

Strategies for Celebrating Milestones with Children and Adolescents

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hith·er·to

hiTHər'tō

adverb until now or until the point in time under discussion.

Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer [that is, The stone of help], saying, "Hitherto hath the LORD helped us." (I Samuel 7:12, KJ21)

Hitherto. It's an antiquated compound word we rarely hear, if at all. It's a word I remember my father would strategically pull out when we needed to be reminded of God's faithfulness. Those three syllables sent a clear message that,

Up until this point in our lives, God had been faithful.
So not only are we going to pause and
mark this moment in gratitude for God's presence,
we are also going to look back and
give thanks for God's guidance in bringing us to this moment.
And then we are going to turn our eyes to the future
and affirm our belief that God will be with us as we move forward.

"Hither" looks back in recognition and gratitude. "To" looks forward in confidence and hope. It's a lot of firepower for a three-syllable word. To mark the weight of the word, Samuel used a stone. As those who walk alongside of children and adolescents and watch them journey through life's events, we have the opportunity to remind them of the truth embodied in this ancient word. We also have the opportunity to point their families, peers, congregations, and sometimes even the world to the presence of God in those transitional moments. As we mark these moments, consideration should also be given to what "stones" we can offer to symbolize the promise, gratitude and affirmation.

From shared iPhoto accounts to Facebook walls, families are constantly marking, celebrating and sharing milestones in their child's development. A child's birth, a first step, lost tooth, first soccer game and choir concert, homecoming, and first first-day of school and last first-day of school are moments honored with photos. Comments and "like" and "love" and "this makes me laugh" emoji's are posted, continuing the celebration of the event and reminding the family of their extended support.

Many of these occasions are also opportunities for the church to claim these moments as a place in the Holy journey of the life God gave that child. As church leaders, we can help parents celebrate these moments, and show them how to see God's presence in times growth and change. These transitions can

be important times for engaging families in conversations about faith when they are most open to change.ⁱ

Some milestones come from a lifecycle (birth, first hair cut, loss of a tooth, birthdays) and others are less predictable (moving to a new community, buying a new home, the death of a pet). Some come from involvement in a community (first day of school, first soccer game, first dance, Eagle Scout) and others have a unique root in the Christian tradition (baptism, communion, confirmation).

Milestones

Debbie Streicher, a coach at Milestones Ministry, encourages church leaders to approach these moments in the life of a child and of families with these steps:

1. **Name it:** Name the sacred and ordinary events that take place in our daily and normal course of life. By creating a list, others begin to broaden their understanding and recognition of the presence of God in beginnings, changes and endings.
2. **Equip it:** Bring people together to learn about and prepare for milestone. As stories are shared, community is built, understanding is strengthened and awareness of God's presence in moments of transition is increased.
3. **Bless it:** Create a prayer specific to the situation to mark the occasion and to point to the sacred in this ordinary moment.
4. **Gift it:** Like Samuel used a stone to mark the place where he paused to give thanks, a tangible, visible item serves as a reminder of the occasion.
5. **Reinforce it:** Consider a way to follow up with the individual or group gathered to mark the event. This provides a way to grow deeper in understanding for those who participated.ⁱⁱ

The following are examples of milestones that could be offered at various points in the lifecycle between 0-20 years.

1. Preparing the Nursery
2. Baptism
3. First Day in Childcare
4. Going to Preschool
5. First Bible
6. First Communion
7. 5th Grade Leadership Role
8. Confirmation
9. High School Leadership
10. Graduation from High School

Preparing the Nursery

After confirming a pregnancy, parents quickly turn to preparing a nursery or a place where the baby will sleep. It could be as simple as a blanket and a small box in the corner of room already used as a bedroom, or as elaborate as a newly painted room with a crib, dresser and changing table. Setting aside space in the home begins to prepare a parent for setting aside space in one's life for the arrival of a child.

Beyond the necessity of finding a place for a newborn to sleep, considerations of colors and themes are made based on the criteria of creating spaces that are safe, soothing and loving. Of course, these selections are also based on what parents find to be therapeutic and comfortable. The task of helping the child shape an identity is already starting, as the nursery is created.

