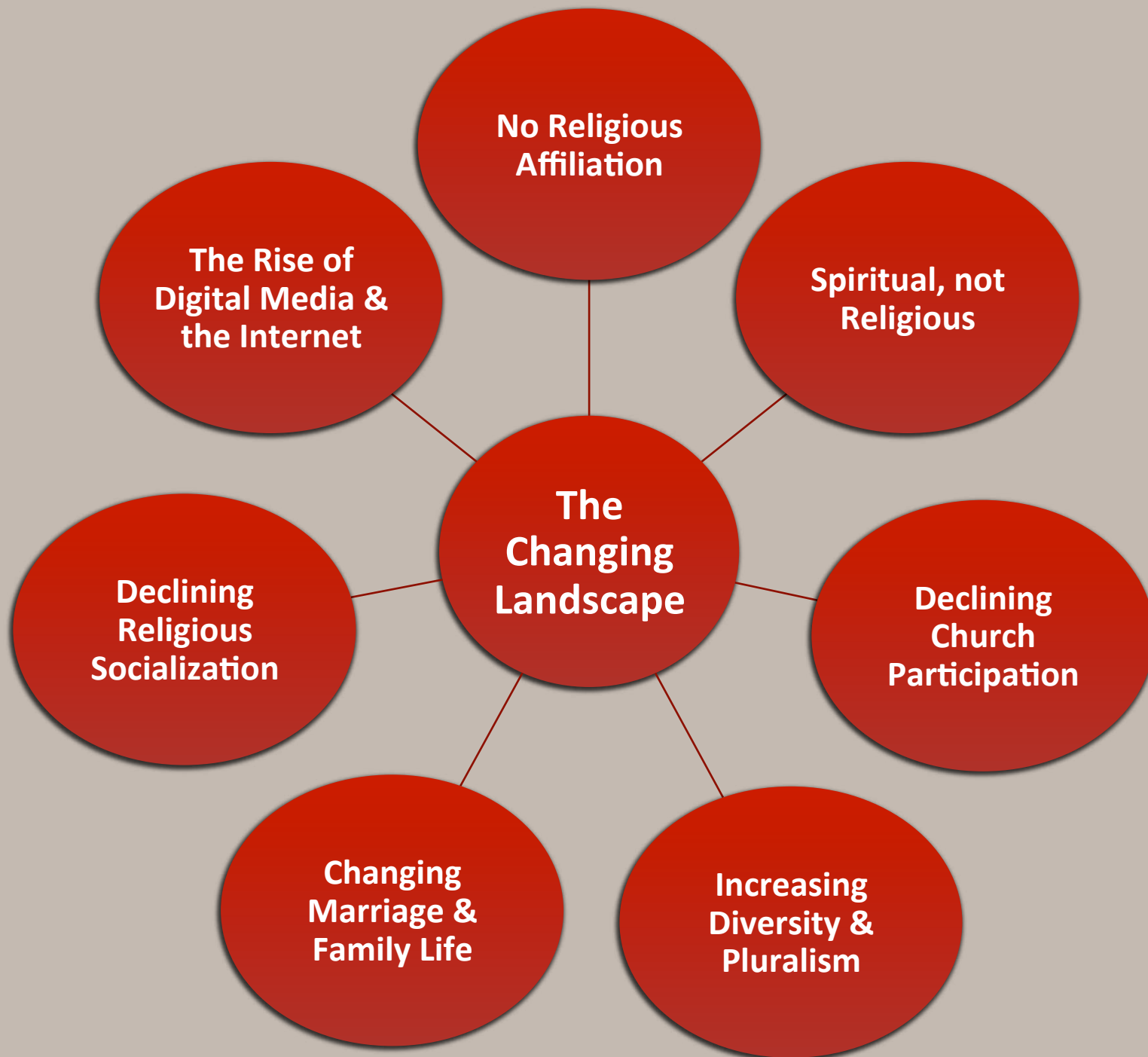


Envisioning the Future of Marriage & Family Ministry



John Roberto (jroberto@lifelongfaith.com)





Demographic Trends

Trends in the Catholic Church 2001-2010

(Using figures from the *Official Catholic Directory*)

1. Catholic population + 3 million (68.5 total)
2. Parishes - 2,500
3. **Marriages - 70,000 (168,400 total)**
4. **Infant Baptisms - 150,000 (857,410 total)**
5. Adult Baptisms - 43,000 (119,00 total)
6. First Communion - 71,000 (822,000 total)
7. Confirmations - 7,000 (622,000 total)
8. Children (parish) - 400,000 (3.1 million)
9. Teens (parish) - 78,000 (689,552)
10. Catholic grade school - 500,000 (1.5 million)
11. Catholic HS students - 70,000 (611,723)

Demographic Trends

- The number of marriages celebrated in the Church has fallen from 415,487 in 1972 to 168,400 in 2010 — a decrease of nearly 60 percent — while the U.S. Catholic population has increased by almost 17 million.
- To put this another way, this is a shift from 8.6 marriages per 1,000 U.S. Catholics in 1972 to 2.6 marriages per 1,000 Catholics in 2010.

(CARA, 2011)

Changing Views of Family

	A Family	Not a Family
Married Coupled with Children	99	1
Married Couple without Children	88	10
Single Parent with Children	86	12
Unmarried Couple with Children	80	18
Same-Sex Couple with Children	63	34
Same-Sex Couple without Children	45	52
Unmarried Coupled without Children	43	54

Pew Research, 2011

Generational Shifts

- Fully eight-in-ten adults younger than 30 say a same-sex couple with children is a family, more than double the proportion of those 65 and older who share this view (80% vs. 37%).
- Among those ages 30 to 49, two-thirds (67%) see a same-sex couple with children as a family, compared with 58% of all 50- to 64-year-olds.

(Pew Research, 2011)

Generational Shifts

Among those in their 20s, 30s, and early 40s....

1. Increasing number of “Nones”
2. Increasing number of “Spiritual but not Religious”
3. Accepting and embracing diversity: culturally, sexually, and in family structures
4. Declining participation in Mass and Sacraments, especially Marriage, Baptism and First Eucharist for Children
5. Living together, marrying later, and having children later
6. Declining levels of family faith practice & socialization

Impact

- Significant **Generational Change** began in the early 90s among the younger generations and is influencing society and the older generations
- These trends are having a significant impact on a **Life Cycle** approach to faith formation and church life, in general.
- fewer marriages – marrying later – fewer baptisms – fewer young families – lower Mass attendance.....

The Challenge of Adaptive Change

“The significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”

Albert Einstein

Technical Problems

- *Technical problems* (even though they may be complex) can be solved with knowledge and procedures already in hand.
- Leadership would be an easy and safe undertaking if organizations and communities only faced problems for which they already knew the solutions. Everyday, people have problems for which they do, in fact, have the necessary know-how and procedures—*technical problems*.

Adaptive Challenges

- *Adaptive challenges* require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization.
- Without learning new ways—changing attitudes, values, and deep-seated behaviors—people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment. *Adaptive challenges* call for changes of heart and mind—the transformation of long-standing habits and deeply held assumptions and values.

Leadership is “*the activity of mobilizing people to tackle the toughest problems and do the adaptive work necessary to achieve progress.*” (Ronald Heifetz and Martin Linsky)

Envisioning the Future



How can parishes envision the future of faith formation and design initiatives to respond proactively to the challenges and opportunities in the second decade of the 21st century?

Envisioning the Future

1. Will trends in U.S. culture lead people to become more receptive to organized religion, and in particular Christianity or will trends lead people to become more resistant to organized religion and Christianity?
2. Will people's hunger for and openness to God and the spiritual life increase over the next decade or will people's hunger for and openness to God and the spiritual life decrease.

