

Fresh Start Flexibility: How Can Fresh Start Best Serve YOU?

by Lynn Schmissrauter – lynn@episcopalfreshstart.org

The diversity of uses for **Fresh Start** is wide – and deep. **Fresh Start's** mission to serve clergy and congregations in transition has not changed since its beginnings in the nineties, but the way facilitators use modules is as varied as dioceses across the church! In visiting with people across the wider church, it is clear that there are many faces of **Fresh Start**.

A “**Fresh Start** Diocese” is a diocese with a program supported by the Bishop, led by trained facilitators, and coordinated by someone designated by the diocese as a “**Fresh Start** Coordinator” who oversees administration and evaluation of the program.

Fresh Start modules and resources are also used in many other formats and settings. The faculty and curriculum teams at **Fresh Start** are presently working on a resource for using **Fresh Start** in the search process. Other dioceses use **Fresh Start** material as a resource for vestries, leadership groups, workshops and at diocesan conventions.

How do YOU use **Fresh Start**?

What help do you need in using **Fresh Start** in your diocesan program? As a resource for clergy and congregations?

Please contact your area coordinator for more information or if you need help accessing the **Fresh Start** password-secured portion of the website (www.episcopalfreshstart.org).

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“Felt like I was handed a gift.”

- October 2010 National Training Participant

Using Fresh Start for Leadership Training

by Sandy Kolb – skolb@episcopalfreshstart.org

In June the Diocese of Washington did a pilot leadership training workshop, open to clergy and lay leaders. We used the **Fresh Start** module, *Leadership for Our Times*, and the workshop, held on a Saturday morning in June, drew 45 participants. Participants were pre-assigned to small groups of no more than 15, with participants coming from the same parish deliberately divided up so they would gain the most exposure to different viewpoints. Each small group was facilitated by one person from our **Fresh Start** team. Pre-registration was required, and the fee was kept at \$25 per person. That covered the costs of renting a conference space big enough to hold the whole group in plenary sessions and accommodate up to four small break-out groups, coffee service and light snacks, and an honorarium for each of the facilitators.

In planning our session we agreed to keep costs down by offering a half-day program. We also identified those **Fresh Start** modules which would have the broadest application to situations facing our congregation's leaders. In addition to *Leadership for Our Times*, we decided to consider the following for future sessions: *Conflict I and Conflict II*, *Church Size and Its Implications*, *Decision-Making*, *Leading Planned Change*, *Organizational Systems Theory*, *Polarities*, and *Transition*.

Our day began with registration and coffee at 8:30, followed by a plenary to welcome people and go over the logistics and agenda at 9:00. People then adjourned to their small group

session rooms. The small groups ran from 9:10 to 12:00 noon, with a break around 10:30. We focused on using the personal leadership style inventory, talking about the circumstances under which different leadership styles are most appropriate and covering Heifetz' theory of adaptive leadership. If we had time (not all groups did), we discussed Steinke's model of non-anxious presence. When we reconvened in plenary at noon we led a general debrief – what had people learned, how would it be used, how would they share what they had learned – and a quick evaluation (we did both an oral and written evaluation). We also asked them what other topics they would like to see offered, using a ballot that listed several of the **Fresh Start** modules as well as some “nuts-and-bolts” topics (e.g., how to survive an audit). The most popular choices for the next offering were *Polarities* and *Organizational Systems Theory*.

The feedback and written evaluations were very good. Our next steps are to plan a fall workshop using *Leadership for Our Times* in another part of the diocese and additional workshops on the most-requested topics. The workshops have the support of the Bishop and the Canon to the Ordinary, and diocesan staff handle all the arrangements, do the publicity and manage registration. The goal is to offer workshops once a quarter, in different parts of the diocese to minimize travel times and encourage participation across a broad spectrum of the congregations.



September Meeting of National Faculty and Curriculum Development Team

by Sandy Kolb – skolb@episcopalfreshstart.org

Members of **Fresh Start's** national faculty and curriculum development team met at Kanuga Conference Center September 7-10. Mike Ehmer and Amy Smith from CREDO also attended. On the agenda were a look at facilitator training, next steps in curriculum development, and new ways to keep the nation-wide **Fresh Start** community connected.

Based on feedback from participants and the importance of facilitation in creating a good **Fresh Start** program, the training agenda starting in 2011 will be revamped to give participants more of an opportunity to practice their skills.

The curriculum team is looking at revising pieces of the **Fresh Start** curriculum to

use with certain subgroups (e.g., retirees, congregations moving from having full- to part-time ordained leadership), and expanding the existing time line on using **Fresh Start** with congregations during the search process to provide additional resources for such use.