Preparation: After the announcement of a pregnancy, a church leader could bring (or send) to the home a card of congratulations as well as a crib cross or blanket to be placed in the baby's space.

Experience: When the item is placed in the space prepared for the baby's arrival, a prayer could also be said. Having the prayer written in a card will allow the parent to use those words during the pregnancy, particularly as they walk by or continue to prepare the space. The prayer and gift can serve as reminders that the infant's church family is praying for and eagerly anticipating the arrival of God's new child.

Living it: There will be no need to mark the anniversary of this date because the milestones will continue with the life of the child. However, if a parent loses a baby, it can be important to follow up at the same time of year with a card to let them know the church remembers their loss.

Baptism

For many families, baptism is the entry point into a congregation. The journey of faith begins during a stage when the infant is utterly dependent on others (primarily parents) for survival and growth. Though incapable of comprehending God, the infant's brain is busy discerning patterns and "extracting laws of relationships" which lay a foundation for how God will be understood.ⁱⁱⁱ

In baptism, Christians affirm the claim that "We belong to God," even in our most dependent and unknowing stage of life. This is always the starting point of the individual's faith development. Parents are acutely aware that they are needed "more desperately, more consistently and more frequently than any other stage of life."^{iv} As they stand before a congregation and take their baptismal vows, parents are reminded that they are not alone in this crucial work of physical and spiritual development. They are part of the extended family of God that pledges to participate in creating patterns so the child will grow up extracting laws of loving relationships and discerning God as their source. When an infant is baptized, a congregation "remembers its own baptism." As it recalls that stage of dependence and unknowing, it is joyfully compelled to shape the patterns that will lead a child to faith in God, either through support of the parents or direct contact with the infant.

Preparation: A new couple should either meet with a clergy before the baptism to discuss the theology behind baptism, as well as the opportunities for further faith development and support from the

congregation. If it is a larger congregation, the couples can meet with the clergy in a group setting, thereby building relationships with other couples.

Experience: At a time when demands on the parents are so intense and immediate, it is wonderfully empowering and supportive to see and hear a congregation- some friends, many strangers- say they will help you in raising this child. To know that others have committed to love the child brings a whole new understanding of the family of God to the parents as well as the church family. To “introduce” a new family member can (hopefully!) bring joy to the child as he or she looks out over a sea of smiling faces that are already in love with the newest member of God’s family.

Living it: Some churches give candles to families at the time of the baptism. Some churches offer a bible story that will guide the parents as they shape the child’s faith. Some churches send cards on the anniversary of the baptism, which is a great way to connect with parents, especially those who have not been in attendance regularly.

First day in Church Childcare (1-2 years old)

Maya Angelou, the great American poet, once wrote,

*I've learned that people will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel.*

These are important words as we keep in mind the experience of parents bringing their babies to the nursery for the first time. Though the baby cannot understand who God is, the parents are looking for cues that they are with God’s people and that their child will be treated in a way that he or she will feel safe and loved. Attention to safety will involve knowing the child’s name and having a way to contact the parents if necessary. This of course would be on top of having a clean and safe environment with a good ratio of caregivers to children. Attention to showing the baby he or she is loved will begin with the welcome the family receives. An enthusiastic, confident and centered caregiver exudes peaceful feelings.

To mark the child’s importance and value, the church could have a way to place a name on a cubby for the child’s items, or to offer a personalized sippy cup or plate. A brochure with information about the nursery could also include a prayer to say for your child during worship or Sunday School. Some churches have paid staff in the nursery and others use volunteers. All nursery workers should be properly trained for safety and for hospitality.

Preparation: If the meeting to prepare for baptism takes place at the church, then it could include a visit to the nursery and the opportunity to meet at least one of the caregivers. If this is not possible, a staff person could contact a parent either before they have a child or immediately after to introduce them to the nursery.

