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Reflective Approach of Lonergan's Generalized Empirical Method (GEM) to Maternal Child Nursing

Presented by Josephine DeVito, PhD, RN, Seton Hall University

Bernard J. Lonergan

Canadian philosopher, theologian, economist

Principle architect: Generalized Empirical Method clarifies what occurs in any discipline

Generalized Empirical Method:

Understanding the mind, to clarify meanings through insight

Proposes a framework to promote integration and deeper meanings

Developing critical thinking and reasoning to enhance the self-reflective process.

Purpose: The experience of nursing students through meanings, values, and insights using GEM for Orthodox Jewish families during childbirth

Design: Qualitative, Phenomenology

Setting: BSN, students in Maternal Child Nursing course (n=63)

Reflective Approach: A scenario on Orthodox Jewish families during childbirth; journaling to reflect and express their feelings, values, meanings, and insights

Questions for Reflections:

Laws of:

Modesty, Niddah, Kosher, Sabbath and Holidays; naming a male and female child; circumcision and gender

Summary of Findings:

“The mothers were very much ‘to themselves’ in the post partum setting,...they accepted what was expected...I observed a mother discussing her first newborn son’s circumcision, her husband did all the talking and arrangements,... she nodded silently as she breastfed her newborn,... women today usually take the role of planning, but not in this situation, it made me uncomfortable, until I learned this is what is normal behavior for this mother”

“I never realized how much my feelings, upbringing, & my education now are a part of my values & insights about understanding families of different religions/cultures”

Conclusions: This assignment reflected how students feel and influenced their role as nurses. Knowledge gained from maternal child theories combined with critical thinking enhanced understanding of their values, meanings, and insights.