Restoring God’s Reign in Religious Imaginations: 
A Pedagogical Approach for Promoting Integration in Learners’ Minds, Hearts, and Lives

Abstract
The importance of attending to the imagination in religious education is paramount. Our cognitional needs demand it, Jesus models it, and our image-flooded culture makes it a practical necessity. But what does it look like to teach the Christian faith in a way that does not merely pay lip service to the importance of imagination but actually promotes genuine transformation of learners’ imaginations? Synthesizing research on Jesus’ teaching, cognitive science, and educational best practices, this paper presents a proposal for an innovative pedagogical process that meets the aforementioned cognitional, theological, and cultural exigencies.

Introduction
The importance of imagination for people’s lives of faith has been a prominent theme in the writings of some of the most distinguished scholars of our time. Descriptions of the gradual shifting of Christians’ “social imaginaries” lies at the heart of Charles Taylor’s account of our present “secular age” and how we got here.¹ Andrew Delbanco in like manner has traced the permutations in Protestant Americans’ imagining that facilitated a cultural devolution from a nation united “under God” to our present “stage of the self”.² Andrew Greeley concluded from decades of research that people’s preferences of religious images were more predictive of behaviors and attitudes than church attendance, doctrinal orthodoxy, or any other religious measure.³ In the field of religious education, leading scholars like Maria Harris, James Loder, and Thomas Groome have devoted significant attention in their writings to the importance of the imagination in for education in faith.

These scholarly influences do seem to have permeated popular thinking on some level, with most religious educators today making some effort to incorporate audio-visual elements into (e.g., PowerPoints and YouTube videos) their instruction. Notwithstanding such haphazard efforts, by and large the imaginative formation received by most contemporary Christians remains inadequate to withstand the fragmenting effects of postmodernity described by Taylor and others. What more could be done? In this paper, I endeavor to address this question, drawing upon my research from the past several years in a variety of fields including sociology, cognitive science, biblical studies, and religious education. I begin by offering three arguments for the centrality of the imagination to Christian religious education. In the latter half of the paper, I present a proposal for the sort of imagination-centered pedagogy needed to empower people to

live meaningful, integrated lives of faith in today’s postmodern culture. While the challenges, possibilities, and responses I describe are applicable to religious educators of all faith traditions, I write primarily out of my experience within the Catholic Christian community in the United States.

Three Arguments for the Centrality of Imagination to Christian Religious Education

The reasons for why it is so important to attend carefully to the imagination in religious education are many. I will articulate three here. First, mental images constitute the core of all thought and for this reason must be engaged directly in any case where educators seek to promote meaningful change in their students’ thinking and living. According to the best available cognitive research, thought begins from the senses when sensory and motor nerves carry signals from sensory receptors on the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin to neurons in the brain. The firing of neurons in certain patterns provides the physiological basis for mental “images”.  

So long as one is awake or dreaming, one experiences a constant stream of images through one’s consciousness. This stream of images, according to Damasio, is “probably the main content of our thoughts.” The ability to generate, attend to, and mentally manipulate these images is what is meant by “imagination” in the most basic sense of the word.

Beyond providing the material of thought and a basic interpretive lens for understanding one’s sense experiences, imagination gives direction to our living. As Paul Ricoeur says, “One lives only that which one imagines.” Famed educator Parker Palmer similarly asserts, “Our seeing shapes our being.” Even executing relatively simple actions—for example, locating an object or walking to a particular destination—requires visualization of the action to be completed. In fact, it is especially in the case of day-to-day living and real-time thinking and deciding that we rely most heavily upon rapid acts of imagination rather than discursive reasoning.

When further life experience and learning endow mental images with affective

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4 In neuroscience the word “images” indicates “mental patterns with a structure built with the tokens of each of the sensory modalities—visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and somatosensory” (Antonio Damasio, The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness (New York: Harcourt Brace, 2000), 318). Significant in this definition is the fact that the term “image” is not limited to the visual. One’s recollection of a friend’s face, a catchy melody, the smell of a favorite flower, the taste of a favorite fruit, and the feel of a loved one’s touch would all qualify as “images” in this sense.