Experience: The goal is for the baby to feel loved and welcomed. In order to do this, the parents and the baby need to feel safe. The love and peace of Christ need to be experienced through every detail of the nursery care. Because we believe that God calls us by name, the experience of bringing a child to the

nursery should be marked by something with the child's name on it. A small tag or label for a diaper bag or a personalized sippy cup communicate that the church knows the child and is expecting him or her!

Living it: Quarterly invitations to the nursery or email updates might be a way to continue to communicate with those who have not yet come, as well as those who are in attendance but don't know the caregivers.

Going to Preschool

As children enter preschool (3 and 4 years old), their sphere of influence broadens. For some, this is their first social experience beyond their family. For others, it is simply a different social setting than that of childcare. At this stage, children begin to develop the language and imaginative skills necessary to form concepts of things they cannot see. For example, they can write letters and understand that they refer to concepts that build words. At this time, they also have the ability to generate a concept of God.

Because the imagination is so active at this stage, it is a good time to introduce the stories of the Bible. Children can place themselves in these stories and imagine what it would be like to actually be there. "I wonder..." questions instigate conversations about who God is and how he worked through the people of the Bible.

Children will often ask profound questions about God at this stage ("Can God heal Gramma?" or "Do we really want to live forever with God?") which can lead parents, as well as congregations, to consider their own faith journey and needs for growth.

To mark this transition in the life of a child, a congregation might want to have a "back to (pre-)school" party for families just before the school year starts. At this time, a brief presentation on the changes that will occur in your child's thinking, including positive ways to help children use their imagination. Guidance can be offered in talking with children about faith and opportunities available at the church for children to explore their faith can be presented. This can also serve as a time for young parents to meet and get to know each other, which is especially important as their children begin to make new friends in the classroom. An item like a children's bible to help families explore stories of God's people can be offered so that conversations will occur between parents and children. A keychain or item which can be clipped to a backpack or school bag with a verse on it would also be a good reminder that God is walks beside us as we experience changes.

Preparation: Before parents and children begin preschool, hold a "back to [pre]school" ice cream social or playground party. The agenda will include parents and children getting to know each other, an invitation to be involved in faith development opportunities at church and a bit of an explanation of how to talk to your children about faith in this next stage of their life.

Experience: As parents move to this next stage of parenting, it's heartening to know that the church recognizes and equips parents for this change. As a child's imagination starts to develop, it's reassuring as a parent to know that this is a normal stage of development and to understand how to use it in a healthy way. It's also important to for the church to be there as the parents begin to broaden their

child's social sphere of influence. For the child, it's exciting to know that others are cheering them on (not to mention providing ice cream) as they start doing "big kid" activities like school.

Living: Follow up gatherings could occur for this class perhaps in the spring at "graduation" or again the next fall. Perhaps seasonal contacts such as inviting families to participate in a family Christmas service or an Easter event could occur.

First Bible (7 year old)

In the second grade, most children have reached a literacy level that will allow them to read a basic translation of the bible. Equipped with this new skill, they are excited to show others that they are capable of using their newly acquired ability to do an activity typically reserved in churches for older people. They need an audience to demonstrate this and most churches will provide it.

At this age, although they are earnestly hoping to show adults their competence, anything that sounds like fun is ultimately appealing. In selecting a bible to present, it should be colorful and somewhat flashy in presentation. It should use games, maps, puzzles and activities to expand upon the story. This is not the time to purchase a childish bible or a more thoughtful study bible. The impact of the story will come through a positive interaction with it.

Preparation: The presentation of Bible should be done in a worship setting when the second graders are surrounded by adults. A liturgy can be prepared for the presentation. A class can be held either before or after the service to show the children and the parents how to use the bible. Unique features can also be explored.

Experience: It is always important to mark a developing competency and this is part of what is happening in this milestone. Children are now being recognized for their ability to read (which happens outside the church). There is a level of pride that accompanies the intersection of learning to read and receiving an adult book like a bible. There can also be a level of excitement with the unique interactive tools with the bible.

