



# Adult Faith Formation Innovation Lab

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## Program

1. Adult Learning Today
2. Adult Faith Formation Today
3. Developing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Adult Faith Formation
  - ◆ Personalizing adult faith formation: Pathways of discipleship and faith growth
  - ◆ Programming adult faith formation: Playlists of content and experiences for Pathways
  - ◆ Curating adult faith formation
  - ◆ Designing digital platforms for adult faith formation

## Resources

Handouts/Resources/PowerPoint Presentations: <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/adult-faith-formation.html>

Roberto, John. *Reimagining Faith Formation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Naugatuck: LifelongFaith Associates, 2015. (available at [www.LifelongFaith.com](http://www.LifelongFaith.com))

Roberto, John, editor. *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation*. Naugatuck: LifelongFaith Associates, 2015. (available at [www.LifelongFaith.com](http://www.LifelongFaith.com))

*Lifelong Faith Journal*: Fall 2015 & Winter 2016 Special Issues on Adult Faith Formation. Available for free at: <http://www.lifelongfaith.com/journal.html>.

*Seasons of Adult Faith Formation* website: [www.SeasonsofAdultFaith.com](http://www.SeasonsofAdultFaith.com).

# 1. Adult Learning Today

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## Lifelong Learners (Pew Research)

Most Americans feel they are lifelong learners, whether that means gathering knowledge for “do it yourself” projects, reading up on a personal interest or improving their job skills. For the most part, these learning activities occur in traditional places – at home, work, conferences or community institutions such as government agencies or libraries. The internet is also an important tool for many adults in the process of lifelong learning.

A new Pew Research Center survey shows the extent to which America is a nation of ongoing learners:

- 73% of adults consider themselves lifelong learners.
- 74% of adults are what we call **personal learners** – that is, they have participated in at least one of a number of possible activities in the past 12 months to advance their knowledge about something that personally interests them. These activities include reading, taking courses or attending meetings or events tied to learning more about their personal interests.
- 63% of those who are working (or 36% of all adults) are what we call **professional learners** – that is, they have taken a course or gotten additional training in the past 12 months to improve their job skills or expertise connected to career advancement.

These learning activities take place in a variety of locations. The internet is often linked to a variety of learning pursuits. However, it is still the case that more learners pursue knowledge in physical settings than choose to seek it online.

- By an 81% to 52% margin, personal learners are more likely to cite a locale such as a high school, place of worship or library as the site at which personal learning takes place than they are to cite the internet.
- By a similar margin (75% to 55%), professional learners are more likely to say their professional training took place at a work-related venue than on the internet.

People cite several reasons for their interest in additional learning. Those who pursued learning for personal or professional reasons in the past 12 months say there are a number of reasons they took the plunge. Personal learners say they sought to strengthen their knowledge and skills for a mixture of individual and altruistic reasons:

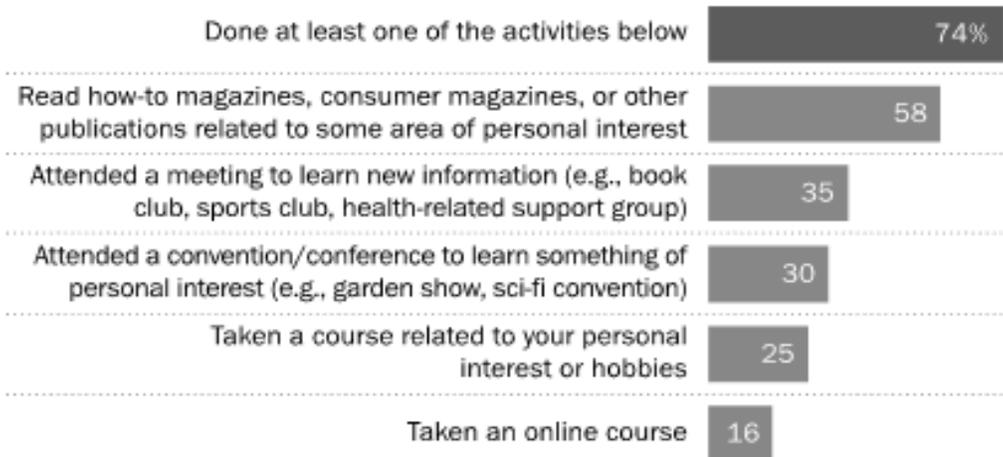
- 80% of personal learners say they pursued knowledge in an area of personal interest because they wanted to learn something that would help them make their life more interesting and full.
- 64% say they wanted to learn something that would allow them to help others more effectively.
- 60% say they had some extra time on their hands to pursue their interests.
- 36% say they wanted to turn a hobby into something that generates income.
- 33% say they wanted to learn things that would help them keep up with the schoolwork of their children, grandchildren or other kids in their lives.

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## Majorities of Americans seek out learning activities in their personal and work lives

**PERSONAL LEARNERS:** 74% of adults

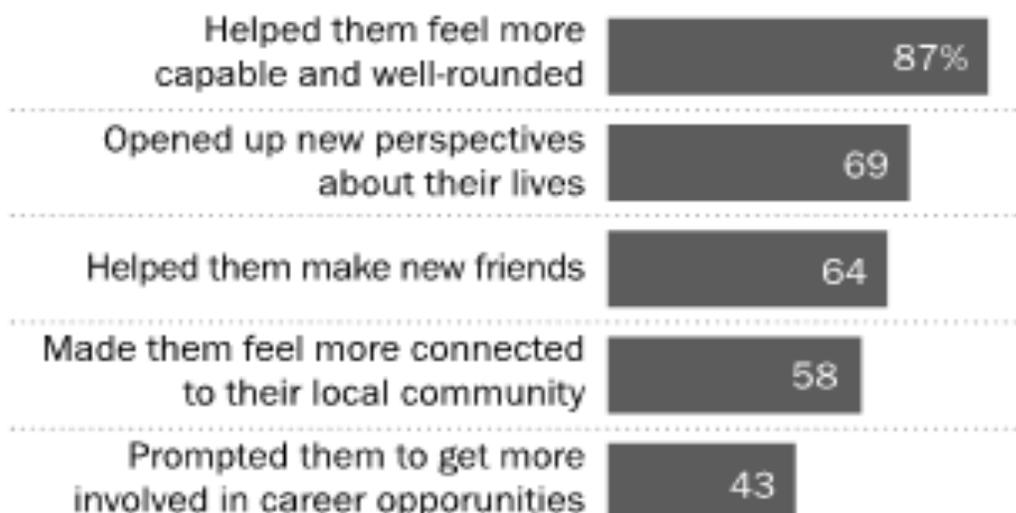
*Percent of adults who say that in the past 12 months they have ...*



## Recent educational experiences have paid off in key ways for some learners

**PERSONAL LEARNERS**

*Among adults who pursued personal learning activities, percent who say their learning ...*



# Motivation: Why Adults Participate in Learning

Drawing on decades of scientific research on human motivation, Daniel Pink in his book *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us* exposes the mismatch between what research shows and how we motivate people. While carrots and sticks (policies and requirements) worked somewhat successfully in the twentieth-century, assembly-line model, that's precisely the wrong way to motivate people today. He describes three types of motivation: Motivation 1.0 presumed that humans were biological creatures, struggling for survival. Motivation 2.0 presumed that humans responded to reward and punishments in their environment.