6 For a fuller account of the role of mental images in the generation of thought, see Damasio, Descartes’ Error.

7 Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, 278. Ricoeur adds, “even Life is a symbol, an image, before being experienced and lived.” In the same vein, David Tracy writes, “human beings need story, symbol, image, myth, and fiction to disclose to their imaginations some genuinely new possibilities for existence” (Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1996), 207. Maria Harris similarly notes that people are not moved by direct appeal to the will so much as by inciting their imaginations to hoping and acting (Teaching and Religious Imagination (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 20).

8 Parker J. Palmer, To Know as We Are Known (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), xi.

charge, variegated connotations, and existential significance, they become the sorts of “symbols” that constitute the foundation for the cognitive framework by means of which one interprets and navigates reality. In light of all of the above, it is evident why any instruction that makes a lasting impact on learners’ thinking and behavior necessarily engages them on the level of their mental images.

In reading the Gospels, we observe Jesus teaching in precisely this way, which suggests a second reason why Christian religious educators should practice an imagination-centered pedagogy. Jesus’ pedagogical use of story and symbol was essential to his mission, which is best understood as, not merely proclaiming the reign (or kingdom) or God, but inviting people to participation therein. Jesus found parables to be particularly suitable mediators of his vision of the reign of God. Rather than merely illustrating information that could stand on its own, the parables prompt the hearer’s participation in the reality of the reign of God to which the parables refer. The imaginative, non-discursive language of the parables requires the listener to make an active effort to understand and make sense of Jesus’ vision of reality.

Jesus seems to have preferred this manner of teaching over more direct instructional methods, which, as any experienced teacher knows, tends to shut down learners’ thinking. A more participatory mode of learning was required because knowing God’s reign is not like knowing the multiplication tables or the capitals of all 50 states. We know the truth of the reign of God when we participate in it. As Pheme Perkins explains, “we respond to a parable on many levels with our minds, with our feelings, and perhaps even with an unconscious resonance to its archetypal themes. Such levels of response,” she adds, “are the ground of any conversion.” Hence, when Jesus told parables, he did not tell his audience what to think about the reign of God but rather invited them to “come and see” for themselves (Jn 1:39). In this sense, the parables are better conceived as exercises of the imagination than fables with clear morals.

This sort of engaged, participatory pedagogy is all the more necessary in an age when people’s imaginations are being daily overwhelmed by an excess of stimulation. This brings us to the third reason for the centrality of the imagination in contemporary religious education. In times past, Americans received information and heard stories from a limited number of sources. This ensured a relatively unified set of messages and meanings that served as the foundation for Americans’ social world (e.g., the Christian message as proclaimed from the pulpit by preachers). In the current era, however, the media sources have proliferated and so too have the

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10 I define “symbol” as a multivalent, affectively charged image that bear an excess of meaning.
11 C. H. Dodd defines a parable as “a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought” (The Parables of the Kingdom (New York: Scribner, 1961), 5).
14 Cf. Thomas Groome’s distinction between “closure” and “disclosure” styles of teaching (Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis (Harper San Francisco, 1991), 243–4.). This is not to suggest that Jesus never employed direct instructional methods. The Gospels attest to the fact that he did, e.g., in famous sermons like the Sermon on the Mount.
15 Perkins, Hearing the Parables of Jesus, 4.
messages. Richard Kearney describes the situation thus: “All we have is a series of random and conflicting meanings which cancel each other out, leaving us with nothing but a flux of surface images.”

The average North American now sees approximately 6,000 marketing messages each day, and, thanks to the proliferation of handheld electronic devices, young people now pack an average of 10 hours and 45 minutes worth of media content into 7.5 hours of consumption every day. According to a recent Pew Forum survey, 24% of teens go online “almost constantly.”

The advances in communication technologies that have made such prodigious media consumption possible have also provided Americans unprecedented exposure to diverse cultures, religions, and worldviews and multiplied exponentially the sources informing their thinking and imagining. This onslaught of conflicting messages and images undoubtedly presents a significant challenge to people’s efforts to form a coherent vision of life. However, new technology also presents new tools for inviting people into the vision of the reign of God preached by Jesus. Whether religious educators are combatting the fragmenting effects of image overload or employing technology for the sake of evangelization, it has become imperative that they intentionally address the imaginal factors that exert such a powerful influence on the minds, hearts, and lives of modern people.

An Imagination-Centered Pedagogy for Today

The need for serious attention to the imagination in religious education is clear. This increased attention can and should take multiple forms including greater commitment and exposure to Christian art and literature, deeper experiences of liturgy and liturgical catechesis, and giving Christian symbols at least as much weight as doctrine in religion curricula and materials. For the purposes of this paper, I will leave these suggestions aside and focus on the potential of devoting greater attention to the imagination in religious instruction.

