

7 Life Lessons

“A Lesson Program on Discipleship and Spiritual Awakening”



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WHY were they created?

- To help Emerging Adults find Jesus/Spirit/God for themselves
- Easy to Teach, Easy to Learn, Simple yet Powerful
- Memorable, Lasting,
- Reachable to various levels of Belief (Inward, Horizontal, Vertical)

WHERE did they come from?

- Years of working with CCD youth
- Personal Soul Searching
- Contemporary Spiritual Teaching (Richard Rohr)

WHAT are they?

- 3 Ways to Connect to the Spirit
- Life Journey
- Life Map
- The 4 D's of Religion
- What Number Best Represents Religion?
- Your Eyes are the Window to your Soul
- Life Balance

HOW do you use them?

- Teach the lessons
- Use Faith Sharing Index Cards to begin the candidate's personal Jesus 'experience' journey
- During a Faith Sharing moment, comment on the various stories shared, encouraging them to go deeper with their new found Understanding and *not* to Be Afraid...
- If you have questions, comment, likes, dislikes, etc . send them to: 7lifelessons@monticchio.net

Faith Sharing via Index Cards

“I helped my father get down the steps, to go on the field” **-Zach**

“I helped my friend with basketball” **-Patrick**

“I taught this kid on my basketball team about a new play, we learned.” **-Tony**

“I helped my friend when she had family issues.” **-Meghan**

“I helped open a friend’s locker” –

“I helped my friend catch up in my literacy class” **-John**

“I helped my friend’s little brother feel welcome” **-Katie**

“I went to the mall with my friend and she didn’t have enough money yet, so I bought her the shoes she wanted” **-Becca**

“I gave all my teachers chocolate bars for Valentine’s Day” **-Fred**

“Helped my friend pick up his books” **- John**

“I have a player on my basketball team a tip on how to play defense. It’s his first year playing” **- Tony**

“I saw a little autistic girl in church who smiled at me and she came over at the end of mass and started talking to me, so I talked to her a little while after mass” **-Becca**

“I lent money to my friend to get food” – **Fred**

“Some kid got hit in the face with a hockey puck, so I got a band-aid” **-Zach**

“I helped my friend research the abacus for REACH” **-Katie**

“I did my sister’s chores for her” – **Vittoria**

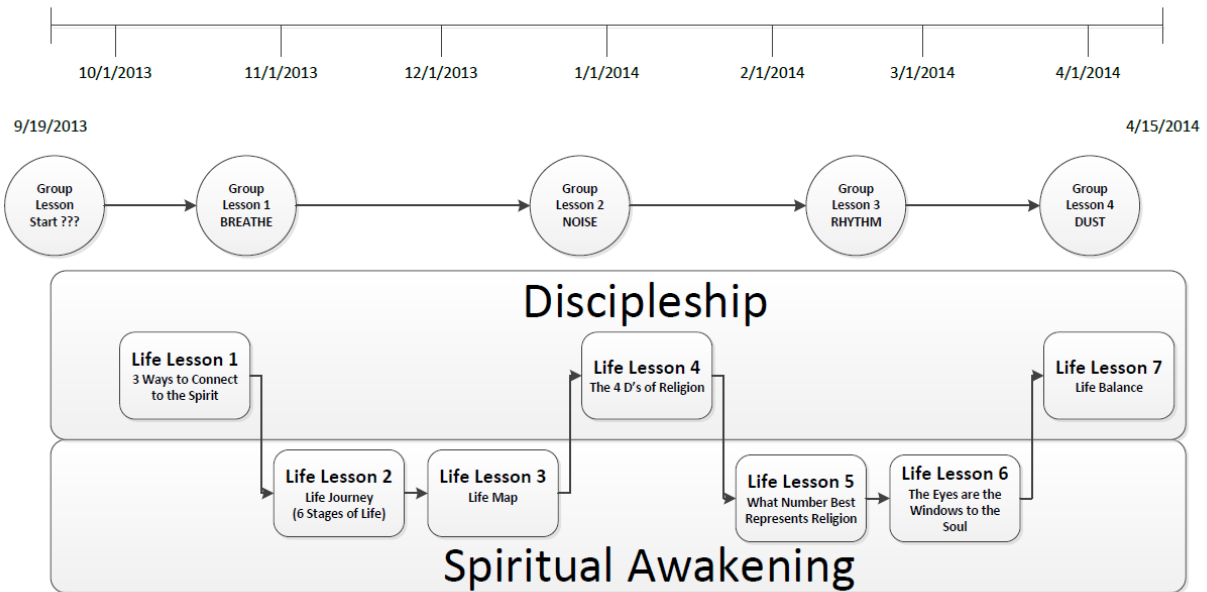
“I got back my friend’s speaker from a kid that stole it from him on the bus” **-Danny**