Motivation 3.0 presumes that humans have a third drive—to learn, to create, and to better the world. Motivation 3.0 has three essential elements.

- *Autonomy*: the desire to direct our own lives with autonomy over task (what they do), time (when they do it), team (who they do it with), and technique (how they do it).
- *Mastery*: the urge to get better and better at something that matters—to be engaged deliberate practice to produce mastery.
- *Purpose*: the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves, to seek purpose—a cause greater and more enduring than ourselves.

Daniel Pink writes, “The secret to high performance and satisfaction—at work, at school, and at home—is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by ourselves and our world” (145).

*The key motivation in adult learning is that adults are motivated to learn and grow as they experience needs and interests that adult learning activities will satisfy. Adults are motivated. . . .*

- when *facing life transitions*. They seek learning and support to cope with changes in their lives that give rise to new developmental tasks, e.g., raising children, aging parents, financial matters, job changes, divorce, etc.
- when there is a *gap* between their present level of understanding, skill, performance and/or growth and the desired level or goal that they set for themselves or that their organization or community expects of them
- by appealing to personal and spiritual growth and/or personal benefits.
- when they identify they have a need to learn
- when the benefits of a learning experience outweigh their resistance
- when programs are enjoyable and enriching
- when they have the opportunity to do something they could not do before
- by settings that have a natural, interactive, communal feel
- when programs are sensitive to their time constraints by keeping commitments short in terms of duration and offering choices of times for participation

Studies of motivation show that adults bring diverse attitudes and expectations to their learning experiences. We can identify at least four different orientations for learning:

- a *goal-orientation* in which learning is seen as leading to a change in work or personal status
- an *activity-orientation* in which participants' social interactions are especially valued,
- a *learning-orientation* in which a love of learning underlies the learner's engagement and participation,
- a *spiritual-orientation* in which learners seek new meaning and perceive education as the starting point for thinking in new ways. (Schuster and Grant)

# Characteristics of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Adult Learning

1. **Mobile Learning** – accessing digital content on mobile devices, available anywhere, anytime, 24x7
2. **Content & Technology** – delivering content using the latest digital technologies
3. **Micro Learning** – designing learning into small bits of content and experiences
4. **Video** – using short, engaging videos (now the most popular method), and if not videos, make it visually rich
5. **Personalized Learning** – tailoring learning to each adult's interests, needs, ways to learn, etc.
6. **Learner Centered Spaces** – creating spaces more like Starbucks than a classroom
7. **Learn by Doing** – applying new knowledge and skills by practicing in as realistic a setting as possible.
8. **Learning is Social** – learning from each other: interact, discuss and exchange information
9. **Storytelling** – tell relevant stories, present case studies and show examples
10. **Learning Styles** – incorporating a diversity of learning activities/methods in a learning experience: 1) hands-on, concrete experiences, 2) reflective observation, 3) exploration and analysis, 4) active experimentation
11. **Multiple Intelligences** – integrating the eight multiple intelligences into learning experiences thereby provide a greater variety of ways for people to learn
12. **Multisensory**: utilizing all of the senses in a learning experience where people can taste, smell, touch, and hear things related to the topic of the session
13. **Small Group Participation** – incorporating small group participation so that people can discuss and reflect together on their learning, explore and question, and envision ways to practice what they are learning
14. **Practice & Application** – practicing and performing what people are learning by incorporating real-life application activities in the learning experience

## 2. Adults Today

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### The Life Tasks of the Seasons of Adulthood

(From *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation*, edited by John Roberto, LifelongFaith Associates, 2015.)

#### Key Characteristics of Young Adults

- ✓ Exploring their identity: trying out various possibilities, especially in love and work, developing an individual sense of autonomy, and stabilizing a self-concept and body image
- ✓ “Tinkering”—putting together a life from the skills, ideas, and resources that are readily at hand
- ✓ Developing and maintaining intimate relationships with trust, love, and caring
- ✓ Transitioning from their family of origin toward establishing independence in living arrangement, finances, career, and other aspects of their lives
- ✓ Differentiating self without repudiating or replacing their family of origin—sorting out emotionally what they take from their family of origin, what they leave behind, and what they will create for themselves
- ✓ Developing a career and occupational identity and working to establish a work-life balance.
- ✓ Adjusting to the expectations and responsibilities of the “adult” world
- ✓ Committing to a marital partner, defining and learning the roles of married life
- ✓ Starting families and having children; establishing a new family with its own rules, roles, responsibilities, values, and traditions, and developing parenting roles and skills
- ✓ Engaging in a religious-theological reevaluation and, sometimes, reinvention

#### Key Characteristics of Midlife Adults

- ✓ Exploring how the self is adjusted in the context of committed family, work, and civic relationships and to the roles of parents, colleagues, leaders, team members, and more.
- ✓ Anchoring themselves in a particular way of life filled with commitments and relationships

- ✓ Maintaining intimate relationships with other midlife adults while developing the capacity for new kinds of relationships with those younger and older than themselves.
- ✓ Caring and guiding the next generation and often caring for the older generation
- ✓ Building extensive personal networks for themselves and their families—traditional networks around their families, coworkers, churches, and other organizations, supplemented by digital social networks that allow more frequent conversations
- ✓ Evaluating their lives at its midpoint and often growing beyond the pressures of the present moment toward an appreciation of the deeper meanings symbolized in religious tradition.
- ✓ Reflecting on “What are we spending and being spent for? What commands and receives our best time and energy? What causes, dreams, goals, or institutions are pouring out our life for? To what or whom are we committed in life and in death? What are our most sacred hopes, our most compelling goals, and purposes in life?”
- ✓ Engaging in family life and parenting children, adolescents, and, often, young adults: working to allow for the increasing independence of adolescents while maintaining enough structure to foster continued family development; adjusting patterns of family communication, traditions, and celebrations for adolescent and young adult children; adapting to an empty-nest household and redefining the marriage relationship and roles now that children are no longer at home full-time
- ✓ Seeking a religion that emphasizes personal identity, religious experience, and a quest for religious identity in community; seeking an authentic religious experience that acknowledges the ambiguities, trials, and successes of life