22 In the words of theologian Ray Hart, “For an American Christian to see via satellite television the life-style of a self-immolating Buddhist priest in Saigon is for him to see another human being whose existence is ordered by radically different self-images” (Unfinished Man and the Imagination: Toward an Ontology and a Rhetoric of Revelation (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 199).
23 Although I do not have the space in this paper to elaborate on these non-pedagogical opportunities for transforming learners’ imaginations, I encourage the reader to consider the possibilities in these areas. Given the foundational role imagination plays in our thought and behavior, one should not underestimate the influence of literary luminaries like C. S. Lewis and Flannery O’Connor. More than theologians, it is they who shape people’s thinking about faith at the deepest level, and we as a faith community would do well to encourage more people to devote themselves to artistic expression and to incorporate it more consistently in the life of the Church. For a similar argument about the importance of the imagination as it concerns liturgy, see James Smith, Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation (Baker Academic, 2009), and Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works (Baker Academic, 2013). Finally, for an example of how textbooks and other educational materials could be designed to make them more imaginatively engaging, see Nick Sousanis's groundbreaking and wonderfully creative work Unflattening (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015).
As suggested above, most religious educators have some sense for the need to engage their students on the imaginative level. The real challenge is moving beyond the occasional use of audio-visuals to engaging learners’ imaginations in a genuinely transformative way. In order to do so, teachers need more than scholarly arguments for the importance of the imagination and disconnected suggestions for imaginative teaching strategies. They need a cohesive pedagogical approach that is concrete in its implications, grounded in the best available research, and ready to be implemented in the classroom. It is my aim in the latter half of this paper to describe such a pedagogical approach, which proceeds in three phases summarized by the acronym “SEE”—(1) Stimulate the imagination, (2) Expand the imagination, and (3) Embrace a new way of imagining.  

Phase One—Stimulate the imagination: The purpose of the first phase is to engage learners cognitively and affectively by stimulating activity at the level of their mental images. All thought originates in sensations and mental images, and our mostly deeply entrenched views and convictions are those that are tied most tightly to personally important mental images. For these reasons, teachers seeking to facilitate truly transformative learning must invite learners to activate their core mental images and symbols (i.e., of God, self, and world25), critically examine those images, and take an active role in constructing new meaning around these (now potentially modified) images. We often see Jesus beginning his lessons in just this way, inviting his hearers to call to mind images and experiences that were intimately familiar to them like casting nets in the sea, laboring in a vineyard, baking bread, or shepherding sheep. Today a Christian educator might begin a lesson—for example, about the Eucharist—by facilitating discussion, an art project, or storytelling that helps learners to bring to mind familiar images of community (e.g., hanging out with friends or enjoying a family meal). The teacher would then invite learners to critically examine these familiar images, for example, by asking where they came from and whether there might be other ways to imagine community. Key to this phase is presenting images and questions that prompt learners to actively imagine reality as they experience it and encouraging them to give expression to their mental images in their own terms (not in those they think the teacher wants to hear).  

Phase Two—Expand the imagination: Having stimulated learners’ imagining in Phase One, Phase Two aims to challenge their current imagining so as to open them up to ways of imagining that are more adequate and more authentically Christian.26 In this phase teachers