Envisioning the Future

Dominant Cultural Attitude toward Organized Religion

Receptive

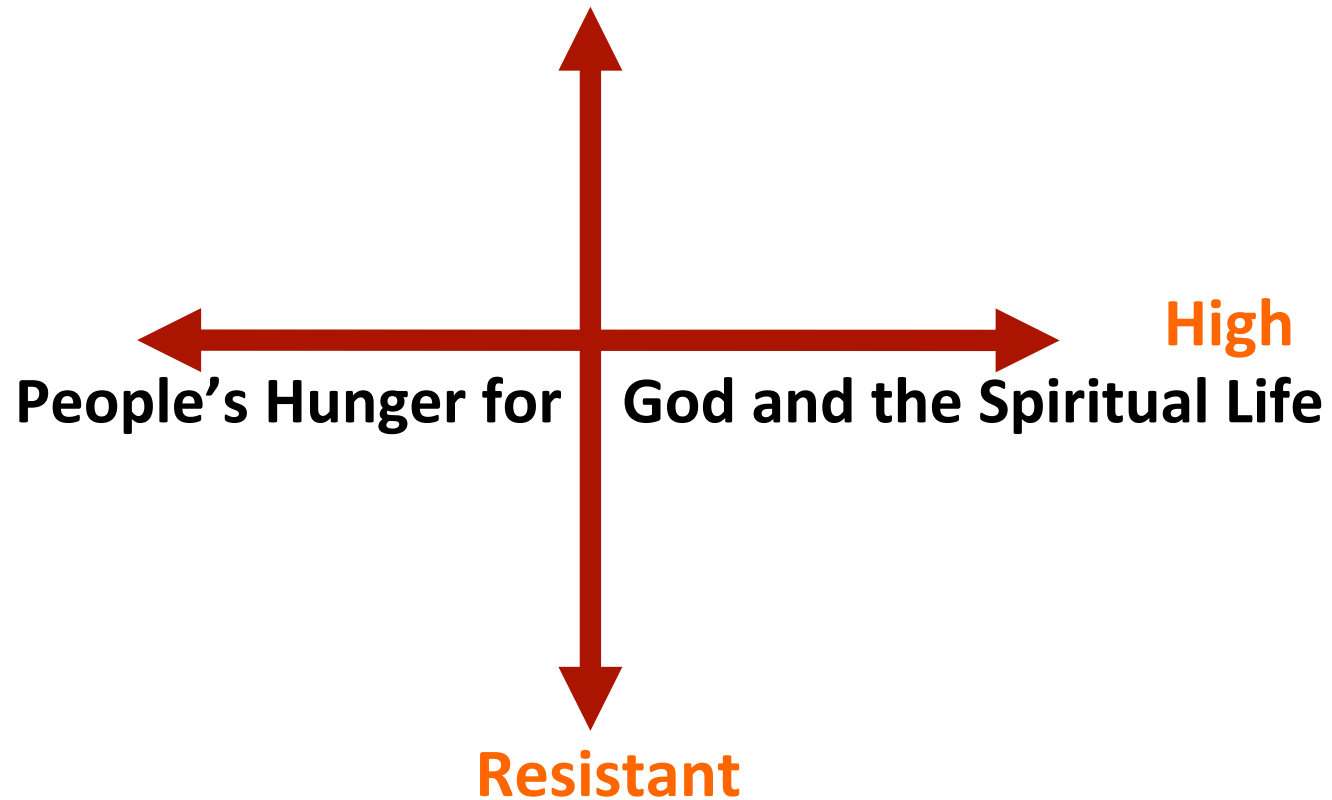
Low

People's Hunger for

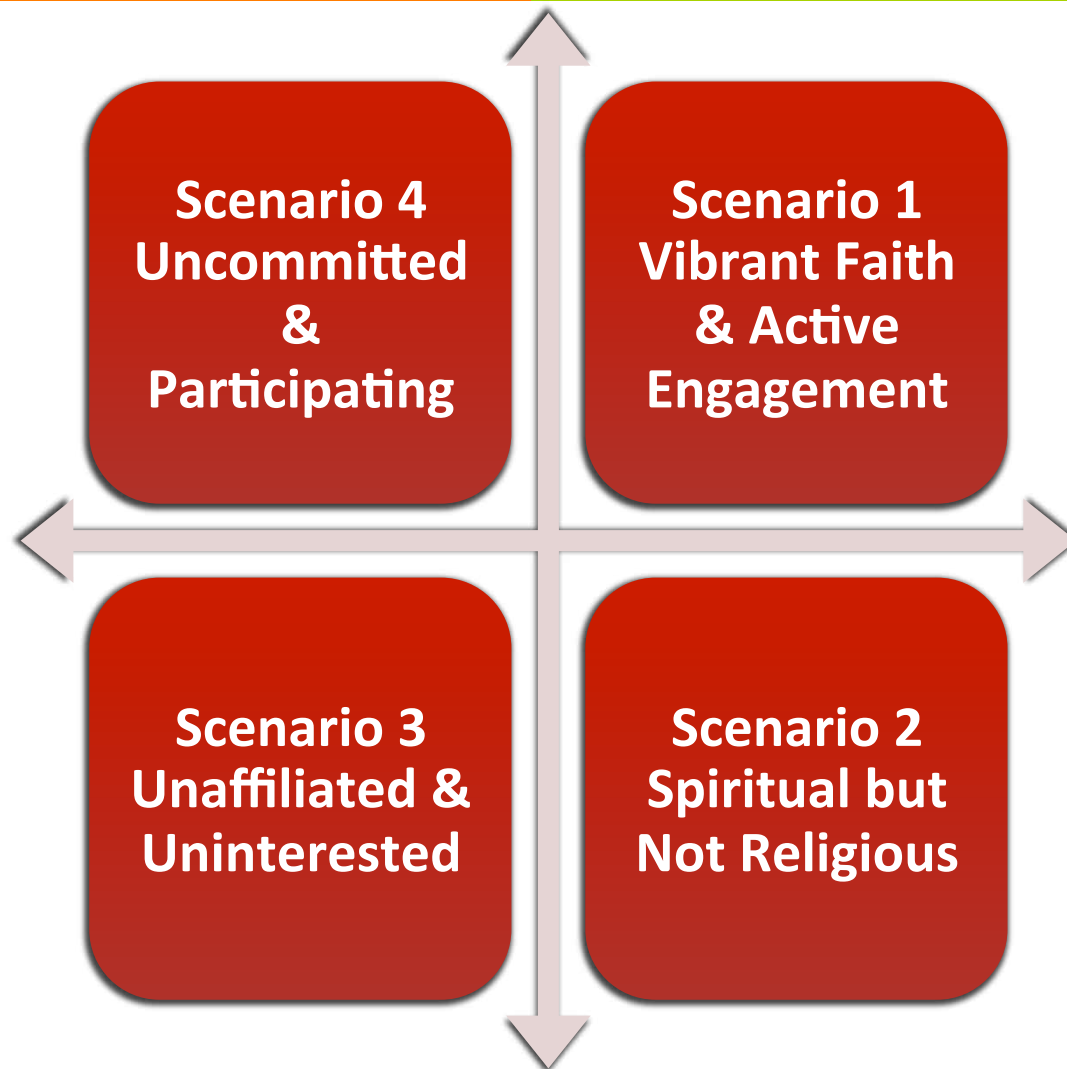
God and the Spiritual Life

High

Resistant



Envisioning the Future

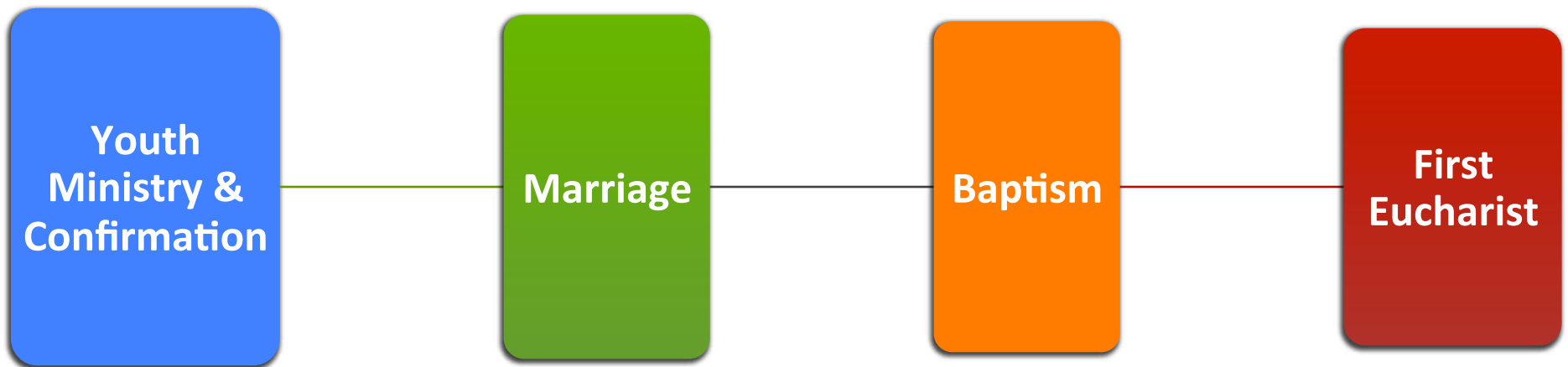


Envisioning the Future

Three Critical Priorities for Marriage & Family Ministry

1. Faith Formation with Emerging Adults
2. Comprehensive Faith Formation Before & After the Celebration of Marriage
3. Comprehensive Faith Formation Before & Action the Celebration of Baptism

Continuous, Lifelong Faith Formation



Key #1 - Targeted & “Differentiated”

Shifting from. . .

“One Size Fits All” Programming

to

Personalized & Customized Faith Formation

focusing on addressing people’s spiritual and religious growth by offering a wide variety of religious content and experiences

“Differentiated Faith Formation”

Key #2 - Faith Formation Models



Key #3 – A Network Approach

- Face-to-Face
- Virtual



Faith Formation with Emerging Adults

Scenario #4

- + Bible Study:
- + Large Group Gatherings
- + Life Tasks & Issues: workshops, small groups, online resources
- + Pathways to Deepen Faith & Engagement

Scenario #1

- + Bible & Catholic Theology: courses
small groups, online learning
- + Service/Mission: local & global projects
- + Spiritual Life & Practices: mentored, retreats, small groups, online resources
- + Ministry & Leadership