## Key Characteristics of Mature Adults

- ✓ Addressing the challenge of generativity (or its failure, stagnation)—establishing and guiding the next generation, striving to create or nurture things that will outlast them through caring for others, and creating and accomplishing things that make the world a better place
- ✓ Addressing the challenge of integrity—reflecting on the life they have lived and coming away with either a sense of fulfillment from a life well lived or a sense of regret and despair
- ✓ Experiencing physical changes and decline, coming to terms with the cognitive changes related to a changed perspective on time and a personal, existential awareness of death; seeking to stay physically and mentally fit
- ✓ Thinking about, planning for, and disengaging from their primary career occupations, launching second or third careers, and developing new identities and new ways to be productively engaged
- ✓ Retiring from full-time work and planning for sufficient income that will last into their later adult years
- ✓ Blending (part-time) work, volunteering and civic engagement, pursuit of new interests, travel, and their role as grandparent into a new lifestyle for the mature adult years
- ✓ Having adequate health care into later life and providing for their own or a spouse/partner’s long-term care needs
- ✓ Establishing new patterns of relating to spouses, children, siblings, parents, and friends; and leaving some existing relationships and beginning new ones
- ✓ Experiencing changes in the marital relationship now that parenting responsibilities are minimal, developing adult-to-adult relationships between grown children and their parents, becoming grandparents, realigning relationships to include in-laws and grandchildren, and caring for the older generation and dealing with disabilities and death.
- ✓ Moving to the very core of their faith tradition, while appreciating other religious traditions; seeking a self-reflective quest for individual wholeness, a search for depth and meaning, as well as guidance for living one’s life; recognizing that spirituality must be cultivated through sustained practice
- ✓ Seeking to be in service to others that is mission driven and can make a difference; doing things that give their lives purpose, meaning, and fulfillment
- ✓ Seeking spiritual growth in a time of significant life transitions and in a time when they are searching for meaning and purpose in life as they enter the second half of life and evaluating the things that really provide lasting fulfillment; connecting with others to talk about spiritual and life issues

- ✓ Seeking intergenerational relationships to share their lives, stories, and faith across generations, and to be united with the whole faith community

## Key Characteristics of Older Adults

- ✓ Remaining vital and actively engaged in the lives of their community, church, social network, and family well into their 80s and 90s
- ✓ Experiencing changes in their body and a decline in mental and physical ability, such as a loss of hearing or vision or dexterity
- ✓ Continuing to learn and process new information, and many live well into their 90s with memory and logic intact
- ✓ Addressing the challenge of integrity—reflecting on the life they have lived and coming away with either a sense of fulfillment from a life well lived or a sense of regret and despair. They are cultivating wisdom in which one’s perspective on the world and human relationships reflect an inner sense of liberation from the rules, roles, and rituals of the past
- ✓ Taking on new roles as senior citizens and adjusting to the role of mentor and sage in their extended family
- ✓ Experiencing losses of friends and loved ones: death of a spouse, family members, and close friends
- ✓ Facing the growing and continuous challenge of maintaining their independence and desiring to stay in their own homes (“aging in place”) or coming to accept being cared for by their family and moving from their own home into other living arrangements (with their children or in senior living or assisted living situations)
- ✓ Becoming reconciled to their impending death and accepting their personal mortality; dealing with questions coming from the nearness of death: What is life about? How do we want to die?
- ✓ Growing into a deeper, more personal faith that is clearly their own and desire ways to continually enrich their faith life
- ✓ Being engaged in the life of faith communities with a more traditional worship experience
- ✓ Valuing the Bible and the Christian tradition and desiring to continue their learning as Christians

## Spiritual-Religious Identities of Adults

### Vibrant Faith and Engaged in the Congregation

A religious faith is central to the lives of the engaged. These are who are actively engaged in a Christian church, are spiritually committed, and growing in their faith. These are parents who are transmitting this faith to their children and are actively engaged as a family in a church community. These are children, adolescents, adults, and parents/grandparents who are spiritually committed and growing in their faith. They have found their spiritual home within an established Christian tradition and a local faith community that provides ways for them to grow in faith, worship God, and live their faith in the world. They are practicing their faith at home and in daily life.

### Moderate Faith Practice and Occasionally Engaged in the Congregation

These are adults and families (children, adolescents, parents/grandparents) who participate occasionally in church life—in seasonal celebrations, sacraments and milestones, major events, and age-group programs. For parents transmitting a religious faith primarily means bringing their children to educational programs at church. Some may even attend worship regularly and send their children to religious education classes. Their spiritual commitment is low and their connection to the church is more social and utilitarian than spiritual. While receptive to an established church, they do not have a faith commitment that would make their relationship with God and participation in a faith community a priority in their lives. Their occasional engagement in church life does not lead them toward spiritual commitment.

## Spiritual, but Not Religious

These are adults who are spiritually engaged (relationship with God, meaningful spiritual life), but involved in organized religion and an established Christian tradition. Some may join a nondenominational Christian church focused on their spiritual needs, while others may find an outlet for their spiritual hunger in small communities of like-minded spiritual seekers, in local or global acts of service, or in online spiritual resources and communities. The Spiritual but Not Religious reflect a growing minority of the American population, especially among young adults.

## Unaffiliated

For the unaffiliated religion is not personally important in their lives (and their family's life). They are not affiliated with organized religion and established Christian churches. The Unaffiliated reject all forms of organized religion and reflect a steadily increasing percentage of the American population, especially among young adults. Many adults (Millennials and Gen X) left organized religion because they stopped believing in the religion's teachings (top reason) or their family was never that religious when they were growing up or their experience of negative religious teaching about or treatment of gay and lesbian people (PRRI research, 2016). Many parents are "first generation Nones" and are now raising their children in religiously uninvolved and unaffiliated homes creating a "second generation of Nones."

# 3. Adult Faith Formation Today

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## Features

1. Adult faith formation addresses the ***diverse life tasks and situations***, needs and interests, and spiritual and faith journeys of adults in the four seasons of adulthood—young adults (20s-30s), midlife adults (40s-50s), mature adults (mid 50s-mid 70s), and older adults (75+).
  - Young Adult Life Stage (20s -30s) & Millennial Generation (born 1980-99)
  - Midlife Adult Life Stage (40s-50s)& Generation X (born 1961-1979)
  - Mature Adult Life Stage (late 50s – mid 70s) & the Baby Boom Generation (1946-60)
  - Older Adult Life Stage (75+) & the Builder Generation (before 1946)
2. Adult faith formation addresses the diverse ***religious-spiritual identities*** among adults today. There is a spectrum of religious-spiritual identities (and corresponding needs): those who are religiously/spiritually committed and engaged in the faith community; those who are who are less religiously committed and participate occasionally in the faith community; those who have left established churches and religion, but are still spiritual and spiritually committed; and those who unaffiliated, uninvolved, and claim no religious identity.
3. Adult faith formation is ***person-centered***, not content- or program-centered. The content, experiences, programs, methods, and delivery systems need to be designed around the lives of the adults. While this may sound self-evident, it is not. Too much of adult faith formation is developed from a provider-centered, program-driven model where denominations, publishers, and churches determine and deliver the content and programming.

The days of the "one size fits all" mentality are over. We can no longer focus on how to get every adult to participate in a small faith sharing group or to come to the Lenten series or to study the Bible. Adult faith formation is no longer about finding *the* program to attract all adults. It is about addressing the diversity of

adult learning needs with a variety of faith formation content, experiences, activities, programs, and resources.