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24 This process and its three phases are designed to cohere with the natural cognitional processes by which sense experience gives rise to thought and thought leads to action. I have briefly described these cognitional processes above (see p.2), and I reiterate the relevant moments of these cognitional processes in my descriptions of each of the pedagogical phases below. The structure of the SEE process also conforms to the basic steps described in the literature of transformative learning theory as leading to radical transformations in people’s thinking and meaning-making. (See, e.g., Jennifer Garvey Berger, “Dancing on the Threshold of Meaning: Recognizing and Understanding the Growing Edge,” Journal of Transformative Education 2, no. 4 (October 1, 2004): 336–51.)  
25 Sandra Schneiders speaks of these three images as the “master images” that “in dynamic interrelationship, decisively control our participation in reality” (Sandra M. Schneiders, Buying the Field: Catholic Religious Life in Mission to the World (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2013), 38.  
26 A person may be regarded as imagining in a more adequate manner to the extent that one can imagine one’s experiences in a unified way, adapt one’s imaginative framework to new experiences and information, and metacognize and exert control over one’s imagining. While there are innumerable ways to be authentic to the Christian tradition, we must acknowledge some criteria that distinguish faithful discipleship from idolatry and error. These include—among others—openness to God’s ongoing self-revelation in one’s imagining (as opposed to an idolatrous close-mindedness) and imagining anchored in the core symbols of the Christian faith (e.g., Jesus, the cross, the Eucharist, Church).
facilitate questioning, engagement with Christian teachings, and/or activities that problematize or expose limits in learners’ current imagining and invite learners to explore key symbols from the Christian tradition that offer greater promise. Producing some level of intellectual discomfort is often necessary because people typically resists accepting radically new views until their accustomed way of seeing things becomes problematic. Disruption of this sort was a hallmark of Jesus’ parables. Indeed, Scripture scholar Amy Jill Levine argues that, if we are to understand the parables, “We might be better off thinking less about what they ‘mean’ and more about what they can ‘do’: remind, provoke, refine, confront, disturb….” Jesus drew in his audience by painting a familiar scene, like a priest walking the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, but then he would turn the tables with a provocative twist, for example, suggesting that not the priest or the Levite but rather the hated Samaritan was the true neighbor to the man on the roadside. A contemporary educator might do likewise by playing a song or video clip, telling a story, or asking questions that challenge learners to imagine the true model of community, not as a group of friends just like themselves, but rather as a Eucharistic communion of diverse, fallible people.

Phase Three—Embrace a more authentically Christian way imagining: After Phase Two has disrupted learners’ inadequate ways of imagining and posed the possibility of more authentically Christian ways, Phase Three presents the opportunity and support needed to forge a new, more adequate imaginative synthesis. It is crucial in this final phase that teachers not presume to impose meanings on learners but rather encourage them to organically and creatively weave the Christian wisdom into their own frameworks of meaning. If the scholarship on Jesus’ parables can be trusted, Jesus did not tell these enigmatic stories with the intention of conveying a single, clear-cut meaning. He told stories in such a way that demanded the audience’s effort to make sense of his meaning and elicited judgments and decisions about the vision of reality the parables present. For example, in the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus challenges his hearers to judge which person was neighbor to the victim and to decide whether or not they will have the courage to act with compassion as the Samaritan did. In like manner, contemporary teachers can pose questions and facilitate activities that invite learners to think for themselves about Christian ways of imagining (e.g., the Eucharistic image of community), to render personal judgments about the adequacy of their own orienting symbols and those of the Christian tradition, and to make decisions about their lives based on those judgments. The more concretely learners can imagine the implications of their decisions, the more likely their learning is to translate into new behaviors and habits.


29 See Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom, 5, 9, 99; Scott, Jesus, Symbol-Maker, 11; Crossan, In Parables, 21; Chilton, “Kingdom of God,” 517-8, 522; Levine, Short Stories by Jesus, 277.

Further clarifications on the SEE process: This three-phase process is not necessarily intended to replace other pedagogical approaches but rather to enhance learners’ imaginative engagement, whatever the pedagogy employed. For example, the SEE process integrates especially well with Thomas Groome’s shared Christian praxis (SCP), supplementing the usual dynamics of SCP with activities that more intentionally promote development in learners’ imaginative capabilities.31 A learning event conducted in accord with the SEE process may progress through the three phases within a 45-minute class or over the course of a week or even a semester. Although this process is distinctive in its capacity to meet the particular needs of postmodern learners, it is designed such that its basic movements accord with the invariant dynamics of human cognition, making the process suitable for nearly all learners, regardless of age or developmental level.32 It is also designed in such a way as to make its implementation feasible for teachers of varied abilities.33

The movements of the SEE process are more appropriately described as “phases” than “steps” in the sense that the activities of the different phases frequently overlap and blend with one another. For example, the invitation in Phase One to identify patterns in learners’ imagining may instantaneously generate awareness of the inadequacy of this manner of imagining, an awareness that is targeted specifically by the disruptive exercises of Phase Two. The language of “steps” is also less appropriate insofar as it suggests a linear process leading to a definitive endpoint. However, the success of the SEE process (and, I would argue, of any pedagogy in today’s postmodern context) depends upon it being carried out in a recursive manner. That is to say that it will be most effective when learners become habituated to the process through repeatedly engaging in it over an extended period of time.