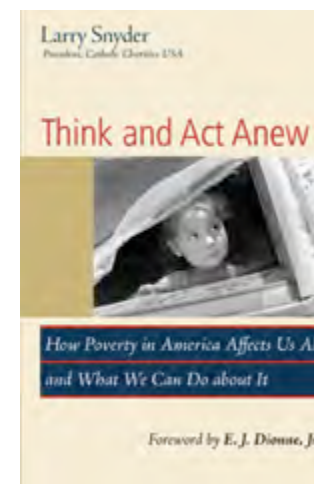
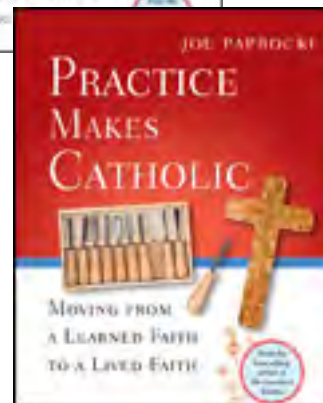
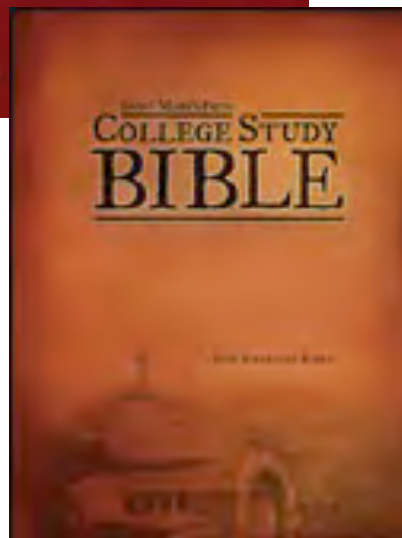
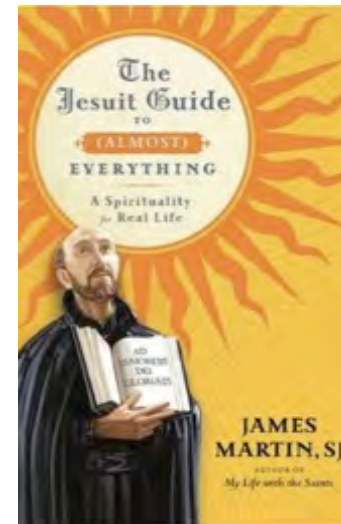
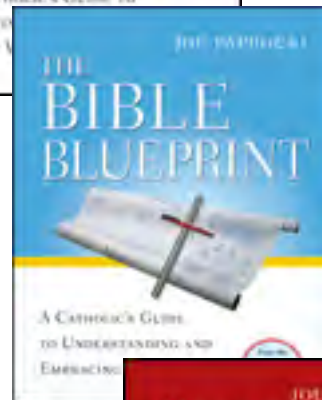
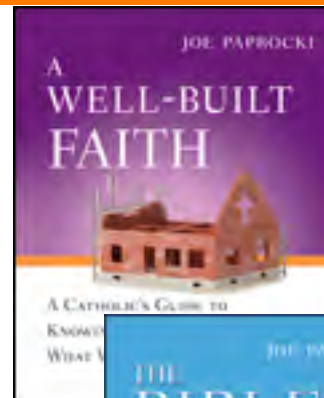
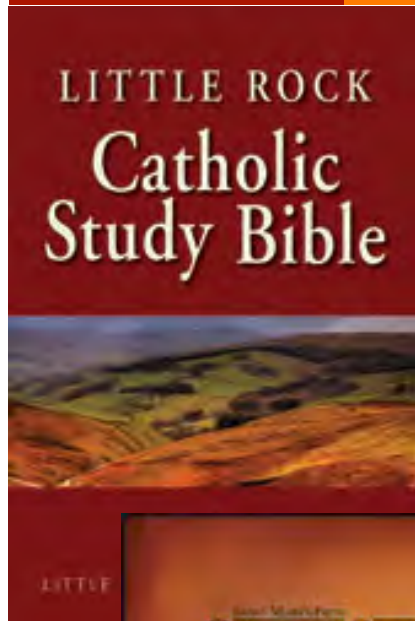
Scenario #3

- + Third Place Settings
- + Life Tasks & Issues: workshops, small groups, online resources
- + Service in the Local Community
- + Community-Wide Events: art festivals, concerts, drama
- + Recovery Ministry

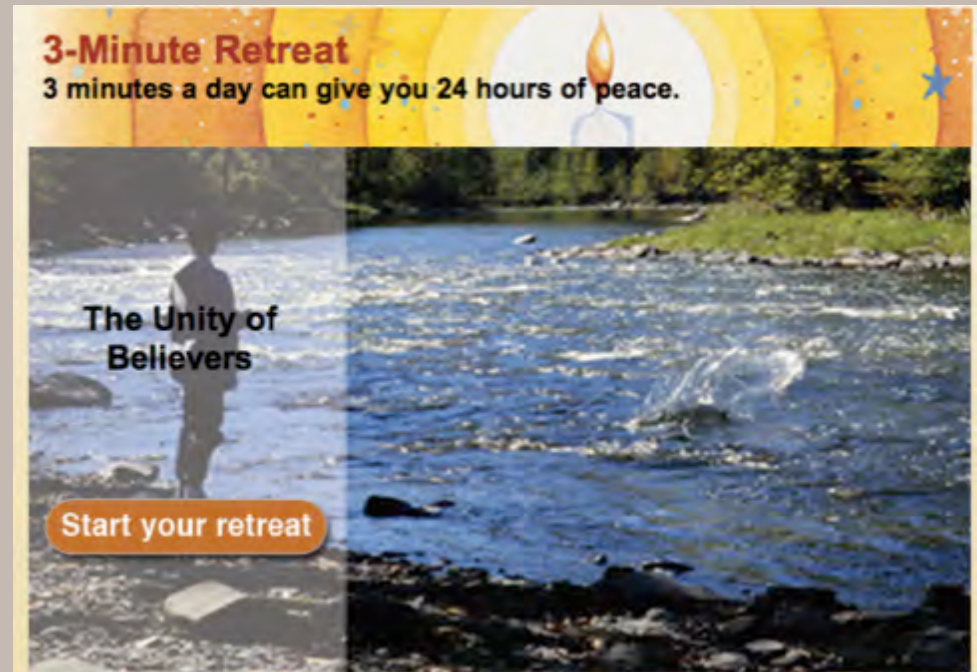
Scenario #2

- + Spiritual Seeker FF: Alpha Course
- + Third Place Settings
- + Life Tasks & Issues: workshops, small groups, online resources
- + Spiritual Life & Practices
- + Service
- + Bible Study: small group, online
- + Pathways to deepen faith & engagement

Bible Study, Small Groups



Apps



GET THE FACTS



GET CONNECTED



CREATE CHANGE



E-Newsletter



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Sunday, July 31, 2011

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT!

Matthew 14:13-21 (Good News Translation)

¹³ When Jesus heard the news about John, he left there in a boat and went to a lonely place by himself. The people heard about it, and so they left their towns and followed him by land. ¹⁴ Jesus got out of the boat, and when he saw the large crowd, his heart was filled with pity for them, and he healed their sick. ¹⁵ That evening his disciples came to him and said, "It is already very late, and this is a lonely place. Send the people away and let them go to the villages to buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ "They don't have to leave," answered Jesus. "You yourselves give them something to eat!" ¹⁷ "All we have here are five loaves and two fish," they replied. ¹⁸ "Then bring them here to me," Jesus said. ¹⁹ He ordered the people to sit down on the grass; then he took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven, and gave thanks to God. He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ Everyone ate and had enough. Then the disciples took up twelve baskets full of what was left over. ²¹ The number of men who ate was about five thousand, not counting the women and children.

Other Readings: Isaiah 55:1-3; Psalm 145:8-9, 15-16, 17-18; Romans 8:35, 37-39; ;

ABOUT LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is a weekly framework for a faithful and respectful reading of the Bible, coordinated with the Catholic lectionary calendar. Content provided by UBS.

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Online Courses

The Death of Jesus: Four Gospel Accounts

Minicourses

The Death of Jesus: Four Gospel Accounts, is an online, self-paced mini-course written and narrated by Philip A. Cunningham, Executive Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College. It is a collaborative project of the Center and C21 Online.



By the end of the mini-course, a participant will have explored:

- the four different Gospel passion narratives by examining five scenes that are common to each of the narratives
- the unique characteristics of each account
- the limits of our historical knowledge about Jesus's death
- the spiritual message about the death of Jesus that each evangelist sought to convey

1 Introductory Materials

The mini-course begins by exploring how the Catholic tradition and recent biblical scholarship understand the origins of the Gospels and their proper interpretation.

2 Passion Narratives Commentaries

In the main section of the mini-course, short presentations examine each of the four Gospel passion narratives in five different scenes. Before viewing the commentaries, read the pertinent biblical passages by clicking the links provided. After completing the commentaries for each scene, try out the Self-Check.

3 Conclusion

This final page sums up the mini-course and introduces the Gospel resurrection accounts. These narratives must also be considered to appreciate fully the evangelists' insights into the significance of Jesus' ministry.

Introductory Materials
Passion Narratives Commentaries
Conclusion
Contact

BOSTON COLLEGE
Center for Christian-Jewish Learning
C21 Online

Center for
Christian-Jewish Learning



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Audio

More From Yale Univers...

Book of Romans: Bible Study Series:
The Book of Isaiah: Bible Study S...

Gospel of Luke: Bible Study Series

Yale Divinity School

Description

The Yale Bible Study Series is presented in cooperation with The Congregational Church books of the Bible by Yale Divinity School Dean Harold W. Attridge and Professor Emeritus sessions to promote discussion and reflection. The Series aims to engage educated lay a rigorous manner. More information and supplementary study materials are available onli

	Name	Time	Released
1	The Gospel of Luke: The Birth of the Anointed One	12:56	9/15/10
2	The Gospel of Luke: Jesus Begins to Preach and ...	10:47	9/15/10
3	The Gospel of Luke: Jesus Begins to Teach	8:46	9/15/10
4	The Gospel of Luke: Jesus Begins to Form a Com...	12:24	9/15/10
5	The Gospel of Luke: Jesus Teaches "On the Road"	10:58	9/15/10
6	The Gospel of Luke: Lost and Found	13:18	9/15/10
7	The Gospel of Luke: In Jerusalem	11:21	9/15/10
8	The Gospel of Luke: The Passion and Resurrection	14:14	9/15/10

Total: 6



Exercising with Ignatius: Part 1

by Carolyn J. Martone

Ten years ago, if anyone told me I would attend a silent retreat to start the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, I would have thought it more likely that I run naked through the Mission in San Francisco, where I lived. Back then I was in my twenties, performing ...