Thanks

“Thank you for being an awesome CCD teacher by guiding my closer to God. You made CCD extra special this year by letting us show how to act like Christians, instead of teaching us on pen and paper. I am about to receive my Confirmation and I would not have been able to without your help” **–Fred**

“Thank you so much for being a great CCD Teacher. I always tried to do good deeds during the week so I could write it on my index card. Thank You for preparing me for the rest of my life journey with God! 😊”
–Becca

7 Life Lessons Group Session Overview



Life Lesson 1 - 3 Ways to Connect to the Spirit

1) Do - Jesus message was one of action and prayer.

We Learn best when we 'experience' our actions as opposed to reflecting on our prayer. That is why 'Do' comes before 'Heart (Prayer)'.

2) Heart - (Prayer) (Contemplation) Mother Teresa's Story

Silence - Sermon on the Mount

Music - links to song list

Nature - Being in Creation, brings you closer to Spirit; Life is everywhere outside, if you just look; EGO likes control; more control inside.

Don't Say Prayers, BE A PRAYER

3) Brain - Education is not Transformation

Too much emphasis on Education limits our capacity for transformation/awakening. Focus on Education in terms of 'practices' that lead to transformation/awakening.

Lesson Aids

1) Introduce the 5 Brain Surges at ages 1, 4, 7, 11, 15-18

2) Be Still and Know that I AM GOD, Psalm; chime for silent prayer;

3) Faith Sharing via Action Cards; 'Learn by Heart' - Commit to Brain

5) Lyric/Song List; end each class with reading lyrics and listening to song;

5) Mother Teresa' story - How do you pray to God?

I listen to God

and what does God Tell you

God Listens to me too

If you can't **Understand** that I can't explain it to you

6) Inspiration = 'In Spirit Action'

7) Why do kids naturally like camping and being outside and adults tend to shy away from camping and want to stay inside?

8) Faith Sharing Cards; Weekly index cards with a short action the candidate took to live Jesus' Message. Typically how they helped someone else. Think 'works of mercy'.

Discuss in a Faith Sharing circle each week.

9) The Baby starts to say NO before YES. WHY?

Life Lesson 2 - Life journey

6 Levels of Human Life

0) Heart - First organ to form in the body. Everyone starts with God's Grace/Blessing EVERYONE; you don't earn God's Grace, it's an unconditional Gift.

- 1) **Information**
- 2) **Knowledge**
- 3) **Intelligence**

-
- 4) **Understanding (goal for Candidates this year) - Awakening**
 - 5) **Wisdom (where Religion should get everyone)**
 - 6) **Transformation**

Levels 1-3 I Believe / I Think (see Word Chart)

Levels 4-6 I Know / I Desire (see Word Chart)

Ask and it shall be given to you; Seek and you shall find, Knock and the door shall be opened ... You need some desire to get started

Lesson Aids

Q: What level is the goal for the Candidates this year? A: Level 4 - Understanding

Q: Where do most adults stop? A: Intelligence

Q: What age do most adults stop ? A: 16 - 20

Q: Do adults ever come back? A: Yes most do; either through some tragic struggle or near death :(5 Biggies - God, Eternity, Death, Love and Suffering are states that the Brain has trouble making sense of, but the Heart can **UNDERSTAND)**

Q: EVERYONE starts with God's Grace/Blessing.. not just this group or that group...

Q/A: First 3 levels are Brain based; Second 3 are Heart Based

Q: What level to the Saints reach? A: 6 Transformation

Q: What level was Jesus at? A: 6 Transformation

When drawing the Life Journey diagram; start with a Heart then ever expanding circles of 'Knowing'.

The numbers are listed top to bottom for a reason.. do you know why?