A recursive pedagogical process is necessary for several reasons. To begin with, healthy integration of the imagination requires relative stability in the core of one’s symbol system, but postmodern criticism of metanarratives and embracing of plurality coupled with the incessant

31 While the two approaches are fully compatible, I describe the SEE process in three phases rather than simply adopting the five-movement structure of Groome’s approach because this structure makes it easier for teachers to attend to the dynamics of imagination transformation that are consistently revealed in research in cognitive science, transformative learning and conceptual change, and in Jesus’ teaching (and for other reasons that I have articulated elsewhere).

32 This imagination-focused pedagogy is appropriate for young children since the prominent use of images is more likely to attract and hold their attention than an approach that focuses on definitions and doctrines. Yet it is no less appropriate for adults in whose cognitive processes images continue to fulfill essential functions. Of course, as with any pedagogical approach, the effectiveness of this process depends to a degree upon the teacher differentiating instruction according to the needs of learners. For young learners, more time will be spent on examining images, telling stories, and undertaking artistic projects so as to respect the limits of their short attention spans and concrete manner of thinking. Adults, by contrast, possess longer attention spans and the ability to engage in abstract thought. In their case, learning experiences can and should incorporate more detailed presentation of Christian teaching and more sophisticated questions. In addition to differentiating instruction according to learners’ age, teachers should adapt this approach according to the learners’ social context and cultural background, emotional maturity, and comfort level with one another.

33 In its most sophisticated form, the SEE process is designed to promote post-critical symbolic consciousness (i.e., imaginative capabilities enhanced by critical reasoning and metacognitive habits) in learners, which requires teachers themselves to be operating from a post-critical consciousness. After all, teachers cannot help learners to develop awareness of the way images function in their cognition and living if the teachers do not understand these dynamics themselves. However, when it comes to more basic forms of this approach (e.g., those used with children), it is less important for teachers to be post-critical thinkers since children are incapable of attaining post-critical consciousness. For younger age groups, this pedagogical process aims at forming imaginations in a Christian manner and deepening learners’ understanding of and thinking about religious and existential matters but not promoting post-critical consciousness.
multiplication of fabricated images in our culture conspire against such stability. The influence of any formal education, no matter how rigorous, is dwarfed by the continuous formation people receive from television, the internet, movies, popular music, and advertising. Given this state of affairs, lessons about Christian teaching and symbols that are not repeatedly reinforced are doomed to be lost in the mix. Even dynamic educational approaches like Groome’s shared praxis and my own SEE process, which produce more resilient learning on account of their experiential, engaging methodology, are inadequate to preparing learners for sustaining imaginal integration if they are conducted merely as one-off or occasional learning sessions. In order to contend with the many competing influences, religious educators must go beyond exposing learners to Christian symbols to training learners to take control of their own imagining. Such training requires more than occasional exercises in Christian imagining; it requires continuous formation.

The symbols that exert the greatest influence over people’s imagining are those that carry the strongest emotional charge and that are most interconnected with other personally important symbols, invested with the richest meaning, and reinforced most consistently by experience. If Christian symbols are to constitute the core of people’s symbol systems, those people must continue to discover ever new levels of beauty and meaning in them through education, liturgy, art, and other formative experiences. This is to say that, in today’s context, Christian religious education will only succeed in forming disciples’ imaginations for the reign of God insofar as it continuously revisits the central symbols of Christian faith, building more and more connections with other faith symbols and images from everyday life and giving learners reason to return to those symbols time and again.

**Conclusion**

There is little doubt in the world of religious education that the imagination is of paramount importance for the way we think, live our lives, and grow (or falter) in faith. What is needed most urgently at present is not more scholarly arguments about why the imagination is important but rather concrete pedagogical guidance that will help teachers to engage learners’ imaginations in genuinely transformative ways. It has been my aim in this paper to offer some guidance of this sort, proposing a three-phase pedagogical process that takes into account how

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34 In *Sharing Faith*, Groome clearly envisions SCP as a process that can be used in an ongoing manner (see, e.g., p.293), but he does not make the case that conducting SCP in an ongoing manner is essential for achieving its aims as I do for the SEE process.

