



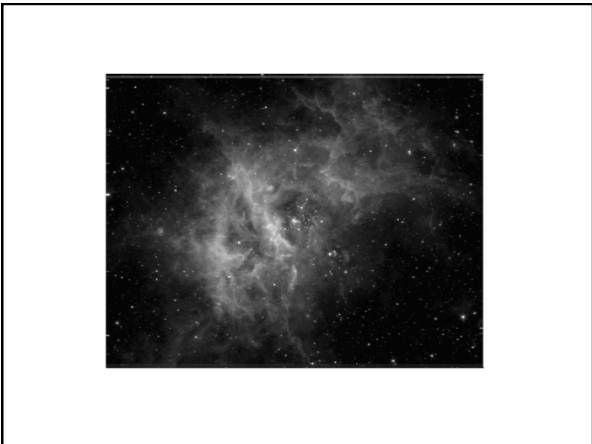

**Autism: Forming Faith
within an Expansive
Community**

**Susan Swanson, MA, CCC-SLP
19th Pyne Foundation Lecture
Boston College
and the
Archdiocese of Boston
February 11, 2011**

GRATITUDE AND CREDIT:

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Margaret Pyne Memorial Foundation

Justin and Billy



God is Love

1 Jn 4:8 and 16

Agapé

The Triune God
God's Primary Attribute is Relational

GRACE
**GOD'S SELF GIFT OUTSIDE
OF THE TRINITY**

**WE ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE
AND
LIKENESS OF GOD**

Genesis
1:26-27

The Sacramental Principle



**To begin a relationship:
follow the child's lead**



***RELATING TO ONE ANOTHER
IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR
KNOWING GOD***

Autism



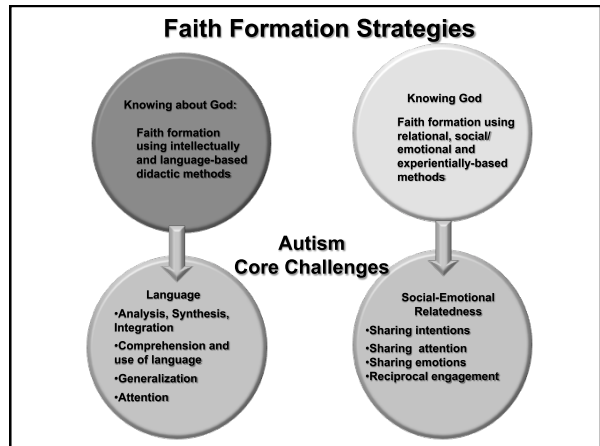
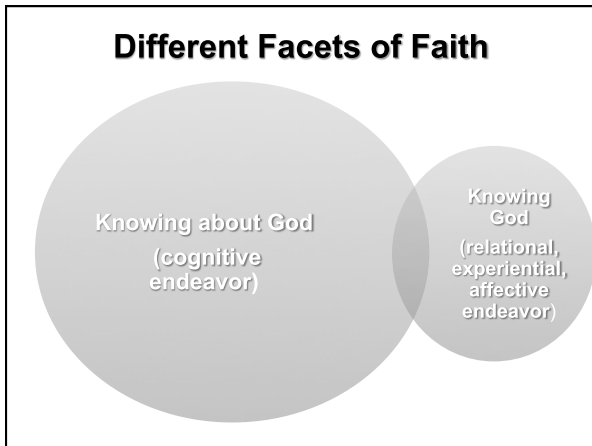
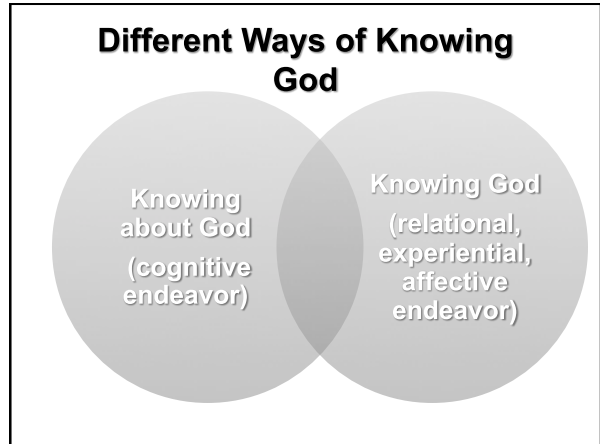
The Emergence of Social Communication