4. Adult faith formation programming is **targeted** and **tailored** to the lives of adults—at each stage of life and in each generation. Adult faith formation provides a **variety** of content, methods, formats, and delivery systems to address the diverse life tasks and situations, needs and interests, and spiritual and faith journeys of adults in four stages of adulthood—young adults (20s-30s), midlife adults (40s-50s), mature adults (mid 50s-mid 70s), and older adults (75+).
  - Adult faith formation provides a variety of experiences, programs, activities, resources, and social connections that are available anytime and anywhere, in physical places and online spaces
  - Adult faith formation incorporates seven learning environments—self-directed, mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, church-wide, in the community, and in the world—in online spaces and physical places, to provide a variety of ways for people to learn and grow in faith that respects their preferred styles of learning, their life situations, and their time constraints.
  - Adult faith formation provides a variety of ways for people to learn and grow in faith that respects their preferred styles of learning, their life situations, and their time constraints.
5. Adult faith formation recognizes that learning and growth is a **process of active inquiry** with initiative residing in the adult learner and that adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that adult learning activities will satisfy.
6. Adult faith formation provides the opportunity for **personalized and customized** learning and faith growth, giving adults an active role in shaping their own learning and moving along their own personal trajectories of faith growth. Personalizing faith formation is tailoring learning around each adult’s strengths, needs and interests— including enabling choice in what, how, when and where people learn (grow in faith and discipleship).
7. Adult faith formation is **digitally-enabled**—blending gathered community settings with online learning environments and utilizing the abundance of digital media and tools for learning and faith formation; and **digitally-connected**—linking intergenerational faith community experiences, adult peer experiences and programs , and daily/home life using online and digital media. The digital world has give us technologies and resources that allow us to build faith formation around individuals and groups with a particular spiritual or religious need, interest, passion, concern, or life issue. We no longer have to worry about reaching a “mass audience.”

#### **Digital Faith Formation Strategies**

- **Gathered using Online Content:** A gathered event or program that uses online content as part of the design of the event or program
  - **Gathered with Online Content:** A gathered event or program that provides online content and activities to extend and expand the learning from the gathered program
  - **Online and Gathered Content:** Online learning focused on presenting the content of the program combined with face-to-face, gathered sessions using active learning methods to discuss, practice and apply the content.
  - **Mostly Online Content:** A mostly online program with opportunities for regular interaction in face-to-face, gathered settings
  - **Fully Online Content:** An online program with all learning done online and limited face-to-face experiences
8. Adult faith formation intentionally nurtures **communities of learning and practice** around the shared interests, needs, life stages, and activities.

9. Adult faith formation is designed as a **network** of relationships, content, experiences, and resources—in physical places and online spaces—that can offer adults “playlists” of engaging and interactive content and experiences tailored to their needs and interests—all offered on a digital platform that makes it easy for adults to find and follow pathways for growth in faith.
10. Adult faith formation is increasingly **curated**. In order to expand faith formation offerings, leaders will need to become skilled at **curating** content, experiences, programs, activities, and resources from a variety of sources—especially online and digital media—and matching content with adult needs. We are moving *from* an emphasis on developing religious content, designing and managing programming, and teaching/facilitating learning *to* designing faith forming environments, designing digital platforms for faith forming content, and curating religious content and experiences.

## Addressing Adult Learning Preferences

In curating and creating adult faith formation take into consideration the distinct ways each generation of adults likes to learn. One example of the difference among the generations is the length of a learning program or activity. Training in the corporate world is emphasizing microlearning and episodic learning—smaller units of learning that can be combined into extended learning programs. For example a microlearning unit could be 5, 10, or 15 minutes in length. This style appeals more to the younger generations than older generations. (Just think of how the typical YouTube video is 3-5 minutes in length today, but ten years ago was typically 10-15 minutes or longer.) In general, we can say that each generation has the following preferences (which does not mean they won’t learn in other ways).

### Builders

- lecture and expert presentations
- activities that take into account their age-related abilities to hear, see, and move
- connect their experience to the topic
- structure and predictability (no surprises); low-risk learning environment
- independent skill practice time
- still like printed resources and books for study

### Boomers

- group interactions and discussions
- storytelling
- chances to try new skills independently
- stable, risk-free environment but want to interact with others
- experiential, practical, and fun activities that allow for team exercises
- use technology as means for learning
- blend of people who prefer printed books and those who learn online

### Gen Xers

- learn by doing
- experiential with lots of direct experience activities
- shorter, episodic learning experiences
- visual learning (images, videos)
- practical and relevant (What will I do with this learning?)
- discretion to complete tasks their own way
- prefer independent self-directed learning, including individual projects
- use technology where possible, including online learning, video, etc.
- will turn to digital resources over the printed resources

### Millennials

- microlearning and episodic learning experiences
- lots of activity-based group work
- fast-moving, interactive activities
- visual learning (images, videos)
- technology enabled learning using their own devices for learning
- collaborative learning environments with peer interaction
- entertainment and learning at the same time

## 3. Developing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Adult Faith Formation

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### Key Features

1. Address life tasks of the seasons of adulthood
2. Address the diverse religious-spiritual identities of adults today
3. Becoming person-centered
4. Target and tailor programming, provide variety of content and programming
5. Build on motivation of adults
6. Personalize and customize faith formation
7. Use digitally enabled and connected methods and strategies
8. Nurture communities of learning and practice
9. Design adult faith formation as a network of relationships, content, experiences, and resources
10. Curate content, experiences, resources, and events

## Part 1. Developing a Pathways Model for Discipleship and Faith Growth

*Personalized learning is tailoring learning (faith formation) around each adult's strengths, needs and interests—including enabling choice in what, how, when and where people learn (grow in faith and discipleship).*

**A Pathway is a process** for helping people discern where they are in their faith journey and to chart a path for faith growth—to get from where they are to a closer relationship with Jesus and a deeper practice of the Christian faith.. People should be able to clearly understand where they are in their faith journey and their next steps in faith growth. They don't have to do everything, they just need to do the one next thing..

**A Pathway is life-centered**, reaching into every area of a person's life: relationships, family life, life transitions, marriage, parenting, financial stewardship, spiritual formation, professional and work life, service to others, and more.

**A Pathway is holistic** incorporating the whole person: head, heart, and hands.

- *A way of the head* (inform) demands a discipleship of faith seeking understanding and belief with personal conviction, sustained by study, reflecting, discerning and deciding, all toward spiritual wisdom for life. This requires that we educate people to know, understand, and embrace with personal conviction Christianity's core belief and values.
- *A way of the heart* (form) demands a discipleship of right relationships and right desires, community building, hospitality and inclusion, trust in God's love, and prayer and worship. This requires that we foster growth in people's identity through formation and the intentional socialization of Christian family and community.

- *A way of the hands* (transform) demands a discipleship of love, justice, peace-making, simplicity, integrity, healing, and repentance. This requires that we foster in people an openness to a lifelong journey of conversion toward holiness and fullness of life for themselves and for the life of the world. (See *Will There Be Faith: A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples*. Thomas Groome, HarperOne, 2011, pages 111-119).

