

## SPRED MODEL

In 1964, Fr. Eucharist Paulhus and Fr. Jean Mesny brought the Method Vivre to Chicago. Their work was adopted by Fr. James McCarthy, Sr. Mary Therese Harrington and Sr. Susanne Gallagher who embrace a vision and a method for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The SPRED Method is not a teaching model based on information but rather an intuitive model grounded on relationships and the use of symbol and a series of evocations

The goal of the symbolic catechetical method used by SPRED is to develop a sense of the sacred, a sense of Christ and a sense of the Church. The use of objects, pictures, or music stirs memories of life experiences. The sharing of life experiences draws the faith community together emotionally. This nurtures a sense of worth and of being in communion. A memory of liturgy or sacrament then draws the small SPRED community emotionally into communion with the larger church. A passage from scripture carries the group into communion with all people of God. The group has now arrived at an awareness of Jesus with us and of the sacredness of all life. This new awareness is celebrated in song and gesture. The symbolic method is the pathway to mystery and a deeper relationship with God in our life.

The SPRED process involved a series of evocations based on life, liturgy and scripture. Evocations develop symbolic knowing. Within the context of the small faith community, partnerships are formed, faith is nourished, and life is celebrated.

*When we are happy to be together, we discover Jesus in our midst.*

## THE EXPERIENCE OF A SPRED SESSION

There are different phases to the SPRED process. Each has a significance that mirrors the various rituals of sacrament and liturgies. The following describes the unfolding of a total community session which includes catechist and Friends.

### WELCOMING

Catechists arrive early to prepare the meeting space and ready themselves to greet their Friends. Each Friend is invited into the SPRED space and greeted with a simple handshake by each catechist and Friend in the community.

### PREPARATION PROCESS

Each person is invited to select a work that will draw their attention, spark creativity and draw them into harmony with others in the environment. There is a generous offering of art materials, sensorial and tactile works, as well as activities of daily life. Concentrated creative work draws us toward an inner peace and brings us to anticipation of something more.

## **SILENCE ACTIVITY (Transition to Catechesis)**

At the end of preparation time, each person is invited to clean up and join together in a circle. This ritual activity is the transition that allows each one to respond to a personal invitation to catechesis. One by one the members move into the Celebration Circle.

## **CATECHESIS**

In the Celebration Circle, an object, picture, a piece of music or sound is presented to the community. A conversation begins drawing a personal, lived experience to the symbol presented. Each person is allowed the time to share their stories, respecting various ways of communication and the sensitivities of our friends. A series of evocations follow that bring the entire community into an awareness of Jesus present in us and with us. A message is delivered to each person highlighting the intentionality of the session, e.g. "Jesus says to you today, Live in my Love." The community celebrates with song and simple gesture. As a piece of reflection music plays, we bask in the joy of our experience.

## **AGAPE**

The celebration is extended through a ritual sharing of food and fellowship. The community collaborates to prepare a beautiful table and present a simple offering of food and drink. Gathered together around the table, we share the joy of life through conversation and song. A successful agape prepares us to enter the celebration of Eucharist with a deeper appreciation.

## **CLOSURE**

Following the joint clearing of the table, the group gathers for a closing song and farewells.

## **THE EXPERIENCE OF A CATECHIST PREP SESSION**

The corresponding session for the community of catechists develops the same mystery of faith. It is a parallel method with the following differences.

- There is no preparation process.
- Feedback related to the previous total community and corresponding catechist session opens the session. Discussion includes observations on the response of the friends, how the goal of the session was met, what might work better, etc.
- The Leader presents a literary selection. From this selection, a question is posed inviting reflection on a personal life experience. Each catechist seeks out a comfortable space and takes ample time for deep, personal reflection. When ready, the catechists gather in the Celebration Circle to share their story as a gift and enter into catechesis.
- The catechesis unfolds with the same series of evocations that are used for the total community and celebrates with the same song and gesture. It is important then for the group to spend time choosing and discussing the symbol for the coming session in view of the experiences of their Friends. Agape is celebrated with the same respect and reverence as it is with the Friends.

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