulness session after session is providing nourishment for the whole person and for the whole community. It is the process of building a liturgical mentality.

One of the dangers for the catechist at this point is to talk about the liturgy in the abstract as a kind of instruction or exhortation.

Our friends with disabilities have a very rich sensorial life but may be totally adrift when the conversation becomes abstract. This can be hard on catechists who have learned to be articulate about liturgical matters but may be a little sleepy when it comes to awareness of concrete realities surrounding them during liturgical celebrations. Although the catechist may focus totally on the celebrant, the priest, our friends are exploring the scene by looking at all the other people, imitating how they hold their hands, how they sit, how they sing, checking out the musicians, other children, older people, other liturgical ministers. All of this make up the tapestry of the liturgical event and this enriches the memory of the event. To this extent, the evocation of a particular liturgy can be rich sensorially. To just say a few words about the liturgy is not an evocation. There may be only a few words on a session outline, but the catechist has to bring the evocation alive with true memories.

Remembering implies a description of the event, the place and the people. A liturgy can be described, but if there has not been participation, the symbolic process is cut and the effort becomes purely conceptual. When this happens our friends become lost and the catechist is also lost.

The power of the symbol is at work when a person, place, thing, or event calls to mind another reality in such a way that it is relived, i.e. evoked. When the event is re-lived the whole person develops a sense of the sacred. This process is an initiation into the symbolic nature of worship.

But what are we to do when those with disabilities as well as catechists do not have enriching liturgical experiences? When there is little to evoke, catechists often drop the liturgical evocation or do not know quite what to do with it.

There are other elements that can be remembered and evoked. The most basic component of the liturgy is the assembly, the people gathered together to pray. Once there is a Spred gathering in the celebration room for a Spred session, that event can be evoked later. "When we came into the celebration room, we saw..., we heard..., we smelled..., we felt... .When we gathered around the Holy Book, we sang... . During the agape we tasted... Jesus was with us.

In order to enrich the Spred process of catechesis by authentic liturgical evocations, many Spred

groups are organizing Spred family liturgies. During these liturgies our friends are active participants. There is music they can sing. There are processions that they can walk in. There are gestures and body movements they can use. There are words that they can grasp. There are places to sit where they can see. There is bread they can swallow and there are patient Eucharistic ministers who help them drink from the cup. They can greet everyone and share their presence freely.

While without a doubt theirs is a witness to the parish community, the Spred community becomes aware of itself as being of value in the larger family of the parish. These are occasions when each one and the whole Spred community assume an identity as members of the people of God.

Many times the liturgical evocation has been called the ecclesial evocation. The ecclesial body is who we become when we engage in liturgy. What we do builds us into who we are.

When we work with our friends with disabilities, we are often working with people who are under-valued and not taken into account, the dispossessed. There is a tendency to avoid taking the time needed for them to participate or to provide the space needed for them to belong. But when we welcome them into the People of God through the doors of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, they are one of us. They are no longer they. We are we. This sense of belonging is a gift we give to one another.

In the symbolic progression of the Method Vivre, the liturgical evocation provides a bridge from the elements of the evocation of the human experience and the dimension of the sacred. Once the liturgical evocation has been worked through, the biblical evocation can be proclaimed. The community has been prepared and readied to hear the Word of God in a passage that is short, clear and part of the total progression.