**A Pathway focuses on faith maturing.** The goal of a Pathway is to develop disciples and promote faith growth. A Pathway is created around the church's vision of discipleship and mature faith—identifying characteristics of faith maturing that can be used for people to discern their faith journey and chart a path for growth.

## Designing a Pathways Model for Discipleship & Faith Growth

1. Identify a target audience(s): young adults, midlife adults, mature adults, older adults.
2. Describe the life stage and religious-spiritual characteristics of your target audience.
3. Identify how you will use the Pathways model, for example:
  - Sacraments/milestones: Marriage, Baptism, First Eucharist, Confirmation
  - RCIA, evangelization, and new member processes
  - Gathered adult faith formation programming
  - Affinity groups
  - On-ramps where people in your church might start the discipleship journey
4. Develop the content for the Pathways
  - Life and faith characteristics of the target audience
  - Characteristics of mature faith
5. Develop a 'discernment continuum' that gives people a way to reflect on their current growth, e.g.,
  - Inquiring---Getting Started---Making Progress---Going Deeper
  - How true is each statement for you: 1= not true for me , 3=somewhat true for me, 5=very true for me

## Characteristics of Mature Adult Faith and Discipleship

*(Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, 1999)*

*The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ. Starting with the "initial" conversion of a person to the Lord, moved by the Holy Spirit through the primary proclamation of the Gospel, catechesis seeks to solidify and mature this first adherence. It proposes to help those who have just converted "to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know his 'mystery', the kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and comments contained in his Gospel message, and the paths that he has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow him." (General Directory for Catechesis, 80)*

This life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is maintained by the spiritual helps common to all the faithful,

- active participation in the liturgy
- frequent reading of the word of God, sacred writings of our tradition, and the official documents of the Church
- involvement in the community life and mission of the Church
- personal prayer
- participation in the works of justice and service to the poor
- the fulfillment of our human obligations in family and society through the active practice of love for God and neighbor (51)

As the General Directory for Catechesis states: "The maturation of the Christian life requires that it be cultivated in all its dimensions: knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, belonging to community,

missionary spirit. When catechesis omits one of these elements, the Christian faith does not attain full development.” (89)

The ongoing development of a living, explicit, and fruitful Christian faith in adulthood requires growth in all six dimensions. Each of them is a fundamental aspect of Christian life and a foundational content area for adult faith formation. The exploration of the six dimensions that follow are presented as content summaries to indicate what adult faith formation programs and opportunities seek to accomplish. (90)

#### **Knowledge of the Faith (91)**

- Explore the Scriptures so that adults may be hearers and doers of the word.
- Become familiar with the great teachings of Christianity (its creeds and doctrines)
- Study the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person in its social doctrine, including its respect-life teaching.
- Learn the richness of the Church's tradition, explore the theological and cultural heritage in which faith is expressed, and gain perspective on contemporary events and trends through an understanding of church history.

#### **Liturgical Life (92)**

- Understand, live, and bear witness to the paschal mystery, celebrated and communicated through the sacramental life of the Church.
- Acquire the spirituality, skills, and habits of full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy, especially the eucharistic liturgy.
- Appreciate and appropriately participate in the Church's daily prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours, and learn to pray the psalms, "an essential and permanent element of the prayer of the Church."

#### **Moral Formation (93)**

- Study the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the moral catechesis of the apostolic teachings, and live in accord with them.
- Appreciate the dignity, destiny, freedom, and responsibility of the human person, together with the reality of sin and the power of God's grace to overcome it.
- Learn how to acquire and follow a well-formed conscience in personal and social life, clarifying current religious and moral questions in the light of faith, and cultivating a Christian discernment of the ethical implications of developments in the socio-cultural order.
- Live a lifestyle reflecting scriptural values of holiness, simplicity, and compassion.

#### **Prayer (94)**

- Become familiar with the diverse forms and expressions of Christian prayer.
- Experience and appreciate the richness of the Catholic ascetical-mystical tradition as it has taken form across the centuries in diverse historical and cultural settings.
- Develop a regular pattern of personal prayer and spiritual reflection, recognizing vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer as basic and fruitful practices in the life of a disciple of Jesus.

#### **Communal Life (95)**

- Pursue personal and spiritual growth in human and Christian maturity.
- Cultivate the human values and Christian virtues that foster growth in interpersonal relationships and in civic responsibility.
- Share actively in the life and work of the parish,.
- Learn the Church's teaching on the nature and mission of the Church,.

### **Missionary Spirit (96)**

- Cultivate an evangelizing spirit among all the faithful as an integral element of their baptismal calling, of the Church's nature and mission, and of a Catholic way of life.
- Motivate and equip the faithful to speak to others about the Scriptures, the tradition and teachings of the Church, and one's own experience of faith.
- Explore and promote the applications of the Church's moral and social teaching in personal, family, professional, cultural, and social life.
- Understand the importance of serving those in need, promoting the common good, and working for the transformation of society through personal and social action.

## **Characteristics of Faith Maturing**

(Developed from research studies on faith maturing and the National Initiative on Adult Catechesis)

1. Sustaining a personal relationship with Jesus Christ supported through regular prayer, faith sharing and Bible reading.
2. Making the Christian faith a way of life by integrating their beliefs into the conversation, decisions, and actions of daily life.
3. Possessing a vital faith and being aware of God present and active in their own life, the lives of others, and the life of the world.
4. Seeking spiritual growth by actively pursuing questions of faith, learning what it means to believe in God, and what it's like to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.
5. Living a life of service by caring for others, reaching out those in need, and addressing injustice in the world.
6. Sharing the Good News through words and actions, through Christian stewardship and working for peace, justice and human dignity.
7. Participating fully, consciously, actively and regularly in the ritual and worship life of the faith community.
8. Articulating the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith and demonstrating a commitment to learning and growing in this faith.
9. Exercising moral responsibility by applying Christian ethics, virtues, principles, values, and social teaching to moral decision-making, life situations, and in interactions with the larger culture.
10. Practicing faith in Jesus Christ, privately and publicly, through participation in the congregation's worship, ministries, and leadership.
11. Discerning and using their gifts to actively belong to and participate in the life and mission of the Christian community.
12. Exploring God's call to vocation through prayer, reflection, and discernment.
13. Possessing a positive spirit with loving and hopeful attitudes toward others and life, convinced that they can make the world a better place.