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Man invented language to satisfy his deep need to complain. — Lily Tomlin



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GOOGLING GOD

Resources for the spiritual seeker

? What is the proper attire for mass?

#291 – What if I am afraid to confess my sins to a priest?

Facts of Faith St. Mark's Remains

OH Receive Me As Your Own

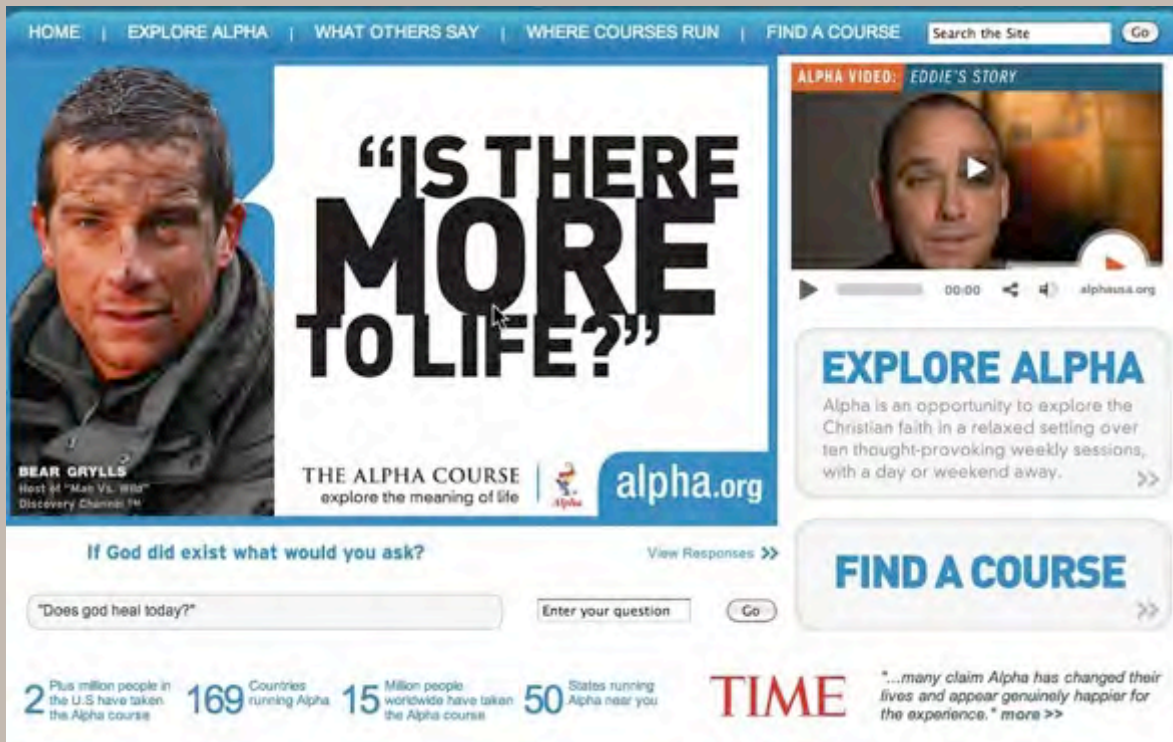


His mission is our mission




Spiritual Seeker Programs

HOME | EXPLORE ALPHA | WHAT OTHERS SAY | WHERE COURSES RUN | FIND A COURSE




BEAR GRYLLS
Host of "Man Vs. Wild"
Discovery Channel™

"IS THERE MORE TO LIFE?"

THE ALPHA COURSE |  **alpha.org**
explore the meaning of life

ALPHA VIDEO: EDDIE'S STORY

ALPHA VIDEO: EDDIE'S STORY
00:00  alphausa.org

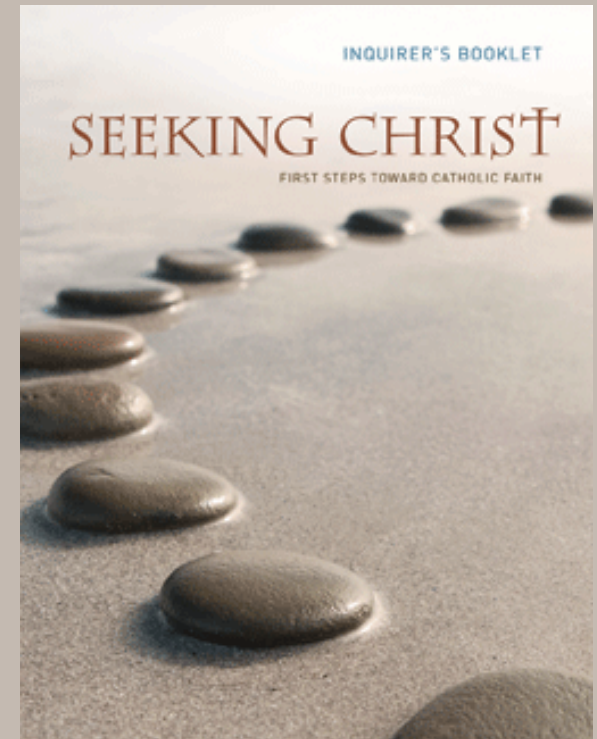
EXPLORE ALPHA
Alpha is an opportunity to explore the Christian faith in a relaxed setting over ten thought-provoking weekly sessions, with a day or weekend away. >>

FIND A COURSE >>

If God did exist what would you ask? [View Responses >>](#)

2 Plus million people in the U.S have taken the Alpha course
169 Countries running Alpha
15 Million people worldwide have taken the Alpha course
50 States running Alpha near you

TIME *"...many claim Alpha has changed their lives and appear genuinely happier for the experience." more >>*



Example: Alpha Course

Introduction Dinner: Is there more to life than this?

Week 1: Who is Jesus?

Week 2: Why did Jesus die?

Week 3: How can we have faith?

Week 4: Why and how do I pray?

Week 5: Why and how should I read the Bible?

Week 6: How does God guide us?

Week 7: How can I resist evil?

Week 8: Why & how should we tell others?

Week 9: Does God heal today?

Week 10: What about the Church?

Weekend: Who is the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit do?

How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? How can I make the most of the rest of my life?

Example: Pathways to a Deeper Faith

Our Lady of Soledad Catholic Parish

1. *Mini-Retreat 101: "Catholics Alive!"*
 - "What does it mean to be a follower of Christ?"
2. *Mini-Retreat 201: "Alive and Growing Spiritually!"*
 - maturing in the Catholic faith
3. *Mini-Retreat 301: "Alive and Gifted!"*
 - discerning how to serve God in ministry
4. *Mini-Retreat 401: "Alive in the World!"*
 - living as witnesses for Christ, as contagious Catholic Christians
5. *Mini-Retreat 501: "Alive to Praise God!"*
 - Catholic worship and the sacraments

Example: Pathways to a Deeper Faith



1. Spirituality: What's the Buzz?
2. Who is Jesus?
3. Do We Need the Spirit?
4. Can I Accept God's Mercy?
5. Can Mass Make My Life Meaningful?
6. The Church and Me



Doing Life. Doing Good.

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Lifetree Café is all about stories.

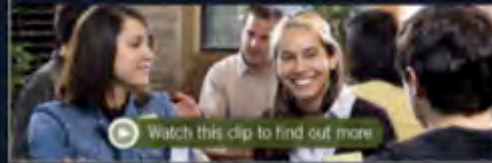
Join us weekly for compelling stories about fascinating people. Stories from the news. Stories from our own lives. The story of what God is doing in the world around us. At Lifetree Café we explore all those stories - and make sense of our faith and our lives.

• explore life • talk with friends • hear from God

WHEN & WHERE

PLANT A LIFETREE

WHAT GOES ON AT LIFETREE CAFE?



THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Week of July 31

FatherLess



Getting past the pain of an absent or abusive dad

WHEN & WHERE

UPCOMING TOPICS

NEWEST CONVERSATIONS on



- Can peace & change be made through ..
- Why I Love My Mom!
- Medicinal Marijuana
- When is a time in your life that you've ..
- Skin Art...
- Mosque at Ground Zero... What are your ..
- Who's the difficult person in your life?

[VIEW MORE CONVERSATIONS](#)

PRAYER

Experience
Power of Pra

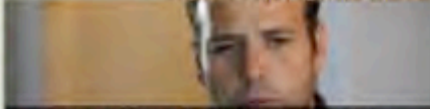
DOING GOOD



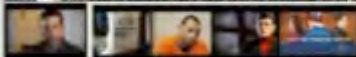
Stay Tuned: A new Lifetree Café Out-on-a-Limb project is now budding! Check back soon!

VIDEO CLIPS

[Next Page](#) | [Visit our Previous Page](#) | [YouTube Channel](#)



Growing Up Without a Father Explored at Lifetree Café
Forty percent of American children will sleep tonight



WEEKLY POLL

How would you rate the relationship you have (or had) with your father?

Time left on question
6 Days 13 Hours 20 Minutes

[VOTE](#)

WHAT'S NEW @ LIFETREECAFE?