35 This process of assuming control over one’s own imagining can be understood as one facet of the work of “self-appropriation” described by Lonergan in *Insight*. Robert Doran’s work on “psychic conversion” represents one scholarly effort to develop further the imaginative dimension of Lonergan’s work on self-appropriation. (See, e.g., Robert M. Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 2nd ed. (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2006).)

36 Further research is needed to determine what period of time would be necessary to form learners in lifelong habits of Christian imagining. We can assert with confidence that the time period will vary depending on when the training begins. For young learners, whose mental habits are still highly malleable, one imagines that an extended period of training (perhaps three, five, or ten years) would be adequate. For adults, who are more set in their ways of thinking and imagining, a much longer (if not indefinite) period would likely be required.

37 Of course, conducting the process in a recursive manner does not mean repeating the same content in the same way year after year. Rather, returning to the same topics repeatedly over time allows for deepening and nuancing of learners’ understanding of those topics. An illustrative image for this dynamic would an upward spiral as opposed to a flat circle. This “spiraling” approach to curriculum, originally advocated by Jerome Bruner, is a common approach among textbook publishers. (See Jerome S. Bruner, *The Process of Education*, Revised (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).)
the human mind constructs meaning, that imitates Jesus’ transformative pedagogy, and that meets the exigencies of educating for faith in a pluralistic, image-overloaded culture. My hope is that this proposal will be of immediate use to teachers of religion and spur further refinements and similar work by scholars of religious education.
Appendix

### Illustration 1: Graphic Representation of Recursive Pedagogical Process

![Recursive Pedagogical Process Diagram](image)

### Table 1: Relationship of SEE Process to Groome’s Shared Christian Praxis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEE Process</th>
<th>Shared Christian praxis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase One</td>
<td>focusing activity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>movement 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase Two</td>
<td>movement 2</td>
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<td>movement 3</td>
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<td>Phase Three</td>
<td>movement 4</td>
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<td>movement 5</td>
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### Table 2: SEE Process Overview by Age Level

The following chart provides a suggestive overview of how a learning event focused on the Eucharist and conducted according to the SEE process might be adapted for three different age groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Lower elementary</th>
<th>Junior high school</th>
<th>Adult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase One</td>
<td>Viewing and discussion of movie clip that illustrates dysfunctional community (e.g., Disney’s Lion King). Learners share experiences/images of a group of people getting along well and then discuss: How do people learn to treat each other lovingly? Why do people sometimes not treat each other lovingly?</td>
<td>Viewing and discussion of movie clip that illustrates dysfunctional community (e.g., Remember the Titans). Learners share experiences/images of ideal community and then discuss: What would it take to form a community that’s like that all the time? What gets in the way?</td>
<td>Viewing and discussion of clip from TV show that illustrates dysfunctional community (e.g., “New Girl”). Learners share experiences/images of ideal community and then discuss: What would it take to form a community that’s like that all the time? What gets in the way?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase Two</td>
<td>Key questions: Who taught you how to treat others lovingly? Optional diagnostic assessment of learners’ form/manner of imagining. Viewing of clip from Disney’s <em>Frozen</em> in which one sister continues to treat the other lovingly despite mistreatment (to challenge learners’ vision of community as people who are nice to them). Tell story of Exodus 16. Simplified discussion of Eucharistic community. Simulation of Mass emphasizing community-forming aspects. Opportunity for traditional assessment.</td>
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<td>Discussion of Mass simulation: Did you realize that we do basically the same thing every Sunday at Mass? Do you think people would be more loving to each other if they had an experience every week like we just did? Activities for facilitating judgment (e.g., role-playing, artwork). Opportunity for decision-making (discussion, artistically expressing decision). Persuasive appeal by teacher (e.g., personal testimony, video of Christian community). Suggest an anchoring image of community for learners. Optional assessment of learners’ growth in form/manner of imagining.</td>
<td>Discussion of Mass simulation: Did any of the parts of the Mass take on new meaning for you? What has your experience of Mass been like in the past? What would you and your community be like if you intentionally engaged in this sort of ritual on a regular basis? Would this be a change for the better, the worse, or neither? Activities for facilitating judgment (e.g., telling stories, role-playing, artwork). Opportunity for decision-making (journaling, discussion, artistically expressing decision). Persuasive appeal by teacher (e.g., personal testimony, video of Christian community). Opportunity to imagine an anchoring image of community. Optional assessment of learners’ growth in form/manner of imagining.</td>
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