



A Testimony: “What EFM has meant to me.”

Education for Ministry is a four-year commitment and an opportunity for spiritual growth no matter where you are in your Christian journey. It focuses on theological reflections and all the little ministries that have a big impact on every aspect of your day to day life. Every person brings a gift to the table and each is soon aware of other gifts that they possess.

I would encourage everybody to look into this extraordinary opportunity for spiritual growth. You must be willing to read, share, cry, laugh and open your heart to how God might be calling you to serve.

Four years ago, I started this journey called *Education for Ministry*. In year one, I sat in a room with people I barely knew and started to study the Old Testament. My mentor tried to explain what a theological reflection or a metaphor was and asked us each to share what thoughts we were comfortable sharing. Then year two rolled around, and I was diving into the New Testament, still struggling with theological reflections and metaphors and still not too sure about sharing my thoughts on the topic at hand.

Then came year three with church history, and after trying to quit eight times (I'm not sure if that's a record or not), I was persuaded and helped by my mentors to finally realize where I was going so wrong.

Suddenly the light came on in so many ways: the theological reflections and metaphors finally took hold. My classmates were no longer just classmates, we were a family. We laughed, cried together, learned from each other, and watched each other grow. Needless to say, year four with Philosophy was fun (yes, philosophy was fun). They couldn't get me to shut-up, and the growth I experienced was more than I could have hoped for. Going to church is now a very emotional experience for me.

Sitting at early service awhile back I had the privilege of listening to Father Ben talk about the story of Jesus by saying he is the vine, and we are the branches, I got caught up looking at the stained glass windows. It occurred to me how much we are like that stained glass window. Each of us is a small piece of that window—different colors, sizes and shapes. Put us together and we paint a picture of faith, hope, love, growth, sacrifice and with the light of Jesus coming though we truly shine.

I want to thank *Jay Lehnertz, Leila Potts and Russ Sifers* (St. Aidan's) who were my mentors, *Father Gar, Mother Kelly, Father Kevin, Deacon Barbara and Father Ben* for their encouragement and gifts of delivering a weekly challenge to us. St. Thomas is blessed to have truly gifted clergy & lay ministers to support & encourage spiritual growth. A special thanks to my family for their support.

God Bless.

Chuck Brough