### **Background: Eight Marks of Mature Faith (Search Institute)**

- Mark of Faith #1: Trusting and Believing
- Mark of Faith #2: Seeking Spiritual Growth
- Mark of Faith #3: Integrating Faith and Life
- Mark of Faith #4: Holding Life-Affirming Values
- Mark of Faith #5: Experiencing the Fruits of Faith
- Mark of Faith #6: Nurturing Faith in Community
- Mark of Faith #7: Advocating Social Change
- Mark of Faith #8: Acting and Serving

## Part 2. Developing Playlists of Content & Experiences

*A learning playlist is a curated group of digital and local learning experiences and resources (e.g. videos, websites, books, games, articles, etc.). A playlist weaves together these learning experiences into a sequenced pathway centered on a common theme. Playlists create a rich network of experiences for learners.*

### Pathway-Specific

- Content and experiences are selected to address each pathway, for example resources for Inquiring, Getting Started, Making Progress, Going Deeper

### Settings

- Independent/Individualized
- Mentored
- Family / At Home
- Small Group
- Large Group
- Intergenerational /Whole Church Community
- Community and World

### Multiple Intelligences

- Verbal-linguistic (word / book smart)
- Logical-mathematical (number / logic smart)
- Visual-spatial (art / picture smart),
- Bodily-kinesthetic (body / movement smart)
- Musical-rhythmic (music / sound smart)
- Naturalist (nature / environment smart)
- Interpersonal (people / group smart),
- Intrapersonal (self / introspection smart)

### Methods

- Learn alone or with a group
- Read
- Write
- Engage in storytelling and create stories
- TV shows
- Feature films
- Watch or create a video
- Converse with others
- Create a media project or video
- View or create art
- View or take photographs
- Watch or engage in drama
- Listen to or create a podcast
- Listen to or create music
- Conduct a demonstration
- Experience games, simulations, video games
- Analyze or create a case study
- Develop an apprenticeship or internship
- Create an exhibit
- Experience prayer and rituals

- Take a field trip (e.g., churches, museums)
- Participate in a mission trip
- Engage in or create a service / action project
- Keep a journal
- Develop a mentor relationship
- Experience events in the congregation

### Opportunities in the Church

- Sunday worship
- Sacramental celebrations
- Adult programming
- Intergenerational programming
- Service and justice ministries
- Pastoral care
- Church events

## Part 3. Publishing Playlists

Publish the Playlists on a digital platform and use social media for connection, interaction, and sharing learning reflections. You can add the playlists to your existing church website or create a website just for adult faith formation and link it to your church website. Example of an adult faith formation website:

[www.SeasonsofAdultFaith.com](http://www.SeasonsofAdultFaith.com)

Building a website is made much easier today by the availability of online website builders that provide predesigned website templates, drag-and-drop features to create webpages, and hosting for the website. Three popular website builders to explore are Weebly ([www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com)), Wix ([www.wix.com](http://www.wix.com)), and Squarespace ([www.squarespace.com](http://www.squarespace.com)). All three have easy to use features and very reasonable subscription fees. For advanced users WordPress (<http://wordpress.org>) provides thousands of predesigned templates, lots of customization features, and ready-to-use apps. WordPress does require an understanding of web design and some programming ability.

Here are several suggestions for web usability to keep in mind as you design (from Steve Krug's excellent and easy-to-use book *Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability*, Third Edition, Berkeley: New Riders, 2014).

1. Don't make the user think—make web pages self-explanatory so the user hardly has any perceived effort to understand them, or example, clear choice of labels, clearly “clickable” items, simple search.
2. People generally don't read web pages closely; they scan, so design for scanning rather than reading.
3. Create a clear visual hierarchy and menu system (main menu, submenus).
4. Make it very clear how to navigate the site, with clear “signposts” on all pages.
5. Omit needless words.
6. The home page needs the greatest design care to convey site identity and mission.
7. Promote user goodwill by making the typical tasks easy to do, make it easy to recover from errors, and avoid anything likely to irritate users.

# Worksheet: Designing a Pathways Model for Adults

**1. Identify a target audience(s): young adults, midlife adults, mature adults, older adults.**

**2. Describe the life stage & religious-spiritual characteristics of your target audience.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**3. Identify how you will use the Pathways model.** For example:

- ✓ sacraments/milestones: Marriage, Baptism, First Eucharist, Confirmation
- ✓ RCIA, evangelization, and new member processes
- ✓ gathered adult faith formation programming
- ✓ affinity groups
- ✓ on-ramps where people in your church might start the discipleship journey

**4. Develop the content of the Pathways model.** For example:

- ✓ Life and faith characteristics of the target audience,
- ✓ Characteristics of mature faith, etc.

**5. Develop a ‘discernment continuum’ that gives people a way to reflect on their current growth.** For example:

- ✓ Inquiring---Getting Started---Making Progress---Going Deeper
- ✓ How true is each statement for you: 1= not true from me , 3=somewhat true for me, 5=very true for me

# Example: Adult Faith Growth Pathway Model

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We believe that growth in our relationship with God and in following Jesus (discipleship) is a lifelong process. We are constantly trying to grow deeper in our relationship with God and in living the Christian way of life each day. Our church is committed to helping you grow wherever you may be in your faith journey. We are committed to helping you live the Christian way of life everyday.

To help you discover areas for growth and to help us serve you better, please take a few minutes to complete the Adult Faith Growth Pathway. It will help you identify strengths and areas of growth in your own life. Use these statements to assess where you are honestly and prayerfully. Rate “How true each statement is for you” using the rating scale: 1 = not true from me , 3 = somewhat true for me, and 5 = very true for me.

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. I am growing in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. My faith shapes how I think and act each and every day.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I make the Christian faith a way of life by integrating my beliefs into the conversation, decisions, and actions of daily life.                                   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. I am aware of God present and active in my own life, the lives of others, and the life of the world.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. I have a real sense that God is guiding me.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I seek spiritual growth by actively pursuing questions of faith, learning what it means to believe in God, and what it’s like to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I devote time to reading and studying the Bible.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. I use the Bible to discover how I should think and act.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. I pray to God and take quiet time to reflect and listen to God.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. I am growing spiritually through spiritual practices such as contemplation, <i>lectio divina</i> , praying Scripture, daily Examen (reflection), and meditation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. I can articulate the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. I am growing in my understanding of the Christian faith—beliefs, traditions, and practices.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. I exercise moral responsibility by applying Christian ethics, virtues, and values to making moral decisions.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. My faith helps me know right from wrong.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. I live a life of service by caring for others and reaching out those in need.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. I am involved in ways to promote social justice and address injustice in the world.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. I am involved in actions to care for creation.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. I share the Good News of Jesus through my words and actions.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. I participate actively and regularly in the worship life of the church community.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. I participate in the life, ministries, and leadership of the church community.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |

## Ways I Can Grow

- Areas Where I Need to “Get Started” (look at the numbers 1 and 2)
- Areas Where I Need to “Grow” (look at the numbers 2 and 3)
- Areas Where I Want to “Going Deeper” (look at the numbers 4 and 5)

# Additional Adult Faith Formation Topics

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## **Bible**

- ✓ Study and read the Old Testament: The Pentateuch –to discover its message and meaning for life today
- ✓ Study and read the Old Testament: The Prophets – to discover the message and meaning of the prophets for our world today
- ✓ Study and pray the Psalms as a spiritual practice
- ✓ Study and read the four Gospels to discover the life, ministry, and message of Jesus and how it applies to our lives today
- ✓ Study and read the Letters of Paul to discover how his message to the first Christians applies to us today

## **Relationship with Jesus**

- ✓ Discover how to begin (or begin again) my faith journey by exploring the heart of Christianity: Jesus, the Gospels, the church, and spiritual life
- ✓ Learn how to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ and explore what it means to be a disciple today in daily life – at home, at work, in the world

## **Christian Faith and Tradition**

- ✓ Learn more about what we believe as \_\_\_\_\_ (religious tradition) today and why
- ✓ Explore how contemporary theologians present what it means to be a Christian in today's world, and how that can inform our experience of the God in our daily lives
- ✓ Become familiar with the great teachings of Christianity (its creeds and doctrines)
- ✓ Learn the richness of the Church's tradition, explore the theological and cultural heritage in which faith is expressed, and gain perspective on contemporary events and trends through an understanding of church history
- ✓ Learn the Church's teaching on the nature and mission of the Church,.