Living it: After a child receives a bible, there should be an expectation that it should be brought to church on Sundays. During the education hour, it can be assumed that each child has a bible in his or her hands (there should always be extras in the room for visitors or those who forgot).

First Communion (7-8 years old)

Though few Protestant churches have an established timeline for when children should take communion, most Roman Catholic churches provide instruction and opportunities for First Communion in the second grade. This is a time when children are open to engaging in activities that have been previously seen as adult-oriented. They are also interested in new things and greet them with phrases like, "That sounds like fun!"

Participation in the Lord's Supper is an important way to involve this age group in the life of a congregation. They are able to read and are beginning to see the world in more complex ways. They are

interested in stories and able to see multiple levels of meaning in a story. They are also able to observe a process and imitate what others are doing around them.

When children receive communion, they are invited into a sacred practice of a larger community. They are asked in a very new and different way to be a part of the story of Christ and his followers. The practice of taking communion asks for a faithful response for the individual in ways that have never been done before. Receiving communion also provides a way for the family to participate in faithful acts together. It's a common experience that can be discussed by generations. When children are present in the Lord's Supper, a congregation gains a fuller picture of who they are as a family of God. As we look to God to sustain us in the journey of faith, our needs and our understanding of God's provision are expanded when we are surrounded by a breadth of generations.

Preparation: While Roman Catholics parishes have practices in place for preparing children for communion, most Protestant churches do not have a regularly scheduled training event. A yearly opportunity for equipping families to understand and discuss communion is recommended. This might best be scheduled before an intergenerational worship service where communion will be served (like Ash Wednesday or Maundy Thursday for traditions that don't serve communion at every service). There should be a component for children and parents so that it can become a topic of family discussion.

Experience: While Roman Catholics are good at celebrating milestones like First Communion, Protestants are not! Protestants would benefit from marking this day as a special milestone in a child's life. After the training, the experience of being invited into a long history of gathering around a table with other Christians can be elevated with special liturgy and recognition in and after the service. Whether in or after the service, an occasion for the congregation to welcome the new communicants would create a meaningful entry into this new status for young people.

Living it: Though we prepare young people for communion, we are never fully prepared. And so it is a good idea to offer periodic occasions to talk about the Lord's Supper and how our understanding of it (and need for it) changes over the years. This could be worked into the curriculum as something that is discussed on a yearly basis for young (and old)!

5th Grade Leadership Role

For many communities, fifth grade is a transition year. It is either the last year of elementary school or the first year of a middle school. It is also a year when students are confident and open to developing more skills and responsibilities, but need direction. "With a 'lifetime' of experience under-their-belt and a 'no fear' attitude, a kid in this phase is virtually unstoppable."^v They are confident and ready to prove to others how helpful they can be. They are acutely aware of friend groups and who is in their "tribe."

This is a perfect time to invite young people into leadership roles within the church. The impact of making a meaningful contribution to the life and ministry of the congregation will strengthen and deepen the 5th grader's faith. The opportunity to put their faith in action will benefit not only the young person but also the church. While the fifth graders are eager to serve and lead, they also need an adult to shape this leadership. They need to be yoked with an adult who can model what Christian leadership and service looks like. As a congregation, young and old, we all benefit from a broader base of leaders.

Preparation: At the end of 4th grade or the beginning of 5th grade, each young person is given multiple options of ways in which they can become a young leader in the congregation (ushering, greeting, acolyting, helping with younger children in church school, helping with coffee hour, helping to prepare communion, helping with Vacation Bible School, etc.). Perhaps this request is sent to the home or presented at a special meeting. The importance of the role can be communicated with a title, like “junior leader” or “cadet” or “Team 5.” Special consideration should be given to matching the 5th grader with the leadership role. In each area of leadership, adults must be identified and trained to mentor these young leaders. It cannot be assumed that because the 5th grader is confident and eager that he or she understands the task of leadership. Direct attention to mentoring must happen.

