Lasallian Formation Online

Purpose:

The online formation program is an effort to be intentional about the development of Lasallian culture. But even more than that, we consider our schools and spirituality centers ministries. That means, for us, that we engage the whole child: academically, socially, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually. It is difficult to ask students to take a journey into their intellect and their heart if the adult guides have not done that for themselves. The online formation program, then, is a reaching out to all of us adults who work with students be they children, adolescents, young adults, or adults, and inviting us to take a journey into our own minds and hearts - to the central core of our own purpose in life. Too often, we don’t take time in our busy lives to give ourselves that gift.

When anyone begins work with an institutional or corporate structure, one of the primary expectations is that the person (employee or board member) have training or formation to gain insight about the nature of the institution, its culture and its purpose. Every institution and corporation has a culture into which its employees are initiated. Amazon, Catholic Charities, Exxon, Lutheran Social Ministries and every other institutional structure does the same. Each person becomes the face of that institution and represents it through their work.

The Lasallian world of education is like that too. Lasallian Schools exist in nearly 80 different countries and when you walk into a Lasallian School you can feel it in your bones, see it in the students, on the walls, and especially in the relationships that exist among faculty and staff and between adults and students.

How is culture developed? We believe it happens intentionally. Formation is the tool we use to generate the culture we expect to be embedded in the structures of the school, spirituality center, or any other institution that claims the name Lasallian. If the development of a culture is not intentional, one will grow and develop and not necessarily one we wanted.

HOPES:

Our hope is that this invitation takes each person where he or she is and gives them the space - and the prompts - to reflect more both personally on his or her own and then corporately in communal activity or dialogue about significant markers in our lives. The model is the life of John Baptist de La Salle from whom Lasallian Schools get their name as well as the philosophy and spiritual approach that was characteristic of his own journey.

THEMES: The themes of the program reflect significant pauses in his journey:
  Call (what is the world asking of me),
  Signs of the Times (societal need),
  Vision (how to respond to that need),
  Association (we can’t do it alone),
  Abandonment (facing obstacles and turning things over to God), and
  Legacy (life doesn’t end with us so how do we contribute to the future).
One theme for one year - 6 years total. Three to five hours every 3 - 5 months is the commitment.

Our hope is that the invitation to participation will be inclusive. That is, no matter what our faith or our doubt, this material will encourage us to reflect within our own context and stimulate a desire to go deeper into our own purpose.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE: To do this, the program is composed of (A) Source Material. It is composed of readings from De La Salle, readings about De La Salle, videos, poetry, interviews, or anything else that might stimulate some thought. Following the Source Material is (B) Reflection - pausing to engage the source in a personal way. It asks for a personal response in writing, photography, music, art, poetry - or anything that captures our response to the source material. And then, (C) is Communal Action or Dialogue. It asks for a professional development in which the entire educational community gathers to share about the material contained in the module.
Our hope is that all of the ministries in the midwest region - elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, spirituality centers, and universities will move through the program together. If we are studying the same material, we can build a stronger network based on a unified brand. We will be talking the same language, marketing the same philosophy, living our spiritual roots, and building an alumni base that has deep understanding of our shared mission.

Life is a journey. Looking at our own purpose and how we live it into the world is important. We are inviting all of us to be serious and intentional about that journey. Children’s lives are at stake.