## **Worship**

- ✓ Understand, live, and bear witness to the paschal mystery, celebrated and communicated through the sacramental life of the Church.
- ✓ Acquire the spirituality, skills, and habits of full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy, especially the eucharistic liturgy.
- ✓ Appreciate and appropriately participate in the Church's daily prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours, and learn to pray the psalms, "an essential and permanent element of the prayer of the Church."

## **Prayer & Spirituality**

- ✓ Develop spiritual practices to sustain my life as a Christian
- ✓ Learn the stages of spiritual growth and experience spiritual practices to deepen my spiritual life
- ✓ Explore a spirituality for the second half of life and how to sustain and deepen the spiritual life after 50
- ✓ Learn and practice ways to pray and meditate as part of daily life
- ✓ Get away for a retreat experience to reflect and deepen my spiritual life
- ✓ Receive spiritual guidance from trained spiritual directors who will help me on my faith journey
- ✓ Explore the history and meaning of Christian worship and how to get the most out of Sunday morning worship.
- ✓ Become familiar with the diverse forms and expressions of Christian prayer.
- ✓ Experience and appreciate the richness of the Catholic ascetical-mystical tradition as it has taken form across the centuries in diverse historical and cultural settings.
- ✓ Develop a regular pattern of personal prayer and spiritual reflection, recognizing vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer as basic and fruitful practices in the life of a disciple of Jesus.

### **Moral Living**

- ✓ Study the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the moral catechesis of the apostolic teachings, and live in accord with them.
- ✓ Study the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person in its social doctrine, including its respect-life teaching
- ✓ Appreciate the dignity, destiny, freedom, and responsibility of the human person, together with the reality of sin and the power of God's grace to overcome it.
- ✓ Learn how to acquire and follow a well-formed conscience in personal and social life, clarifying current religious and moral questions in the light of faith, and cultivating a Christian discernment of the ethical implications of developments in the socio-cultural order.
- ✓ Live a lifestyle reflecting scriptural values of holiness, simplicity, and compassion.

### **Service & Justice**

- ✓ Explore major social issues and the responsibility of Christians to transform the world
- ✓ Engage in projects and actions of service to those in need in our community and region
- ✓ Engage in projects and actions of service to those in need in our world
- ✓ Participate in mission trips to serve those in need in our country and around the world

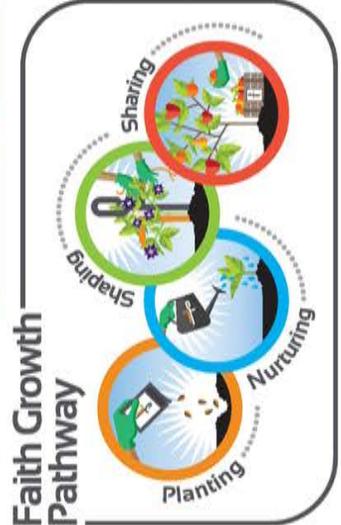
### **Life Issues**

- ✓ Discover my strengths as a person (gifts and talents) and how to utilize them to develop my “calling” in life
- ✓ Figure out how to balance the many commitments in my life: relationships, family, work, and more
- ✓ Develop life skills such as coping with stress, communicating effectively, managing my time, dealing with anger and sadness,
- ✓ handling conflict, and more
- ✓ Develop a financial “plan” by learning the skills and tools for creating savings, develop a personal/family budget, planning for the
- ✓ future (college, retirement), investing wisely, reducing debt, and more
- ✓ Discern my purpose in life as an adult: what am I committed to, where I am spending my time, what are my goals for the future,
- ✓ and more.
- ✓ Learn how to develop healthy relationships and let go of unhealthy ones
- ✓ Learn how to plan for life after retirement—relationships, finances, spiritual life, contributing to the church and the community, and
- ✓ more
- ✓ Join with a group of single adults for support, storytelling, and faith sharing
- ✓ Participate in a support group with those recovering from an addiction

# Faith Growth Pathways

Connecting with God		Connecting with Others	
Personal Spiritual Practices	In Community	Individually	In Community
<b>Planting</b> I am learning about daily devotions and praying to find those that I want to practice. I read the Bible from time to time.	I attend worship at least once a month. I say the Lord's Prayer during worship, grace before meals and prayers in the morning and/or at bedtime.	<b>Planting</b> I aim to accept others, including those whose color, status, etc. are different from mine.	I attend seasonal events or special events. I am learning about ministry opportunities.
<b>Nurturing</b> I am practicing some spiritual devotions occasionally, including reading from the Bible. I am learning about STER (Scripture, Tradition, Experience, Reason)	I attend worship on Sunday mornings at least twice a month. I participate in Central Connect Groups (faith formation opportunities).	<b>Nurturing</b> I go out of my way to be hospitable to members and guests in our church.	I participate in a Central Connect Group for fellowship or faith formation. I attend or serve at events.
<b>Shaping</b> I am using spiritual devotions regularly. I also use other resources to understand the Bible at times. I use STER to make decisions.	I participate in worship every week unless sick or out of town. I share Biblical and/or Christian stories with my family/friends.	<b>Shaping</b> I listen and try to help others with their spiritual questions, joys, and concerns. I share my faith through personal testimony/story.	I provide leadership for special events. I am open to being trained in church leadership.
<b>Sharing</b> I am revising my spiritual practices. I can share with others how I connect with God through spiritual practices.	I provide worship leadership and/or other service on Sundays. I help organize Central Connect Groups (faith formation opportunities).	<b>Sharing</b> I invite others to worship and church events. I share my faith with others through invitation and witness.	I am a leader in a Central Connect Group. I am open to training others for leadership in church administration, education, etc.