Experience: The goal for the individual and the congregation is to create a successful and meaningful leadership experience. It needs to benefit the individual as well as the congregation! It is very empowering for any leader to feel like they are effective. It is also an important reminder to the congregation that leadership and contribution to ministry comes in all shapes and sizes! A special commissioning of 5th grader leaders might serve as a reminder to them as well as the congregation that this is an important time of developing leaders.

Living it: Recognition throughout the year, including team training meetings and celebrations, can reinforce the idea that leadership is an ongoing learning opportunity. After a time of focused mentoring, the individuals can be asked to service in leadership roles on a regular basis and perhaps even train younger leaders.

Confirmation

Confirmation is an opportunity for the church to retell its story and to invite young people to find a place in that story. Typically this occurs sometime during middle school. Since middle schoolers like being a part of a group, this is the perfect time developmentally to offer a class specific to their grade. Expect the unexpected. Young people at this age will surprise you with how astute they can be and in the next minute shock you at how goofy and inconsistent they can be. Growing up is a process and they know it. They are exploring answers and identities, which make it a perfect time to engage young people in faith exploration classes or confirmation.

At this age, young people are looking to people they can trust and respect and are willing to adopt what that person believes or does. In the parish, that means that middle schoolers are willing to sign onto a faith because the people around them have already done this. In other words, they may or may not be able to tell you why they believe certain tenets of faith (at this stage much of it seems obvious and true). They will agree to accept these beliefs because their parents do and the people around them do. In other words, they are agreeing to bind themselves with a people and a tradition, who they trust will teach and guide them in the future.

This is important for a congregation to understand. Though the young person has some understanding of faith, the congregation is still being asked to follow through on the commitments they made at baptism to nurture that child in the Christian faith. It’s an important distinction for parents as well, who don’t think their child is “ready” to make a profession of faith in a broad sense of the word. They are right to think the child doesn’t completely understand the commitment he or she is making (does

anyone, for that matter?). However, there is a social dynamic here that is ripe for this age group. Developmentally, they are looking for “tribes” to which they can align themselves. The congregation needs to be one of those tribes who offers instructions and guidance when the young person is so open to it.

Preparation: Much like the 5th graders are set aside for additional responsibilities within the church, 8th graders can be set aside and recognized for their time of learning and “practicing” faith. This can be a yearlong endeavor or a “season.” Some churches choose to do it over a few weekends. It’s important to remember that middle schoolers are aware that they are in a process of figuring out who they are. The confirmation experience should be designed to be a process as well. Any preparation should include conversations with the parents about what to expect and not expect. The congregation, also an active partner in the process, should be equipped for their role in shaping the faith of 8th graders.

Experience: Though confirmation should be a process, there are moments along the way when it can be highlighted, such as its launch and the official day of confirmation. Again, Roman Catholics are better at celebrating these milestones! Congregations should consider anything they can do to communicate to the young people and their families that this a big deal and worthy of a celebration. The youth, parents and the congregation could participate in a liturgy in a service which commissions the individuals as they begin their time together. Sitting in church together or participating in a group service project reinforces the group experience for young people. A banquet or special liturgy at the time of confirmation elevates the experience for the youth, as well as their families and the congregation.

Live it: We say confirmation is the beginning, not the graduation of our adult church experience. If that is true, then as much or more attention needs to be given to the “living it” part of this milestone. An obvious way to mark this is remind young people of the anniversary of their confirmation. More immediate ways to live out the milestone are in gifts such as an adult bible and a verse to live by. Presenting each young person with a bible verse to shape his or her life provides an ongoing reminder of the commitment made that day. Some churches involved godparents in this process or confirmation sponsors, who commit to the ongoing support and nurture of the child’s faith development.

High School Leadership

High school marks a different way of living for many young people. There are new-found freedoms in choosing classes and after school activities. Relationships can now extend to different grades and opportunities of hanging out on weekends seem to broaden as friends and teammates can drive. This stage in life is marked by freedom. While young people (ages 15-20) are exploring this freedom, they are also dedicating a lot of energy to determining where they belong. They are looking for a tribe that can help them clarify their values and what they believe. They want to matter and to make a unique contribution to the world.^{vi} The church could not be a better partner for this stage of exploration in a young person’s life.