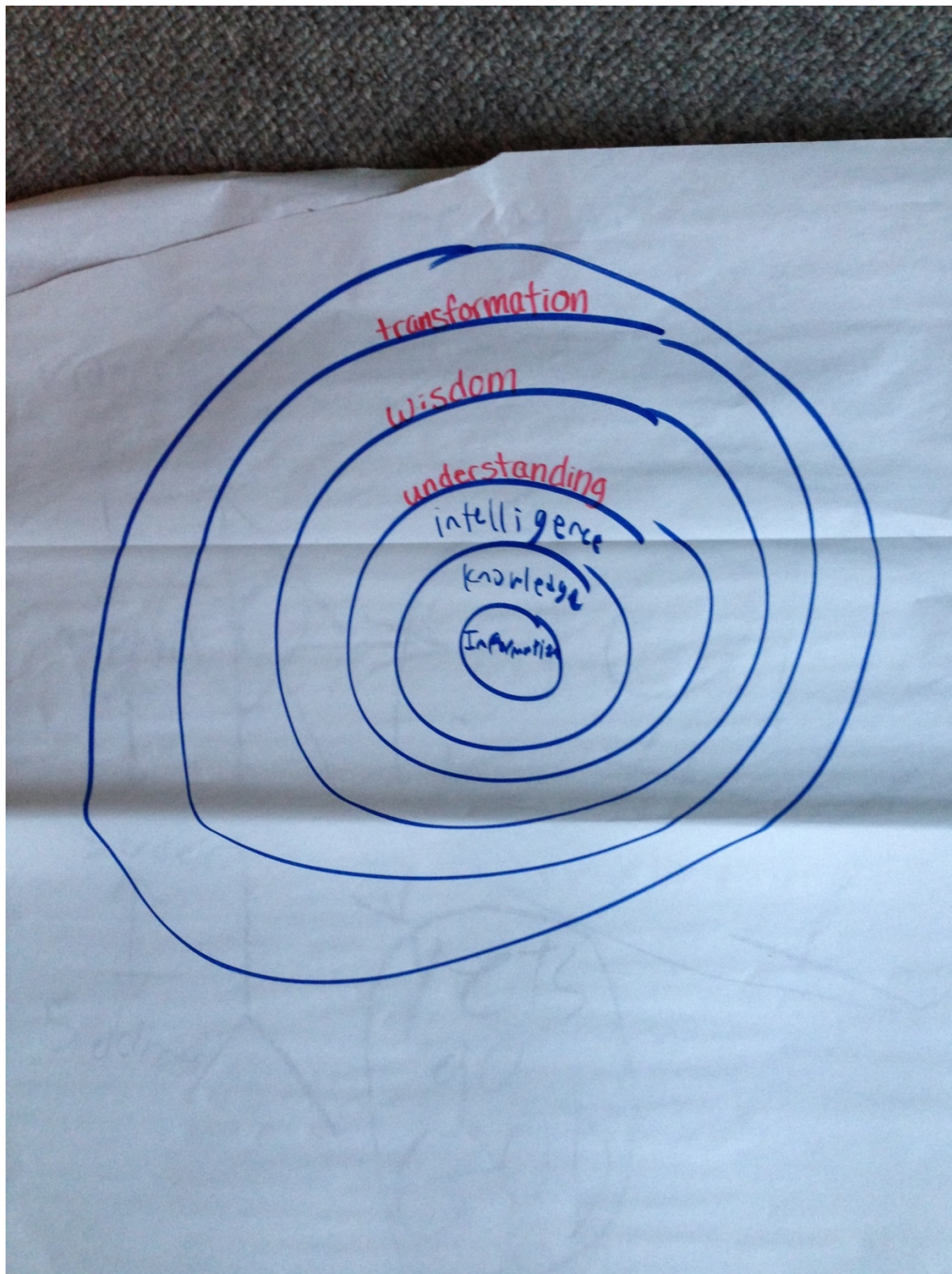


Figure 1 - Life Journey (with every expanding circles)

Life Lesson 3 - Life Map

Basic drawing of a human body (stick figure) with Heart and Head/Brain

Heart - Love, Kindness, Empathy, Forgiveness Compassion etc..

Head/Brain - EGO (The Flesh); Greed, Power, Judgment, Media, Drugs, Consumption, Addiction, Dependency, Envy, Shame Jealousy, Arrogance, success-driven, delusion

Free-Will – Humans, unlike animals, all have Free-Will to decide what path/decisions they will take/make in life.