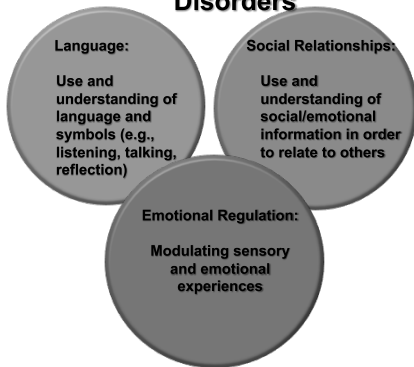
**DIFFERENT WAYS OF
KNOWING GOD**

**KNOWING ABOUT GOD:
a cognitive endeavor**

KNOWING GOD:
An experiential, relational,
affective-based endeavor



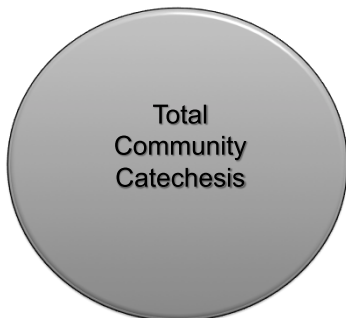
Core Vulnerabilities of Autism Spectrum Disorders



**Whatever is received
is received according to the
nature of the recipient**

St. Thomas Aquinas

**The Faith Formation Process:
Core Domains for Children with Autism**



Relational Domain

**“A primary attribute of *our*
‘human beingness’ is our
capacity to express ourselves
and it is in our self expression
that we become more of who
God intended us to be”**

Michael J. Himes, S.J., 2003

**Routine to Ritual:
The Schedule**



**Joint Attention
and Supporting Relationships**



Experiential Domain

We experience the world through our “bodiliness”—including our senses. “Knowing God” is a whole body event



Experiencing the Word



“Life to Faith and Faith to Life”



Affective Domain

**“Without the emotion of awe
we do not experience the
holy God”**

Edward Vacek, S.J., 2010

Emotions



Religious Affections

**Relational, Experiential and
Affective Domains of Faith**



Joint Attention and Joy



Emotions Transcend to Religious Affections

Emotions

- Happiness
- Remorse
- Anticipation
- Empathy
- Calmness
- Excitement

Religious Affections

- Joy
- Contrition
- Hope
- Compassion
- Peace
- Awe and Wonder

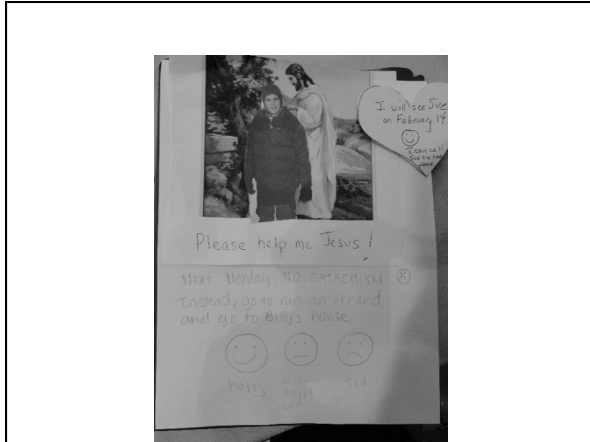
Cultivating Religious Affections



SUPPORTING PARENTS IN THEIR FAITH JOURNEY

Faith's Baptism: Justin, Allison, Mike and
Faith





CRE worksheets

- Parent Questionnaire
- Faith Formation Parent Interview
- Expressing and Understanding Emotions
- Catechetical Education Priorities
- Criteria for Meaningful Faith Formation Opportunities

Witness	The Church should be a welcoming and empowering community for all people
Word	The Church should be about evangelizing, teaching and preaching
Welfare	The Church should be of human service to one another in acts of love
Worship	The Church's task is to assemble its people to worship God in public and communal rituals

Groome, T., 2009