

Inner Wisdom: Parker Palmer and Circles of Trust – Using Third things.

Geoffrey Butler

The Presenter. Geoffrey Butler has presented at all previous ACLE gatherings. He has been Curriculum Leader Christian Studies at Concordia Lutheran College, Toowoomba, at Redeemer Lutheran College, Rochedale and is currently in this capacity at Prince of Peace Lutheran College. He was LEQ Christian Studies travelling scholar for 2007 and has been a Christian Studies mentor with LEQ and a facilitator of EQUIP. Geoffrey travelled for seven weeks in the UK and USA exploring the “Pedagogy of the Heart.”

Circles of Trust and using third things. Part of our problem as teachers of religion is our attempt to teach it as a rhetoric of conclusions. We cannot teach religion as information because it is not that. It is much more about the mystery of the human experience of God in “burning bushes and the belly of the whale.” But how do we get people to talk about that? Parker Palmer says: “The soul is shy: It will not be manipulated.” To discuss the deeper issues of genuine interest to people we need to approach the issue obliquely, in a safe way and in a safe space – in a “Circle of Trust” using “a third thing.” A third thing is a metaphoric object like a poem, art work, music or story or any combination that attends to the issue you wish to discuss, but which allows the participants to explore their own soul journey through that object, helping to open up the conversation about the issue and develop a rich, learning, sharing experience among participants. This particular session explores May Sarton’s poem *Now I become myself* to open up our experience of the authentic inner voice. This is a session Geoffrey presented at Equip 6 - Oct.2012 LEQ.