Happiness Scale

Happiness (short in duration, not lasting) connects to Brain

Joy (true happiness) (long term, everlasting) connects to the Heart

Where is Sadness? Above Happiness

AGE Scale

0 – 80 What age to most adults stop their Spiritual Journey? A: 16 - 20

Lesson Aids

1)Teaching Challenge: Where would you put the American Dream on this Map?

2) Introduce/Explore The Connected Self vs The Separate Self (True Self vs False Self)

3) I would rather be ‘whole’ than ‘good’

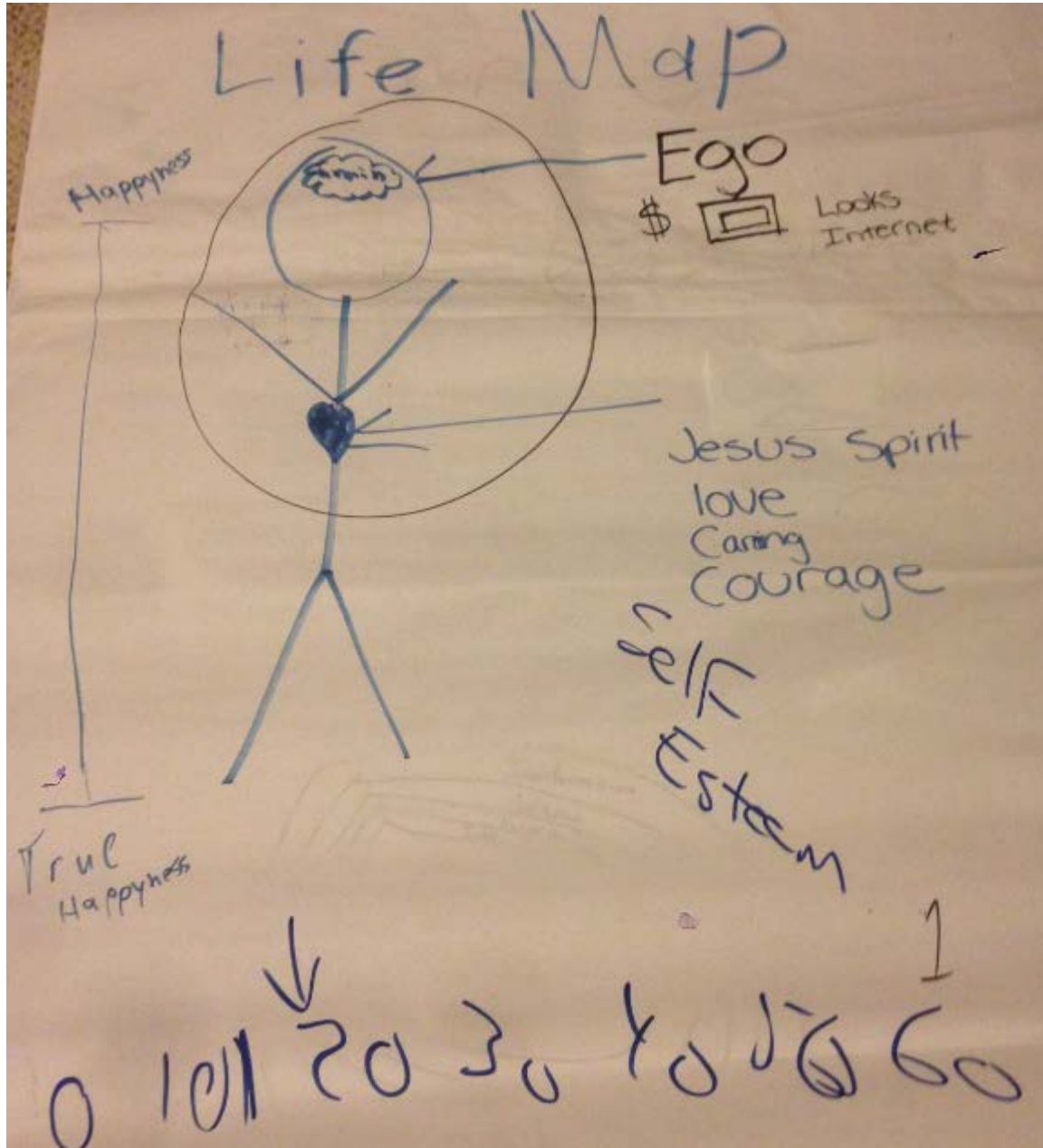


Figure 2 - Life Map

Life Lesson 4 - The four D's

Day by Day - Jesus message is one to follow **EVERYDAY**

Desire/Curiosity to go Deep (and connect with your Original Blessing) -

Desire/Curiosity is key to reaching the higher levels of Transformation/Awakening