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RT @galinaowens4: Still working on our @lifetreecafe.... going to be great!! :)/woohoo! 8 days ago

RT @bigbible: Having a look at @lifetreecafe <http://is.gd/BaWz3W> - What did you see? Did you like it? 17 days ago

RT @sanderssays: #breaking - MySpace sells for only 35 million! <http://yhoo.it/Q82p7> /wow - who

Third Place Settings

stillpoint

nurturing deeper spiritual practice



Welcome to the website of StillPoint - a project nurturing spiritual practice from within the Christian contemplative and mystical traditions. Please explore these pages to find out more about who we are and what we do.

What is StillPoint?

StillPoint is a project which aims to deepen spiritual practice. It is resolutely focussed on *practice* rather than study and is therefore seeking to be experientially based rather than academic.

StillPoint is based in the city of Oxford and on the coast-moor edge of South-West England.

StillPoint exists to nurture and encourage the practice of Christian spirituality in a variety of ways but particularly focussing on the practice of Christianity as an eastern religion and exploring the contemplative and mystical streams of the Christian tradition, whilst positively engaging with other spiritual traditions and the arts.

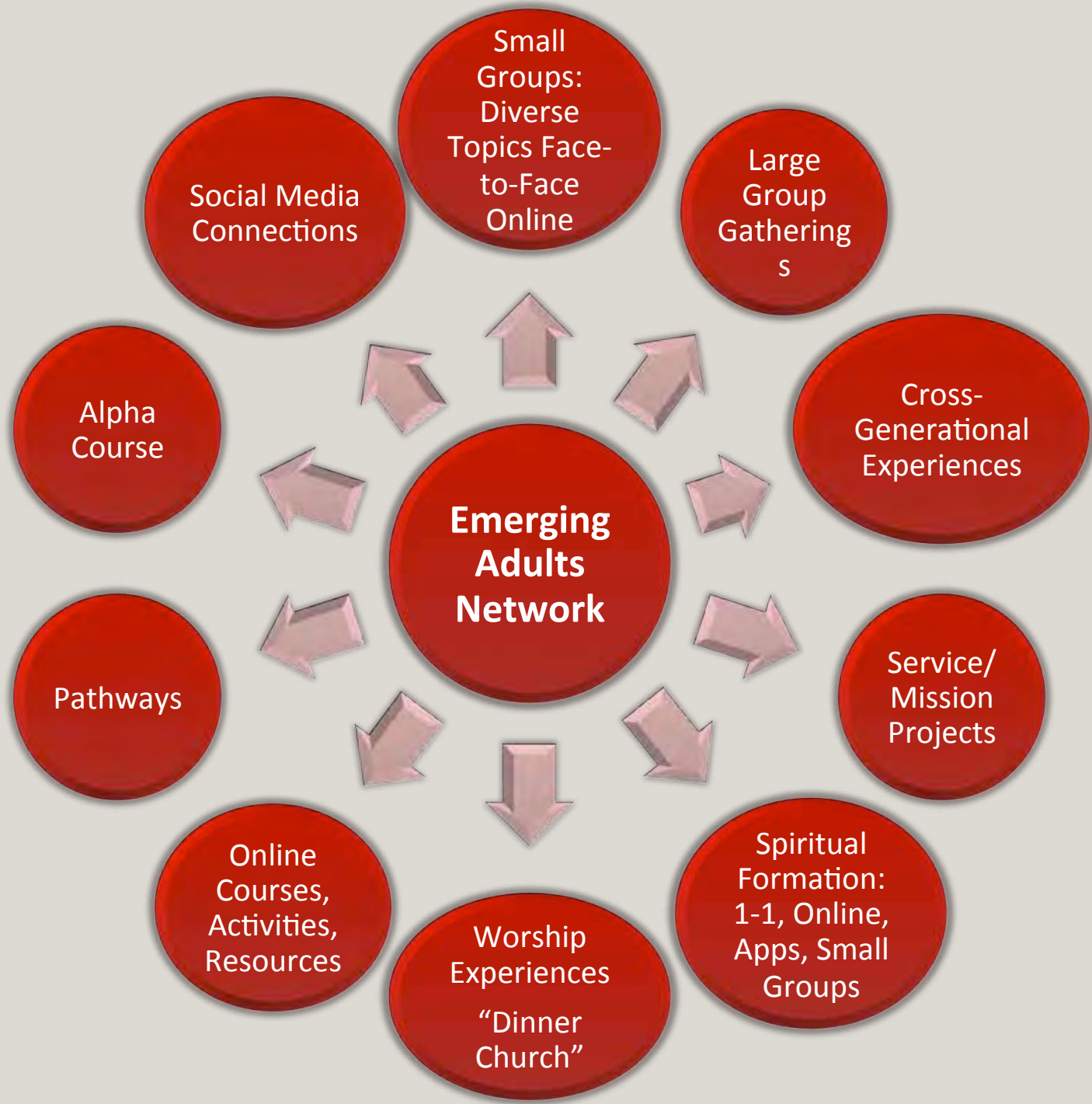
Its aim is to serve both spiritually searching people who would not previously have considered the Christian way as a path to deepen their spiritual search, as well as people who would identify themselves as Christians but are looking for opportunities to learn practices that will deepen their interior journey.

StillPoint will do this in a number of different ways - through conferences, courses, classes and groupwork, the provision of resources, artistic and cultural events, and through spiritual

now booking.....



Spiritual Formation for Everyone





Exercising with Ignatius: Part 1

by Carolyn J. Martone

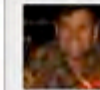
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David



Joan

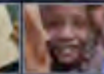
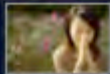


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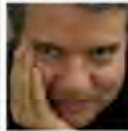


also

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Phil Fox Rose



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St. Mark's Remains



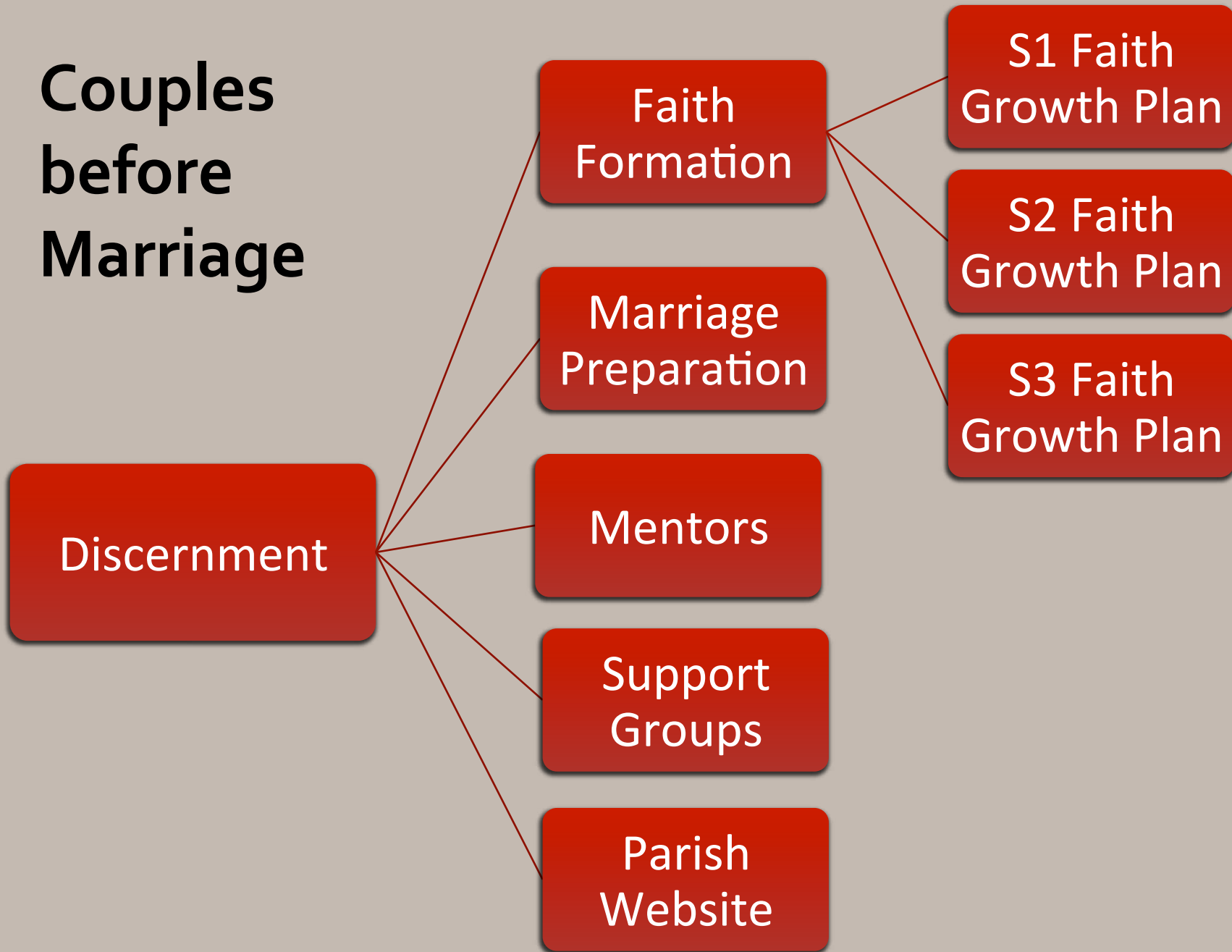
Receive Me As Your Own



Designing Faith Formation: Marriage



Couples before Marriage



Diversity of Faith Formation Models



spiritual assessment

knowing God

	0	1	2	3	4	5
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 in 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.						