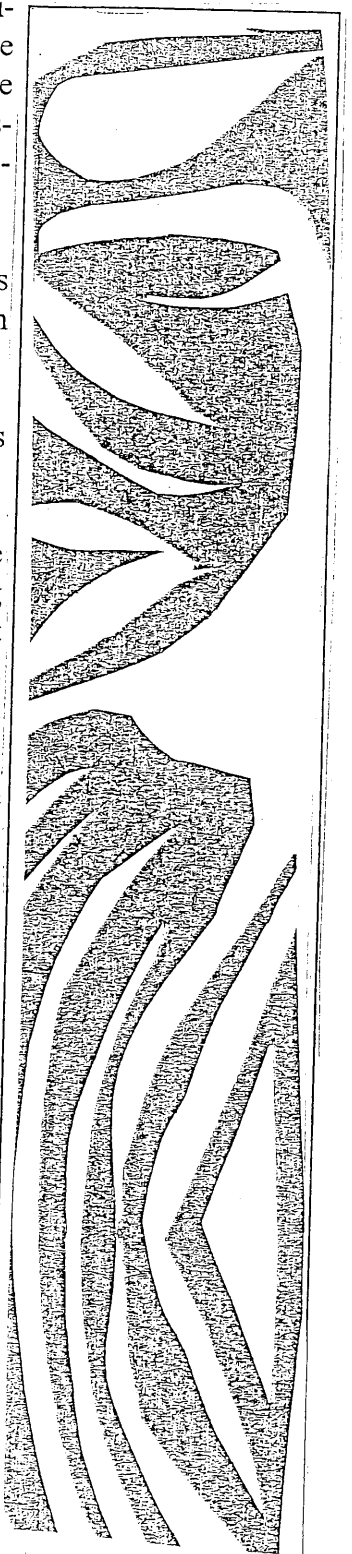
Because of all the work that has preceded the biblical evocation, the passage is not explained but proclaimed slowly, often, with sacred gestures. In some Spred groups the biblical evocation is sung, first by the catechist and then sung several times with the whole group joining in - in a kind of litany. Then there needs to be silence.

When the silence is sacred, the leader can go to each person with a blessing and the words, Today...Jesus says to you...

When the group gathers around the Book of the Word to sing a sacred song with gestures, the personal expression, there needs to be a kind of coherence with the liturgical evocation. Not every word of the song will be understood, but the mood of the music and the gestures will be loved by the participants. The gestures need to be simple enough that all can participate even if there are physical impairments and the music has to be serene enough not to traumatise those with sensitivity to sound, but the main element is that the music is to be such that it could be sung in a parish assembly.

We all have a capacity for the language of music and when we all sing we connect with one another, and when we all move in unison with common gestures, we enter into worship as the people of God, united in praise.

Sr.Mary Therese Harrington
Chicago Spred



TO
MYSTERY

SPRED CALENDAR

SPRED FAMILY LITURGIES

Oct. 2, Nov. 6, Dec. 4, Feb. 5, March 4, April 1, May 6

SPRED TRAINING

Introduction to Special Religious Development

for parish chairpersons, leaders and activity catechists

Saturdays Sept. 17, 24, Oct. 1

1:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Spred Center, 2956 South Lowe, Chicago

Third floor over the church, 312-842-1039

Training in English and Spanish

St. Francis de Sales Spred Center

33 S. Buesching Rd, lower church

Lake Zurich, south of Rt. 22

Kelly Corrigan 847-726-4742

Training in English.

Role Orientation (Resource Days)

In English and Spanish 312-842-1039

Spred Center, 2956 So Lowe, Chicago

Third floor over the church

Saturdays, Oct. 15, 22 1:00 to 6:00

OBSERVATION

6-10 Mondays 6:00 p.m. Sept. 19, Oct. 3, 17, Nov. 14

11-16 Tuesday 7:00 p.m. Sept. 27, Oct. 11, Nov. 1

17-21 Tuesday 7:00 p.m. Sept. 27, Oct. 11, Nov. 1

22+ Mondays 7:00 p.m. Sept. 19, Oct. 3, 17, Nov. 14

Helper Catechist Training

Spred Center, 2956 So Lowe, Chicago, 312-842-1039

Saturday, Nov. 12, 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.

English; Sr. Susanne Gallagher, Mary Claps,

Spanish; Ramiro and Eva Hernandez

Queen of Angels Spred Center,

Saturday, Oct. 8, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

4412 Western Ave, 2nd floor, Chicago

English; Mary Ward, 773-685-9423

St. Francis de Sales Spred Center

Saturday, Feb. 4, 2012, 11:00 to 4:00

33 S Buesching Rd (lower church) Lake Zurich Il

English; Kelly Corrigan, 847-726-4742

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