

EHS character education 2006-2007
A presentation to the faculty by Father Bob Marsh
Pre-planning, August 17, 2006

Presentation outline

I. Why character education rather than a diversity "program?"

- A. The Middle and Upper School theology students recognize that we need a school culture renewal. There is a basic need to renew our teaching of *agape*, respect and responsibility.
- B. See philosophy statement of May 3, 2006: we're not ready to implement the kind of anti-racism/multicultural re-orientation that would change the culture of our school community. We need a common "fund" of virtues from which we can draw. We don't want to relegate "diversity" to a politically-correct "program" that we throw a lot of money at and then say we handled it. Rather, we want to take advantage of who we are as an Episcopal school and teach our students to "respect the dignity of every human being, regardless of race, sex, social or economic status, sexual orientation, or past behavior." See III below.
- C. We need to be very careful about what we mean by "diversity" and "tolerance," too. See Lickona's "Making Sense of Tolerance and Diversity."

II. How we ended up last year at a meeting on May 25, 2006 after our faculty luncheon.

- A. Buying a curriculum would be the least effective approach we could take.
- B. The faculty task force members concluded that if we want to change the culture of the School, we must begin from the bottom up rather than the top down.
- C. The approach: start with the students and their input rather than putting together a curriculum for them.
 - 1. A student questionnaire
 - 2. Use student volunteers to evaluate and recommend based on the hard data of the questionnaire
- D. Establish a new part of the spiritual life section for character education.

III. Where we're headed for the 2006-2007 school year

- A. Faculty and parents: Read and implement "Smart and Good Schools"
- B. Name diversity task force/ respect and responsibility/ character education initiative.
- C. Using questionnaires, as mentioned above, from students,
- D. faculty/staff and parents committees of volunteer students, parents
- E. and faculty, we will develop our recommendations for campus life.
- F. Obtain training for faculty and students volunteers for student-led youth study circles
- G. Obtain training for faculty and student facilitators for anti-racism
- H. study in youth study groups (recognizing God in the race of each other from the Episcopal Church). This organization is to be
- I. developed, however, our goal would be special venues and formats
- J. to ensure that all students participate over a number of years.
- K. Rework the "Thought for the day" section of the homeroom bulletin and "daily devotion" expectation.
 - 1. Thought for the day to include a character quote, a Bible verse and a question for practical application.

2. Daily devotions. After a brief discussion of the thought for the day, ask and/or suggest prayer requests. Ask students in rotation to lead prayer. If a student is uncomfortable praying extemporaneously, ask that student to lead the Lord's Prayer, Psalm 1 or Psalm 23. The important part of daily devotions is not length but consistency.
- L. Develop an ongoing rhythm for students and faculty to have input into the "system." This will include a number of different opportunities from a suggestion box, class meetings, department meetings, home room meetings to special assemblies.
- M. Develop an ongoing rhythm for character education opportunities, for instance, a ten-minute discussion during a particular period on a rotating basis.
- N. Tackle one relatively "easy" problem to begin. Dr. Lickona has suggested that we tackle the litter problem.
- O. Develop an ongoing structure that will begin anti-racism study circles next year.