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 gratefully 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.						

serving 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 reaching the spiritual lives of others, sharing my faith story, offering spiritual encouragement and leading others to Christ.						

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 _____

Serving: 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

Knowing God

We can never fully understand God (if we could, we wouldn't have much of a God!). But the mysteries and questions are not obstacles to growth – they are an invitation to continually journey deeper in our understanding of God and the Kingdom to which he invites us. As we increase our understanding of the God we worship and serve, which is what the word "theology" means, we increase our capacity to live the life God designed us to live. Calendar items and volunteer opportunities marked with the knowing designation will lead you to a deeper understanding of the mysteries of the kingdom.

Loving God

What we think and what we do are expressions of who we are. Trying hard to change ourselves is a fleeing proposition – but when we're traveling with God and letting God work in our lives, we find that transformation becomes a beautiful reality! When you see a calendar item or volunteer opportunity marked with the loving designation, it means that participation will draw you into a deeper level of love for God and neighbor.

Serving God

The Christian life is about more than correct thoughts and a loving attitude, it's about living our calling in the soil and light in the world. This means doing the work of the kingdom. Calendar items and volunteer opportunities marked with the serving designation will help you get your hands dirty for the kingdom. These include mission opportunities, volunteering and much more.

Take the next step today.

Visit www.coc.org/nextsteps or the Connection Point in the Narthex to view a detailed listing of classes and service opportunities and to register.

The United Methodist Church of the
Resurrection

THE JOURNEY

PERSONAL SPIRITUAL ASSESSMENT

The Journey: Knowing, Loving and Serving God

At Church of the Resurrection, our purpose is to build a Christian community where non and nominally religious people are becoming deeply committed Christians. Christians who know, love, and serve God. This short assessment is designed to help you identify where you are in your spiritual journey so that you can make better choices to guide your growth.

Use these 15 questions to assess where you are at honestly and prayerfully. Add up your totals, and select one or two of the suggested next steps.

The United Methodist Church of the **Resurrection**

Knowing God: Becoming Theologically Informed

1 I have a growing understanding of the essential beliefs of the Christian faith, and feel confident that I could share my understanding of them with a non-religious friend.

<p>Level 1 Revisit the 101 Questions & Answers book. Add to it as you learn more about the Christian faith. Read and reread the home page to deepen your understanding of the faith. Use the home page for more information and requests.</p>	<p>Level 2 Many Christians find a format that most helpful spiritual book after the Bible. Buy a United Methodist hymnal to use in daily private and family devotions. Read the words of one hymn daily as prayer. Sing the ones you love. Study and memorize the words and papers.</p>	<p>Level 3 Write your small group or with a group of two to five others, re-read the Apostles' Creed. Write down what each belief statement means. List where it is supported in scriptures and share your understanding of the belief with your group.</p>
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2 I have a growing knowledge of the Bible, including its major events and themes, and I know how to read it daily for maximum understanding.

<p>Level 1 Commit to reading your Bible each day, using the GPS (Grow-Pray-Study) guide. Click here to download the guide each week, or to sign up for e-mail delivery of the daily readings.</p>	<p>Level 2 Purchase a good study Bible, such as the NIV Study Bible or The New Interpreter's Study Bible. Learn how to use the notes, maps and other tools, and begin by studying the book of Mark for yourself.</p>	<p>Level 3 Talk with your small group about how to deepen your Bible study, using questions such as "Has God speaking to me personally through this passage?" or "What will I change in my life because of what I've learned from this passage?"</p>
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3 If someone were to ask me, "What do United Methodists believe?" I feel increasingly confident in my ability to give an informed answer.

<p>Level 1 Learn and understand the purpose and vision of The Church of the Resurrection. Visit this vision page? How do you see your church being faithful in living out this vision?</p>	<p>Level 2 Read David Weimer's John Wesley's Message for Today, a booklet guide available at The Web Bookstore, to deepen your understanding of our church's major teachings and heritage.</p>	<p>Level 3 Study the documents included under the "Beliefs" tab on the umc.org website. Invite two or three people to read the Beliefs with you and dialogue around what you read.</p>
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4 I have a growing understanding of basic Christian ethics, and I am continually developing a deeper ability to draw upon my faith to come to conclusions about important moral and ethical issues.

<p>Level 1 Each day pray your personal devotions. Before you act, ask yourself (and pray about the answer): "What course of action will best express my love for God and neighbor?"</p>	<p>Level 2 Read John's membership book, <i>Collecting the Conscience</i>, available at The Web Bookstore. As you read, reflect on how well you are to look at both sides of each issue, and prayerfully ask God to direct you in your daily to have righteous, reasonable ethical choices.</p>	<p>Level 3 What is the difference between charity and justice? Prayerfully study what it would mean for you to actually "do justice" versus "show charity." Write out two specific ideas you could adopt, and live into them.</p>
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5 I have a growing understanding of God's will for human beings, and I know how to discern his will for my life in particular.

<p>Level 1 Choose one decision, task or big, you are currently making and pray over that decision of the same time each day, asking God's will rather than your agenda. Keep a journal of your experiences.</p>	<p>Level 2 Writing is needed. One way we try to make this need a business (keep a log of your busy life of your activities and decisions). Ask, "Come this business flow from God's will or is it just an effort to make myself feel important and needed?" Write something you need to give up/drop!</p>	<p>Level 3 Prayerfully study Romans 8 and 12. Based on these chapters, answer the questions "Who am I?" and "Who does God want me to be?" After you've given your answer and prayers, in light of your answer, discuss your changes (prayer with your congregational care pastor, and pray about the changes with that person).</p>
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Loving God: Becoming Spiritually Transformed

1 I know God has the power to transform lives and I'm open and responsive to whatever that may lead in my life.

<p>Level 1 Intentionally spend ten minutes daily thinking about good things. Make a list of five "good things" you think of doing the time. Discipline your thoughts to list and be grateful for things that are good in your life. Write it down, and share it with your group, or enjoy it alone.</p>	<p>Level 2 Set a plan for your life of busy. Take the first step by doing the largest task at the grocery store. Looking at the calendar, determine which days you can have a short-term fasting week. Use the time to spend in the church in line with you, pray, or enjoy a time of silence.</p>	<p>Level 3 Memorize the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17). After you've memorized them, ask yourself "Do you know your parent's law your neighbor? Discuss with a pastor/Christian friend (perhaps your congregational care pastor) how to make the Commandments a guide in your daily life.</p>
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2 I have a growing ability to lay aside my own desires and sense of importance and submit to God's will for my life.

<p>Level 1 Examine your life and identify things you do or say to mainly impress yourself. Look good to others. Surrender those habits to God.</p>	<p>Level 2 Fast from TV or another time-consuming habit for one week. Reflect on how this habit affects you. Use the extra time to enjoy your family and friends, or to spend with God.</p>	<p>Level 3 Each day pray the Wesley/Convenient Prayer. After praying the prayer, take one line each day and meditate on what living a life reflective of the line would mean for you.</p>
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3 As a means of growing in Christ, I regularly practice various spiritual disciplines (e.g. worship, prayer, Bible study) in my life.

<p>Level 1 Pray "back prayer" (Acts 1:6-7). Study the book, <i>Living Your Faith and Living in the World</i> by David Weimer. Write a note — in an envelope, pray for the people in the community around you, and pray for them with you and dialogue around what you read.</p>	<p>Level 2 Discover what it means to truly repent. Ask a group and pray for those who will do so. Write a note on your journal and pray for those who will do so. Write at the end of the things you did with your repentance, and the times of when you were deeply convicted, or when God graciously blessed you with it.</p>	<p>Level 3 Write a 10-minute day to reflect on the most important decision you've ever made. Write a note on your journal and pray for those who will do so. Write at the end of the things you did with your repentance, and the times of when you were deeply convicted, or when God graciously blessed you with it.</p>
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4 I have a deepening experience of "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22) in my life — of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

<p>Level 1 Memorize Galatians 5:22. The verse that lists "the fruit of the Spirit." Write out the list. Ask yourself "What course of action will best express my love for God and neighbor?"</p>	<p>Level 2 Ask yourself, "Does God's love go on when something painful happens?" or "How do I love my peace when something happens?" Ask God to grant the fruit of the Spirit in your life under all circumstances, and to teach you how to live in that.</p>	<p>Level 3 Ask three people who know you how well you live toward feedback on your life and on how well you live the fruit of the Spirit. Enter their help in targeting one area for growth.</p>
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5 I have a group of friends with whom I meet regularly in order to grow in faith together and to challenge each other to grow deeper in Christ.

<p>Level 1 Recreate your time to create a list of people, suitable for Group Life or another group that fosters Christian friendships.</p>	<p>Level 2 The discipline gathered around Jesus. He just got to know the world, but he stayed in the vision of miracles in the Kingdom of God. How is your group moving beyond escaping, and into discipleship around Jesus in the Kingdom? Discuss what you want the group to do, and how to do it.</p>	<p>Level 3 Help your group become one where trust and accountability replace selfish talk. If one member is trying to ignore in a particular area, do you ask "How is it going?" Does the group show care and follow, as well as you and yourself? It is okay to say, "Pray for me — I'm struggling seriously."</p>
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Serving God: Serving God daily in the World

1 I actively serve in God's world by helping meet critical needs through acts of justice and mercy, striving in actions what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

<p>Level 1 Volunteer inside and outside the walls of the church choosing assignments or one-time opportunities like Food Bank, Habitat Bible Camp, or a mission team.</p>	<p>Level 2 Commitment give volunteer service inside and outside the walls of the church, e.g. a regularly scheduled urban or ongoing involvement with a mission partner.</p>	<p>Level 3 As God leads you, serve others and pursue justice in all that you do, including in accordance with your giftedness/leadership in a ministry area or extended missionary service.</p>
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2 I am actively nurturing the spiritual lives of others by sharing my faith story, offering spiritual encouragement and leading others to Christ.