There was also a lively discussion about the possibility of using technology to offer **Fresh Start** to sparsely populated dioceses and to develop a greater sense of community among **Fresh Start** coordinators and facilitators around the country. No decisions (or funding) as yet – stay tuned!



At Kanuga Conference Center
September 2010

Around the Dioceses

The Diocese of Massachusetts just added four new facilitators to its cadre: **Elizabeth (Libby) Berman**, **Clifford (Cliff) Brown**, **Katharine (Kate) Malin** and **Jon Strand**. Welcome all! **John DeBeer**, **Daniel Valez Rivera**, and **Mally Lloyd** stepped down from their duties as facilitators in that diocese, though Mally will still have a vested interest in **Fresh Start** as Canon to the Ordinary.

Anne Reed, who trained as a facilitator while still in the Diocese of Western Michigan, is now Canon for Mission in the Diocese of Southern Ohio. She will

launch that diocese's first clergy **Fresh Start** program in the fall. Congratulations, Anne!

Lori Brown, who was serving as the **Fresh Start** coordinator for the Diocese of San Joaquin, has moved to Toronto, Ontario.

Win Lewis in the Diocese of Southern Virginia is now the time certain rector of Christ and St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA. **Michael Spear-Jones**, newly appointed as Canon for Deployment in that diocese will be the diocesan staff person overseeing **Fresh Start**.

Wim Ray in the Diocese of Utah is retiring and stepping down from his duties as a **Fresh Start** facilitator.

Renee Somadavilla has returned to parish ministry in the Diocese of West Tennessee and **Chip Davis**, new Canon to the Ordinary, will help facilitate **Fresh Start** in that diocese.

Be sure to let us know what is happening in your part of the **Fresh Start** world!

Reinforcing Learning

by Sandy Kolb – skolb@episcopalfreshstart.org

Practicing a new skill or applying new knowledge is the best way to reinforce learning. With that in mind the facilitator team in the Diocese of Washington decided to give **Fresh Start** participants a little "homework". At the end of each session, we invited participants over the course of the month to observe when they ran into situations where they used what they had learned and to be prepared to report back on those situations. The next month during our check-in we not only asked the usual "what's going

on" questions, but followed up on the previous month's topic before moving into the new module. The discussions produced wonderful stories of "aha" moments in ministry – and a real sense of the usefulness of the models presented during the sessions. The approach also gave us an opportunity to cover material that we had not had a chance to do. For example, during *Family and Friends* we did not get to looking at support networks. So we gave the support network worksheet to participants as they left,

and they reported back on what they had discovered during the following month's check-in time. The process worked so well we plan to continue it this next program year.

"I think that we are doing a mighty thing for our Church."

- March 2010 National Training Participant



Lessons Learned: A Fresh Start Start Up

by The Rev. Tony Moon, Ph.D. — Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma



Our new bishop called to ask if my rector-colleague and I would be interested in attending the **Fresh Start** facilitator training only a few weeks before the Spring 2008 session. Being unfamiliar with the program, I scoured the

Fresh Start website. That gave me a good idea of the program's mission and a glimpse of how I likely would be involved. Bishop Edward Konieczny asked that after training we talk with him about what would be required to begin **Fresh Start** in our Diocese.

During the training, my traveling and learning companion, Fr. Mark Story, and I compared notes about the best fit for **Fresh Start** in the Diocese of Oklahoma. Once back home, we met with Bishop Ed and Canon Jose' McLoughlin—a graduate of **Fresh Start** from his previous Diocese of West Virginia. Our meeting focused on the basics of the program start up: costs, program structure, target population, and the Bishop's involvement.

The participants, we decided, would be priests who were newly ordained or new to the diocese. A program of three semesters seemed ideal for exposure to the topics and building relationships, and we agreed to meet monthly except in the summer.

Our first group was clergy who had met the agreed-upon criteria during the previous twenty-four months. The Bishop sent them a letter indicating his expectation that they attend on a regular basis over the 18-month period. Program costs were split between the priest's parish and the Diocese. Our first meeting was a casual visit with the Bishop, and he continues to meet with new participants as they rotate in and again with graduates as they finish the program. His clear expectations and demonstrated support have provided a solid foundation for **Fresh Start**.

In my former work I designed and led programs that had the same participants at the beginning and the end. Our **Fresh Start** program, however, has two entry points (September and January). It slowly occurred to me that completed modules needed to be tracked to avoid repeating a topic too soon (i.e., offering a module that was new to some, but had already been covered by the rest) or not covering a topic often enough (e.g., not covering a basic module before a participant completed the program). Since *Transitions* is now the only required module, the latter has become easier to manage.