Lesson Aids

- 1) Song - Day by Day, to end class with
- 2) Stay on the surface of anything and you stay disconnected/separate... start to explore the depths and everything begins to clarify...
- 3) EGO likes the past and future not the Present.. stay in the NOW, the current Moment that's all that there is ...EGO like what's NEXT not the true presence here NOW... That's why silence feels uncomfortable at first.. The EGO struggles with losing control...
- 4) I Am activity .. Keep asking Who are You?
- 5) Tell the Story of the Boy who responded with 'that was deep' after watching 'BREATHE'.
- 6) SERMON on the MOUNT is directly related to all **7 Life Lessons**
- 7) My **Deepest** me is God - St Catherine of Genoa
- 8) Most adults say do not talk 'religion or politics' stay on the surface with weather and sports Talk about items you can't control.. as opposed to the ones you can control... do you see how the EGO is tricky and does not like to look at itself or like the present moment...
- 9) **This lesson is at the center of the 7 Lessons and as such it really gets to the heart of the teaching... Desire and Persistence are essential without them there really is no beginning of Transformation/Awakening**
- 10) **Ask and it shall be given to you; Seek and you shall find, Knock and the door shall be opened ...**
You need some desire to get started

Life Lesson 5 - Which Number best represents Religion

2

Making 1 out of 2 - Human and Divine together - Jesus gave us the model/example/template; other examples see the Saint Stories

Explore seeing the many opposites that exist in Life

Feminine and Masculine	Brain and Heart
Light and Dark	True Self and False Self
Good and Evil	Soul and Ego
Cup is half full or Cup is half empty	Connected Self and Separate Self
Faith/Hope/Love and Greed	Lyric and Melody
Take and Give	What you Say and What you DO
Positive and Negative	
Dualistic and Non-Dualistic	

Lesson Aids

- 1) Begin to Light 2 Candles in class (Unity Candle); as you get closer to Confirmation/Initiation only light 1; see instructions at the end;
- 2) Cup is half full or half empty; Which do you say it is exercise
- 3) Being in the Zone/Flow Athletes Musicians artists.. no thinking .. just acting/Doing (when you are in UNION; no need to think)
- 4) The Story of the Two Wolves
- 5) The 2 Greatest Commandments
- 6) Read the Saint Stories look for the change in their lives from darkness to light.
- 7) I'd rather be 'whole' than 'good'; It's more important to be 'whole', think UNION of Heart and Brain then Doing 'good'; the Doing 'good' is important but without the 'wholeness' the deeds lose their meaning...



Figure 3 - www.etsy.com VladimirIronArt

Life Lesson 6 - The Eyes are the Windows to the Soul

When we are connected/grounded in knowing who we ARE... using our eyes to communicate that knowing is EASY..

The lesson focuses on the BODY and the Body does know. It has a language all of its own; one that we need to be aware of.

Lesson Aids

1) Soul Quotes

2) Eye gaze from Celtic tradition

Start with no instructions just pair up like sex partners and tell them to look into each other's eyes; talk about how it felt; now ask them to do it again giving them instructions to gaze into the left eye which they see as being connected to the heart; Gaze into Left Eye which is right above the heart :)

3) Talk about the Body's knowing.. body language is LOUD

4) What do you think about Tattoos'? Do you think the Brain or the Heart is desiring a tattoo?

5) Use Matthew 6 your eyes are the windows to the soul;

6) Sermon on the Mount - Take the splinter out of our own eye before you ask your Brother to take the splinter from his eye

7) Discuss Self Esteem/Confidence and Anger/Rage all emotions connected to the BODY... How might your connectedness to Spirit help you with these emotions...

Life Lesson 7 - Life Balance - Take - Give - Receive (end with St Francis prayer)

We all TAKE 4 things each and every day at a minimum?

Air

Food

Water

Information

What do we GIVE each day at a minimum?

CO2 and waste products... that's it unless you use your FreeWill to take other actions...