<p>Level 1 Invite a friend, a family member or a neighbor to spend worship or other church activity with you. Signify by praying for God to open doors to extending such invitations.</p>	<p>Level 2 Read a good Testament with you. Ask a pastor to give it to someone else to give it to you. Pray for greater awareness and when the opportunity comes, give the pastor the God a changing you life.</p>	<p>Level 3 Practice turning conversational focus to spiritual focus, creating more intentional opportunities for you to share your faith story. Make this a regular part of your interaction with others.</p>
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3 I have discovered my God-given spiritual gifts, and regularly take steps to develop those gifts and to actively serve Christ by using them.

<p>Level 1 Identify with things you do well at (whether you really love doing, are best at doing, or are proud of). Find ways to do those things for God.</p>	<p>Level 2 Learn what your God-given spiritual gifts are, and connect to one or more ministries that will benefit from those gifts. Study the Giving from the Heart Spiritual Gifts questionnaire with your small group.</p>	<p>Level 3 Focus on how God wants your giftedness to shape, not just occasional volunteer activities, but your entire life. Find a mentor (possibly your congregational care pastor) and discuss how you might use your gifts to live out your God-given calling.</p>
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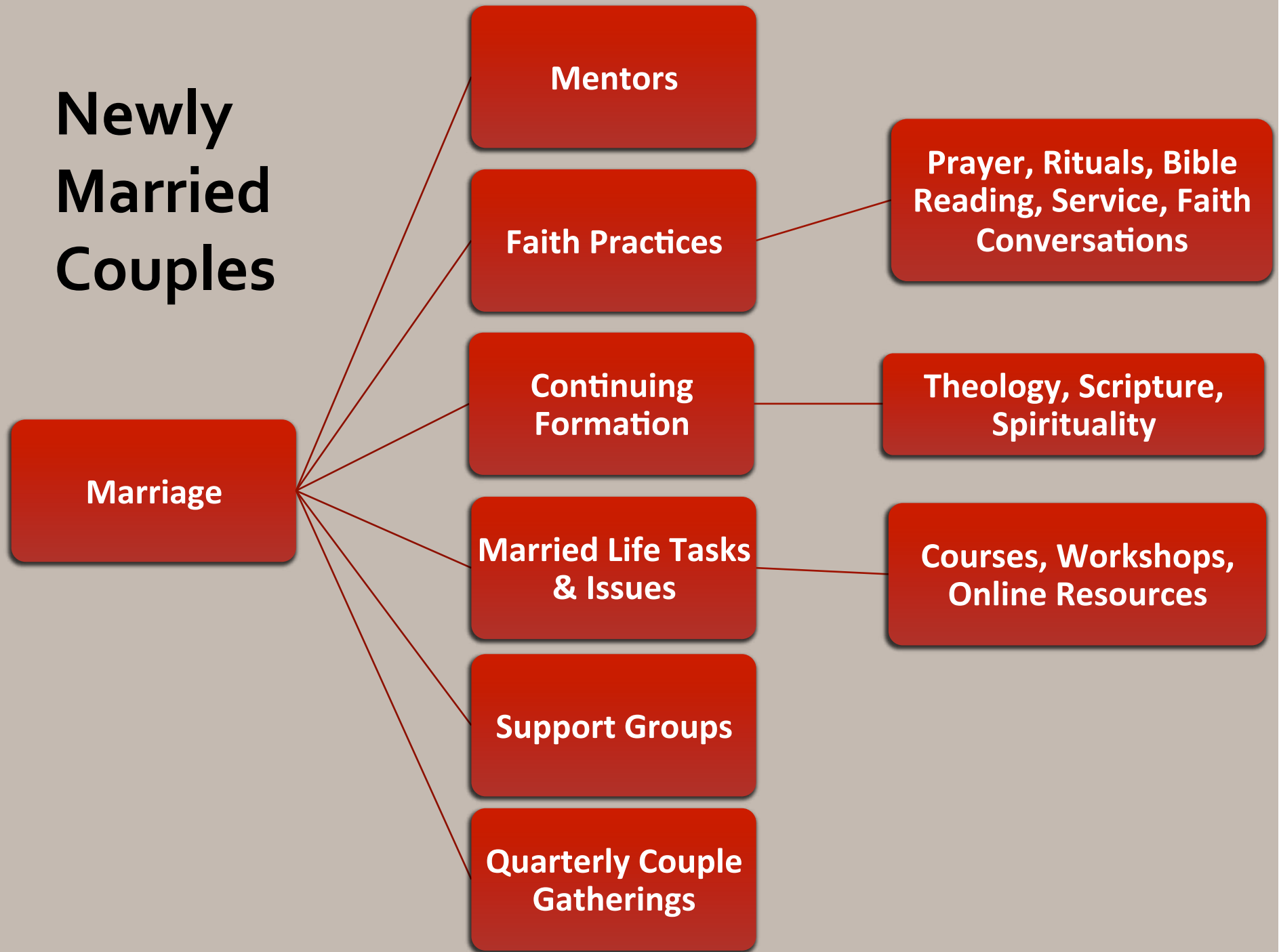
4 I give back to Christ by giving to the church and to others in proportion to my income, with at least 10% as my goal.

<p>Level 1 Begin planning your financial giving as a proportion of your income, given at each pay period, rather than simply on income as a discretionary money you.</p>	<p>Level 2 Increase your giving by one or two percent of your income, as a move toward the goal of giving giving 10% of your income.</p>	<p>Level 3 Make tithing the baseline for your giving, and give more than 10% of your income to God makes that possible. Include God's kingdom in your needs planning, as well as in your regular ongoing giving.</p>
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5 I invest time in building my relationships with God and with others, and I increasingly manage my time according to God's priorities.

<p>Level 1 Be able to list ten hours a month specifically for serving God and others.</p>	<p>Level 2 Identify ten non-productive activities you spend time on, and eliminate them in order to have more time to give to God and God's service.</p>	<p>Level 3 Review your entire calendar. Ask yourself, "If I was incapable of making God the most important person in my life, would my calendar commit me to that charge, or acquit me?"</p>
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Newly Married Couples



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This first-of-its-kind program allows engaged couples to experience a **qualified Catholic PreCana program** from the comfort and convenience of your home. Once you register, the entire program is available to you 24/7/365. When you finish, a **Certificate of Completion** is created for you instantly.

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WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE



This program is a featured Marriage Prep Resource at [For Your Marriage](#), an initiative of the United States

Conference of Catholic Bishops. Susan Vogt, editor of the NACFLM Family Perspectives Journal, "found the online marriage preparation program



MARRIAGE PREP TOPICS INCLUDED

- Communication
- Conflict and Forgiveness
- Children and Parenting
- Natural Family Planning
- Theology of the Body
- Faith and Prayer
- Liturgy and Ceremony
- Commitment
- Sacrament of Marriage
- [Family of Origin](#)

GET STARTED

Program includes:

- ✓ **Catholic Couple Checkup** premarital inventory (**\$30 value**)
- ✓ "Marriage & Money" finances eBook for download (**\$15 value**)
- ✓ Extra eBooks on relationships and marriage (**\$20 value**)
- ✓ 12 months of follow-up learning



NEW



What Is Natural Family Planning?

Around the country Catholic parishes are observing Natural Family Planning Awareness Week (July 23-30). Want to learn more about this natural way to responsibly plan one's family? Read our FAQs and learn the facts.

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Time To P-A-R-T-Y!

Sara and Justin finish up their account of their wedding day. Now newlyweds, it's time to celebrate with friends and family!

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Happily Even After

How Many Children Should We Have?

People often ask Stacey and Josh, the parents of three, if they are "done" having children. Certainly is not something Stacey has regarding the size of her family. She explains why that's not a bad thing.

TIPS & ADVICE

Daily Marriage Tip for July 30, 2011

"A toy or experience that has been 'longed for' is much more appreciated. Ungrateful children usually have too much stuff." (Raising Kids Who Will Make a Difference) Don't let guilt cause you to mistake a child's desire for a command. The same applies to adults.

[ALL MARRIAGE TIPS ▾](#)

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CHURCH TEACHINGS



Marriage: Unique For A Reason

The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is the permanent, faithful union of one man and one woman. The Catholic Bishops' website, Marriage: Unique for a Reason, provides resources to assist with catechesis and education for those who want to know more about this teaching. The initiative includes videos, resource booklets, and an interactive website.

[READ THE FULL STORY ▾](#)

BOOK REVIEWS

The Couple Checkup

MARRIAGE NEWS

CATHOLIC 101

The Couple Checkup: Find Your Relationship Strengths
 By David H. Olson, Amy Olson-Sigg and Peter J. Larson

What contributes to marital success? The authors find five keys to intimacy: communication, couple closeness,

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DATING & ENGAGED



Dating? Four Basics To Keep In Mind

Dating can be a wonderful time in a person's life, challenging a person to grow and to learn more about others. In this article a young adult reflects on four basic points to keep in mind when dating.

[READ THE FULL STORY ▾](#)

PARENTING & FAMILY



Parenting: What The Airlines Can Teach Us

The author finds that airlines unwittingly offer some helpful parenting advice. Why do flight attendants tell passengers to take care of themselves before assisting others?