As new members enter **Fresh Start** the community goes over a covenant that we developed and asks for their input. If they can agree with the covenant, they sign the document and receive a copy. Generally the covenant asks them to agree to be present, to call if they can't be, and to contribute to the meetings.

At times, we have participants who have gone through **Fresh Start** in another diocese before moving to Oklahoma. They usually view the program as an opportunity to develop relationships in their new diocese and often voice that a "refresher" provided by the didactic material is welcome. Even though many of the modules may be familiar to them, "there is always something new to learn," they say. While sharing knowledge and expertise is always encouraged, experienced participants are especially encouraged to do so. They are also encouraged to share their previous experiences in **Fresh Start** programs so we can strengthen ours. Based on one such sharing we introduced "critical incident debriefing" to our **Fresh Start** group, which has led to exceptionally creative insights on occasion.

Geographically, most of the parishes in the Diocese of Oklahoma are located in either the central or eastern part of the state. **Fresh Start** has been seen as one way to reduce the isolation of the two areas. To avoid reinforcing the old divides by offering two concurrent **Fresh Start** programs and distribute the travel burden equally, we meet in different loca-

tions across the diocese. Our 9:30 to 3:00 program day allows for driving time in the morning and late afternoon, while eliminating the costs of an overnight stay. This time period works well for us to gather, overview the day, open with a meditation, cover one **Fresh Start** module, have lunch together, work with a critical incident, and conclude with any community business.

Our "next steps" for **Fresh Start** include incorporating two newly trained facilitators and continuing to respond to participant feedback, making the program stronger and even more meaningful to priests in their time of transition.




The Rev. Tony Moon, Ph.D. is an Episcopal deacon. He coordinates the **Fresh Start** program for the Diocese of Oklahoma and serves as a curriculum consultant to the national **Fresh Start** program. Tony serves on the Diocesan Commission on Ministry, does occasional consulting assignments for the Diocese, and serves at St. Mary's, Edmond. Tony is a retired licensed family therapist and organizational consultant. His doctorate in educational technology is from the University of Oklahoma.


"I really felt part of a national team or network with an important mission we all share and for which we have responsibility."

- March 2010 National Training Participant



Upcoming Training Events

 **March 15-18, 2011**
Kanuga Conference Center, Hendersonville, NC
Online Registration and payment (as well as downloadable forms) will be made available on the **Fresh Start** website.

 **October 11-14, 2011**
Duncan Conference Center, Delray Beach, FL



Participants at Duncan Conference Center
October 2010

Curriculum Corner

It's official – the **Fresh Start** name and logo are now registered trademarks. You'll note different icons on the curriculum as we make revisions. Don't forget to check the Web site before you use a module – changes are posted there, and while most are minor, occasionally we find a major item that needs correction. For example, the two handouts "**Fresh Start** in Your Congregation" were missing text in the appendix on *History-Sharing* (p. 2 of the appendix). That has now been fixed and new versions of both the clergy and lay leader handouts are on-line. You can always view the "*History of Changes*" document to see if changes have been made, whether you have the most recent version (check the date on your copy with that listed in the "History"), and whether the change is substantial enough for you to download the new version.

*"I took away the dramatic realization that **Fresh Start** is not about helping through difficult times as it is about finding opportunities for growth in times of transition."*

- March 2010 National
Training Participant

Facilitator Resources

by **Sandy Kolb** – skolb@episcopalfreshstart.org



Part of the *Transformation: The Episcopal Church in the 21st Century* series, Katherine Tyler Scott's **Transforming Leadership** offers a quick overview of the demands facing both clergy and lay leaders. Drawing on leading management theorists familiar to the **Fresh Start** community such as Ronald Heifetz and William Bridges, Scott argues that the special charism of the Episcopal Church – its ability to deal with paradox and create the space where opposing viewpoints can exist within community – is uniquely suited to leadership in our times – IF only we would reclaim it.



Fresh Start facilitators will find a different take on history-sharing in pages 62-63, and a concise description of organizational culture as it applies to congregations (pages 59-74) which would serve as a good supplement to the **Fresh Start** module on *Organizational Systems Theory*. The book contains a discussion guide and would be a good choice for those dioceses that provide opportunities for clergy to continue to get together after they graduate from **Fresh Start**.

The book is a product of Church Publishing and is available through them (www.churchpublishing.org) or other on-line booksellers such as Amazon.

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