One not so obvious result in GIVING is that you end up RECEIVING
Love Wins over Death - that is the message of the Resurrection
Lightness wins over Darkness

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant,
gorgeous, handsome, talented and fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure around you.
We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God within us.
It is not just in some; it is in everyone.

And, as we let our own light shine, we consciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our fear,
our presence automatically liberates others.

Lesson Aids

- 1) **Use Balance Board when class starts, not much instruction just ask them each to try and balance themselves on the board; discuss what it means to be in BALANCE**
- 2) **Draw a scale; scramble the words TAKE and GIVE; let them guess the words; discuss what it means to GIVE; and who benefits first from GIVING;**
- 3) **How does the American Dream relate to this Lesson?**
- 4) **St Francis Prayer**

7 Life Lesson Instructional Methods

Teacher gives the first set of learning's; adding a new learning each session. It's an additive teaching approach, each week you repeat the previous lessons and add a new one.

Handout 7 blank sheets of paper at the first class; have the candidates number them Life Lesson 1 – 7 and save them in their class folders. Each week have them take out the Lesson sheet and copy the Lesson from the board to their sheet. Protective clear sheets are also nice to hand-out if available. They can use their notes for follow-up lessons during the course of the formation year.

After all the Lessons are taught by the teacher, then each candidate is asked to teach the class the 7 Lessons.

Lyric/Song List; end each class with reading lyrics and listening to song;

Unity Candle – spread this 7 step sequence out over the course of the 8th Grade formation year

- 1) Start with no candles lit; to show, in the next step, the beginning of their UNIGUE LIFE; (you can talk about the uniqueness of fingerprints)
- 2) Start with the smaller white candle, it symbolizes your Baptism at Birth
- 3) Light the second smaller black candle, it symbolizes that start of the EGO Separate Self (False Self) (both small candles are lit) (Level 1/2)
- 4) Only light the small black candle, it symbolizes the EGO taking control (Level 3)
- 5) Next relight the smaller white candle to symbolize the beginning of reawakening and transformation (Level 4)
- 6) Now light the larger middle candle, all 3 candles should be lit (Level 4/5)
- 7) Now only light the larger middle candle it symbolizes the union of your human and divine nature... and your transformation (level 5/6)
Symbolizing the UNION/Unity of heart and brain; light and dark

Lyrics / Songs

Phillip Phillips - Just Know You Are Not Alone

Styx - Grand Illusion

More on the FlockNotes website:

- 1) Amazing Grace – Susan Boyle
- 2) Angel – Sarah McLachlan
- 3) Call Me Maybe – Carly Rae Jepsen
- 4) The Chanukah Song – Adam Sandler
- 5) Day by Day – Godspell
- 6) Do They Know It’s Christmas Time
- 7) Firework – Kelly Perry
- 8) Hallelujah – Jeff Buckley
- 9) Heartlight – Neil Diamond
- 10) Heaven is a Place on Earth – Belinda Carlisle
- 11) Holy Now – Peter Mayer
- 12) How Deep is that River – Mason Jennings
- 13) I love you and Buddha Too – Mason Jennings
- 14) I Will Always Love You – Whitney Huston
- 15) I’ll Be There – Michael Jackson
- 16) Imagine – John Lennon
- 17) Jesus, Take the Wheel – Carrie Underwood
- 18) Just the Way You Are – Bruno Mars
- 19) Let’s Get Together – The Youngbloods
- 20) Open the Eyes of My Heart – Paul Baloche
- 21) Show Me the Way – Styx
- 22) Someone Like You – Adele
- 23) Spirit in the Sky – Norman Greenbaum
- 24) Where Are You Christmas – Faith Hill
- 25) Without You – David Guetta / Usher
- 26) You’re my Best Friend – Queen
- 27) You’ve Got a Friend in Me – Randy Newman
- 28) Beautiful Day – U2
- 29) Me – Toby Keith

Teaching Approach on the Holy Trinity

To help Emerging Adults begin to understand the very **DEEP** concept of Trinity, you may want to explore what I'll call the **MUSIC** example. The '7 Life Lesson Program' relies on Music as one of the three connections to Spirit, we try to end each and every Lesson class with **MUSIC**.

How can we use **MUSIC** to begin to explain **TRINITY**?