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Healthy Relationship Skills

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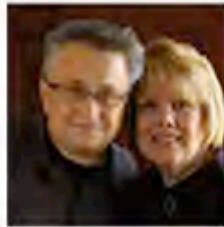
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7 Secrets to Fixing Your Marriage. Alternative to Marriage Counseling.
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Dear Friends:

This July 4th we took a trip down memory lane

...

While we weren't crazy about the animated feature, the Drive-In Movie experience was a blast! Sharing our early years of dating, reliving memories and reviewing those in-the-car romance moves!

It is important to revisit special places and reminisce together. Make plans this month to revisit a favorite place.

Thanks for joining us!

Jim & Sheri Mueller

Co-Founders, Growthtrac Ministries



Rebecca St. James is Married!

Read about her marriage in this exclusive interview.



Marriage According to Golf

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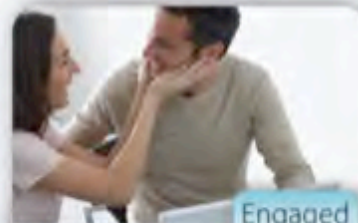
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Grow Up?

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- daily
- inspiring
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Re: Wishing for better sexual (and
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Re: 9 Months Separated

Re: My husband left me for another
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COMMUNITY QUESTION of the week

Have you been through *Financial Peace University* yet? If so, let us know how it has helped you prepare for The Great Recovery!

told her thanks, but that I wouldn't be needing it!

Tuesday August 2, 2011

9:26 Resolve Price English: Paid off over 5K in debt last year, now

TELL ME MORE

What is Financial Peace?



Foundations

October 2007 • Vol. 34, No. 3

The Foundations of a Truly Sacred Couple

A study of interfaith families we conducted a few years ago, and it came up with some interesting conclusions. The chief one was that if couples are religious as a way of coming together and committed in their sense of agreement while still acknowledging and working on their differences, then they are religious in something that strengthens their marriage. How you believe and how you communicate is more important, it seems, than the route you go to your faith.

While the topic for this issue of *Foundations* is interfaith marriage, really it is about the faith you bring to your

could have been very diverse. You may have gone to a religious school and your partner may never even have attended religious classes. Or you may have had different ethnic traditions around your religion — Mexican Catholics, have different customs from Irish Catholics, or Polish Catholics or Italian Catholics.

Nevertheless, couples that do come from different traditions have more success not in the fact of understanding the ways to be respectful of another's traditions can be a challenge.

An article in *Common Sense* magazine highlighted a couple in a Hindu-Muslim marriage, and the difference in the way faith is treated in their traditions. Muslims have very

strict ideas about faith that are clear and unbroken. The same cannot be said for faith in the Hindu pantheon, which had much to learn to be consistently with his wife's faith.

The Purpose of Religion

C.S. Lewis, the great Christian author, reminds us, though, that the purpose of church is in being in closer to God. While the ways we express our beliefs may be different, we should not let those differences distract us from the common goal. Our religious expression is meant to help us better understand and express our love for the God who loves us and



Interfaith Marriage

brought us together.

In case if you don't fit the traditional definition of an interfaith couple, there may be some discussion around the role of you in the tradition. Take a look at the exercise and find out some of the ways you give up experiencing your faith. The book never forces a check that is not only for interfaith couples but also for anyone wanting to learn to give together, and to honor their marriage within the context of prayer.

Your faith is the roadmap for your life. If you choose to explore it, faith can become a roadmap for your marriage as well. The course that will come along as you travel through life together will challenge you to find the meaning in them. Whether you think of yourself as deeply religious or less so, having a common ground between you where you can talk about faith, faith, and how, sharing activities or rituals, will smooth all these conversations. It matters not you will be building a marriage that will survive and thrive for a lifetime. •

Your faith is the roadmap for your life. If you choose to explore it,

faith can become a roadmap for your marriage as well.

marriage and how that view of life and life together impacts your relationship. Whether or not you practice the same religion, your religious faith is an important part of your understanding of God and faith will come from the way you were raised. How did your parents view God, or was there any religious marriage in your home or if it was ever getting up?

Different Traditions

Even if you were both raised in the same tradition, it doesn't mean you have the same experience. Your family could have been very loose in their practices, while your spouse's family

Resources



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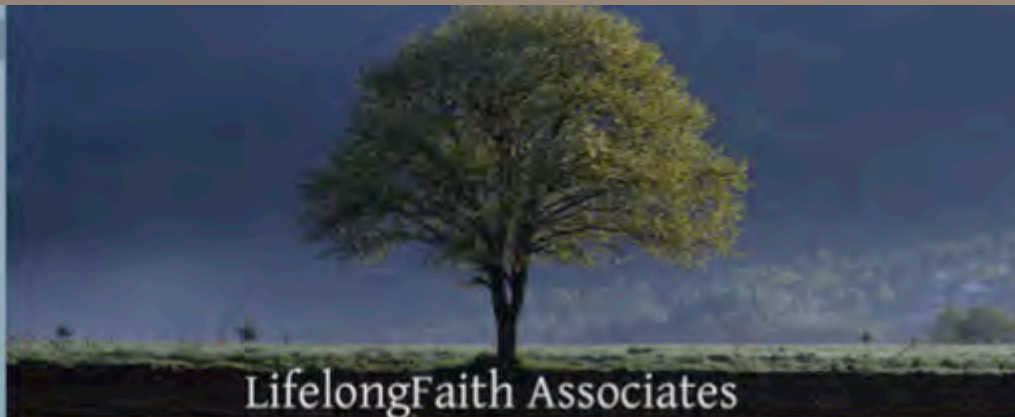
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Latest News

- ***The Spirit & Culture of Youth Ministry* book is now on sale: \$18 for a single copy; \$16 for 5-24; and \$15 for 25+, plus shipping. Take advantage of this sale to buy copies for your church staff and youth ministry team, and to use the book in courses and workshops. Go to the Lifelong Faith Store to purchase copies.**
(Click here for an article that introduces the research findings.)
- **The Spring 2011 issue of *Lifelong Faith* focuses on "Leadership for 21st Century Faith Formation." Download a free copy of "Becoming a Faith Formation Curator" and subscribe to the Journal. Click here to get the article and subscribe.**
- **The Faith Formation 2020 website is redesigned and expanded with new resources and features. Go to www.FaithFormation2020.net.**

Welcome to LifelongFaith.com

LifelongFaith Associates is committed to helping congregations develop lifelong faith formation for all ages and generations, increasing the capacity of leaders and communities to nurture faith growth.

Welcome to the new online home of LifelongFaith Associates. At LifelongFaith.com you can learn about the projects and publications of John Roberto and LifelongFaith Associates.

1. Lifelong Faith Journal - our quarterly journal
2. Faith Formation 2020 Initiative - our multi-year project to help congregations envision and design 21st century faith formation which includes a new book and website
3. Faith Formation in Christian Practices - resources for home and congregation that equip individuals and households to integrate Christian practices into everyday life
4. Faith Formation Learning Exchange - a new online center, developed by John Roberto, for Vibrant Faith Ministries - just follow the link below

Join our mailing list and get announcements and our occasional e-newsletter.

www.faithformation2020.net



Faith Formation for the 21st Century

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What's New in the Faith Formation 2020 Resource Center

Welcome to newly redesigned and expanded Faith Formation 2020 online resource center. The new menu system will make it easier to learn about Faith Formation 2020, develop new initiatives in faith formation, and find the resources you need to design and implement 21st century faith formation in your congregation.

One new feature of the Faith Formation 2020 online resource center is **FF 2020 Strategies and Resources** - providing you with articles, resources, and web links to learn about, develop, and implement faith formation innovations in your congregation. Use the categories on this section's homepage to navigate through the growing number of resources to assist you.

Be sure to sign-up to receive news on additions to the Faith Formation 2020 Resource Center.



Welcome to the Faith Formation 2020 Online Resource Center

Churches across the United States are facing significant challenges in their efforts to provide vibrant faith formation for all ages and generations. The new environment in which Christian faith formation operates requires new thinking, and new models, practices, resources, and technologies to address the religious and spiritual needs of all generations.

The Faith Formation 2020 Initiative guides congregations and their leaders in imagining new directions for faith formation and designing 21st century innovations. The Initiative includes a book, workshops, and this online resource center. The tools and resources on this website are designed to help you and your congregation design models, practices, strategies, and activities to address the spiritual and religious needs of all ages and generations in your congregation today and into the future.

[Read an introduction to Faith Formation 2020.](#)

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faith formation
across the whole
life span.

Special Feature: Faith Formation with Baby Boomers



In the **Adult Center** you will find a new feature section on **Baby Boomers**. On Jan. 1, 2011, the oldest Baby Boomers turned 65. Every day for the next 19 years, about 10,000 more will cross that threshold. By 2030, when all Baby Boomers will have turned 65, fully 18% of the nation's population will be at least that age, according to Pew Research Center population projections. Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, are pioneering a new stage of life between adult midlife—typically focused on career and child-rearing—and old age. This new stage of life spans the decades of the 60s and 70s and is characterized by generally good health, relative financial stability, and an active, engaged lifestyle. Tens of millions of Americans will soon enter this new

stage of adulthood. We are on the threshold of significant changes in our society, in our congregations, and in the lives of millions of people. The Special Feature presents a variety of perspectives on Baby Boomers drawn from research studies, and a number of articles focusing on the practice of faith formation and learning in the