Changing Our World with Christ's Love					
Generosity of Time, Talents, and/or Financial Gifts (TTFG)		In Community (Evangelism, Mission Trips, Service Projects, Social Action)			
<b>Planting</b> I like to hear how my church meets the needs in the community. I like to hear stories from others about how they have been changed by either giving or receiving. I contribute with some Sunday offerings, at Christmas and Easter.	I learn from the church about caring for others in the community. I help in the community in the fields of arts, academics, athletics, politics, charity, etc. I am learning how to apply Christian ethics and faith in my work world.	<b>Planting</b> I like to hear how my church meets the needs in the community. I like to hear stories from others about how they have been changed by either giving or receiving. I contribute with some Sunday offerings, at Christmas and Easter.	I learn from the church about caring for others in the community. I help in the community in the fields of arts, academics, athletics, politics, charity, etc. I am learning how to apply Christian ethics and faith in my work world.	<b>Nurturing</b> I commit to share my TTFG regularly. I help a neighbor or a charity with my TTFG occasionally. I can share a story about my TTFG.	I participate in community service through church ministries regularly. I invite others to try a variety of opportunities outside the church. I assist the church to advocate for peace and justice for all.
<b>Planting</b> I like to hear how my church meets the needs in the community. I like to hear stories from others about how they have been changed by either giving or receiving. I contribute with some Sunday offerings, at Christmas and Easter.	I learn from the church about caring for others in the community. I help in the community in the fields of arts, academics, athletics, politics, charity, etc. I am learning how to apply Christian ethics and faith in my work world.	<b>Nurturing</b> I commit to share my TTFG regularly. I help a neighbor or a charity with my TTFG occasionally. I can share a story about my TTFG.	I participate in community service through church ministries regularly. I invite others to try a variety of opportunities outside the church. I assist the church to advocate for peace and justice for all.	<b>Shaping</b> I make an annual commitment and give in proportion to my income. I share my TTFG regularly. I am a member of a church committee or team.	I participate in ongoing service beyond the walls of the church. I recruit and equip leaders for ministries and missions. I participate in a community peace and justice group.
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**Faith Growth Pathway**  
 Central United Methodist Church  
 Waterford, MI

For more information, please contact:  
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 Pastor of Lifelong Faith Formation  
 kpittenger@waterfordcumc.org  
 248.681.0040

# Discipleship Pathway Self-Assessment

Note: These are not rigid categories but general ideas of where you are currently in relationship with Jesus. Use them to identify what your next steps can be.

	Exploring	Getting Started	Going Deeper	Centering
<b>Relating to God</b>	Acquaintances	Friends	Good Friends	Intimate Friends
<b>Prayer and Meditation</b>	Sometimes I pray (ex: at the beginning or end of the day, or at meals).	I pray for the needs of others in my life, community and around the world. I reflect on my day, and confess struggles to God.	I set aside intentional time each day to pray and learn new methods of prayer. I have a prayer partner/group to encourage to me.	I continue to increase my prayer life by learning practicing contemplative prayer and fasting. I spend time in silence and solitude each day. I lead others in prayer.
<b>Scripture Reflection</b>	I occasionally read the Bible for knowledge and understanding.	I read the Bible for knowledge and understanding, and also listen to how God speaks to me through Scripture.	I spend time each day reading and reflecting on Scripture to listen for God speaking to me. I study scripture with others.	I am exploring new ways to read and study the Bible. I read Scripture and write personal reflections as I listen to God.
<b>Corporate Worship</b>	I attend worship when a friend invites me, it is convenient, or I feel a need.	I attend worship once or twice a month and realize that God is present with me every day.	I participate in worship regularly and set aside time to connect with God daily.	I live my life increasingly aware of God's presence and seek to please God in all I do. I lead worship.
<b>Small Group Community</b>	I am loosely connected to or interested in a class or other group.	I regularly attend a GIG or other small group.	I am involved and interconnected with my group. The group is an important part of my spiritual practice.	I lead my group by being present with them mentally and spiritually. I am learning to be honest with this trusted group.
<b>Gift-based Service</b>	I occasionally volunteer or would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities.	I have taken a spiritual gifts survey to identify my gifts. I regularly help do God's work.	I am using my spiritual gifts to make God's love real in the world.	I am actively pursuing ways to sharpen my gifts (practice, studies, classes, etc.) even if it takes me outside my comfort zone.
<b>Financial Generosity</b>	I thank God for providing for my needs. I occasionally give a monetary offering and consider it a response to God's love and provision in my life.	I budget money to give to God's work. When I hear about critical needs, I give.	I've committed to move toward a tithe (10% of income). I have studied finances from a spiritual perspective and consider how I spend my income because all I have belongs to God.	I give 10% of all income to God's work and respond with more when prompted to do so. I consider how all assets can be used by God. I've provided for a portion of my estate to go to God's work. I'm beginning to live a life defined by generosity as I'm led by God.
<b>Invitational Evangelism</b>	I admire others who can talk about their faith and am exploring questions in my own faith.	I am finding and making friends and am willing to accept others as they are. I invite others to church.	I am actively trying to relate more to people outside of the church in ways that reflect God's love and acceptance of them. I share my faith.	I intentionally seek to build relationships with people in order to share God's love. I mentor others on their faith journey.

# spiritual assessment

## knowing God

1. I understand the essential beliefs of the Christian faith, and feel confident that I could explain them to a non-religious friend.
2. I have a good knowledge of the Bible, including its major events and themes, and I know how to read it for maximum understanding.
3. If someone were to ask me, "What do United Methodists believe?" I feel confident in my ability to answer them.
4. I understand basic Christian ethics, and I know how to draw upon my faith to come to conclusions about important moral and ethical issues.
5. I have a good understanding of God's will for human beings, and I know how to discern his will for my life in particular.

DOES NOT APPLY  
0 1 2 3 4 5

APPLIES SOMEWHAT  
0 1 2 3 4 5

APPLIES COMPLETELY  
0 1 2 3 4 5

## loving God

1. I know God has the power to transform lives and I'm open and responsive to whatever that may lead in my life.
2. I lay aside my own desires and sense of importance and submit to God's will for my life.
3. As a means of growing in Christ, I prayerfully practice various spiritual disciplines in my life.
4. I am experiencing "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22) in my life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
5. I have a group of friends who grow in faith together and challenge each other to grow deeper in Christ.

0 1 2 3 4 5

0 1 2 3 4 5

0 1 2 3 4 5

0 1 2 3 4 5

0 1 2 3 4 5

## servicing God

1. I invest time in building my relationships with God and with others.
2. I know my God-given spiritual gifts, and am actively serving Christ by using those gifts.
3. I give back to Christ by giving to the church and to others in proportion to my income, with at least 10% as my goal.
4. I spend time serving in God's world by helping meet critical needs and showing what it means to follow Jesus Christ.
5. I am actively nurturing the spiritual lives of others, sharing my faith story, offering spiritual encouragement and leading others to Christ.

0 1 2 3 4 5

0 1 2 3 4 5

0 1 2 3 4 5

0 1 2 3 4 5

0 1 2 3 4 5

Place your self-assessment number for each question below and add across, giving you an overall total.

**Knowing:** 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_ Total Head \_\_\_  
**Loving:** 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_ Total Heart \_\_\_  
**Servicing:** 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_ Total Hands \_\_\_

■ No one can concentrate on too many things at once. Look first at the individual questions, and then turn to the inside of this folder to consider next steps. Seek to find one or more areas in which you can grow in your relationship with God. Use the following scale as a general guide to the three levels:

0-2 Level 1      3-4 Level 2      5 Level 3