MUSIC is composed of LYRICS, MELODY and SONG. The '7 Life Lesson Program' focuses on LYRICS a major part of **MUSIC**, which most candidates probably never explored before. The idea here is that each is independent yet at the same time part of the whole called **MUSIC**.

LYRIC is not MELODY
LYRIC is not SONG
MELODY is not SONG
MELODY is not LYRIC
SONG is not MELODY
SONG is not LYRIC
MELODY-LYRIC-SONG are MUSIC

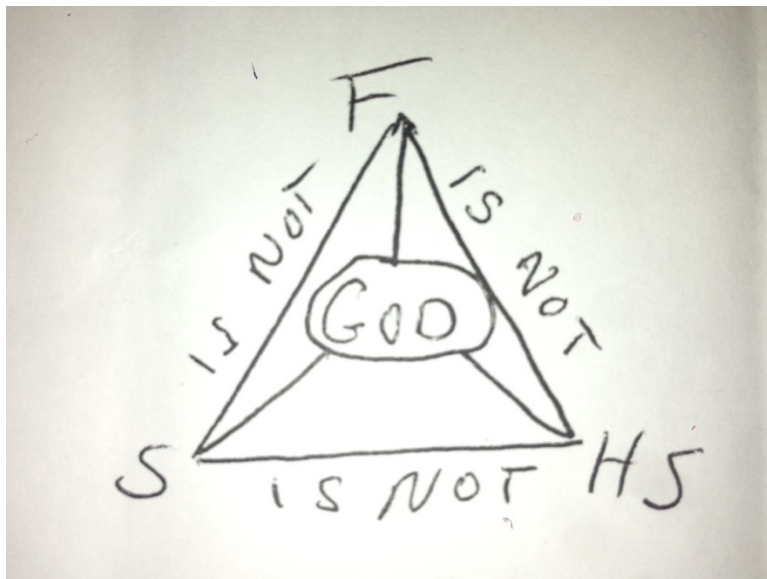


Figure 4 Holy Trinity

What is this thing called EGO?

Each of us has a psychological heritage that is no less real than our biological one. This inheritance includes a shadow legacy that is transmitted to us and absorbed by us in the psychic soup of our **family** life/environment. Here we are exposed to our parents' and siblings' values, temperaments, habits, and behavior. Often, the problems our parents have failed to work out in their own lives come home to us in the form of dysfunctional coping patterns.

“Home is where one starts from.” said T.S Eliot. And family is the theater in which we play out our individuality and our destiny. It is our emotional center of gravity, the place where we begin to achieve identity/personality and develop character under the particular influences of those varied personalities that surround us.

In the psychological atmosphere created by parents, siblings, caretakers, and other important sources of love and approval (or lack thereof), each child begins the necessary process of EGO development. Human adaptation to the society requires the creation of an EGO---an “I”--- to serve as the organizing principle of our growing consciousness. EGO development depends upon our repressing what is “wrong” or “bad” in us, while we identify with what is perceived and reinforced as “good”. This gives the growing personality a strategic advantage in eliminating anxiety and winning positive regard. The process of growing an EGO continues throughout the first half of life, modified by external influences and experiences as we move out into the larger world.

As EGO comes, so goes the ‘shadow’; the disowned self is a natural by-product of the EGO—building process, which eventually becomes a mirror image of the EGO. We disown that which does not fit into our developing picture of which we are, thus creating a ‘shadow’. Because of the necessarily one-side nature of EGO development, the neglected, rejected, and unacceptable qualities in us accumulate in the unconscious psyche and take form as an inferior personality—The Personal Shadow.

However, what is disowned does not go away. It lives on within us---out of sight, out of mind, but nevertheless real---an unconscious alter EGO hiding just below the threshold of awareness. It often erupts unexpectedly under extreme emotional circumstances. “The devils made me do it!” is the adult euphemism that explains our alter EGO behavior.

EGO and ‘shadow’ are thus an age-old antagonism that is a well—known motif in mythology; the relationship of opposing twins or brothers—one good, the other evil—

symbolic representations of the ego/alter ego in psychological development. Taken together, these sibling opposites form a whole. In the same way, when the EGO assimilates the disowned self, we move toward ‘wholeness’.

-- Excerpt taken from ‘Meeting the Shadow’

Remember the ‘Sermon on the Mount’; “Take out the log out from your own eye, before you remove the splinter from your Brothers”.