

Confrontation with Scripture

(Adapted from Ken Smith's
Six Models of Confirmation Ministry)

This study method has five stages. This kind of meeting is used to confront a piece of scripture or the catechism. It boils down all those great things you learned about hermeneutics in the seminary. Good sermons come out of these meetings. As part of the opening worship, read the passage as a group.

- Step 1. The first step of this agenda is to list all the strange things about the passage. What is weird here? Make a long list. The Bible is kind of strange when you think about it. Don't try to make the Bible palatable. Let it be strange for awhile.
- Step 2. The second step is to find a surplus of meanings for this passage. Don't settle for one or two meanings. Find a dozen. Get everybody to contribute to this list. Even the most off-the-wall meaning may take on relevance later. But people should get the impression that there is a lot here and we can't contain it all.
- Step 3. The third step is to argue for awhile about what we think the sense of the passage is. Of all the possible meanings, what is the best one for us? Try to reach a conclusion.
- Step 4. The fourth step in this agenda is to become suspicious of the sense we have made of this passage. Encourage critical thinking. Would the passage hold the same meaning if our skin were a different color, or we spoke a different language, or we had cancer, or we were old or we had just been raped? Push hard for all the voices to be heard.
- Step 5. The fifth step is finally to decide what is the significant meaning after we have listened to our suspicions. What is the one meaning with us as a group in this time and place?

*One of the Bible or lectionary study guides contributed by the members
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