Creating opportunities for leadership and meaningful involvement in the congregation for young people is absolutely essential at this stage of life. Though they come with many skills and a willingness to help, a mentoring relationship is important, not so much to increase skills. The more important task is to interpret the value of their time and talent as they grow in faith. Faith and action must be tied together.

We know that the teenage brain is still developing. In this stage there is a heightened interest in experimenting with new and different behaviors. As the teen experiences positive and negative responses from these new behaviors, he or she is creating new patterns of discernment. It is a time that is highly dependent on feedback- positive or negative. It's crucial that the church be involved in a young person's life, to offer successful experiences, which will lead to positive behavior and patterns of discernment.

Preparation: Young people in grades 9-12 are starting to develop skills in unique ways. Though group service opportunities have their place, high school students will more likely be drawn to a situation that needs the specific gift they can offer. Thought must be given by the church leadership on what specific needs can be met by the unique skills a young person has to offer (e.g., Playing an instrument in worship, teaching a lesson, helping to cook a meal, tutoring at a local school, singing a solo). The high schoolers can be recognized as a group, but this isn't the appeal for them. The focus of appreciation must be on the unique skill each one is bringing to service.

Experience: The student must feel that the work they are doing is meaningful; that their contribution is valuable and something that only they, or other equally qualified persons, can do. Faith is felt at this stage and those feelings often come from acting on their faith. An important component of this kind of leadership is interpreting to the young person that this experience is an expression of their faith.

Living it: Equal or amplified recognition and appreciation go a long way in reinforcing the values of a young person's time and talent. This can be done at least twice a year with notes, gifts, uniforms (all the volunteers wear the same hat or shirt or name tag). These are good reminders that they belong to a team.

Baccalaureate (18 years old)

Nothing says "hitherto" like a Baccalaureate service. In this religious service recognizing graduation, the congregation is not only recognizing and celebrating accomplishments, but also looking backwards and forwards. In this service, the growth of the student and the support of the congregation is lifted up. Both gratitude for the past and hope for the future are named.

As 18 year olds, the law tells our youth they are adults. The state is no longer required to educate them. The choice now lies with them to forge their future- will they go into the work force, into the armed services, or into college? This is exhilarating on one hand, and terrifying on the other. While they are pulling away from the structured life of a high school student, they are entering a new and wide open stage of life and need the advice and guidance of the adults around them more now than ever. Of course it's on different terms...their terms. Social connections aren't as regular but adults need to remind young people of their continued presence and willingness to engage, and when asked, offer advice.

The Baccalaureate service is a great opportunity for the students to reflect on God's faithfulness in the past, especially as it has been revealed through the ministry of the congregation. It's important for the family to see and to celebrate that this congregation has indeed helped them raise their child in faith, as it said it would at baptism. Parents see in this service that they will not be the only ones marking this

change; as the congregation celebrates, it also struggles with ushering the student onto the next stage. The congregation will be changed when that student is no longer there to offer his or her gifts.

Preparation: A Sunday service can be designated on the calendar as a day to celebrate a baccalaureate. To involve several voices, a committee of youth and adults could be formed in January to begin planning. Talents of the young people involved should be considered. Adults who have made remarkable contributions to the young people's lives should be invited to participate.

Experience: The service is a celebration. All students' accomplishments should be lifted up. The students should feel appreciated, embraced and launched into their next stage of life by the congregation.

Living it: Though this service marks the end of a stage of life for high schoolers, it can also point to the next stage. Adults will not be launching them into the unknown alone. They will want to continue their relationship, though in a new way. A gift to remind the student of the congregation's continued care might include a book or a bible. It could be something to place on a desk like a picture frame or a coffee cup. Promises of continued ties could be ensured by a care package delivery scheduled just before exams or a reunion during winter break. The student is still part of the congregation. The bind is looser, but not gone.

Additional Milestones

0-5 years old:

- Preparing the nursery
- Birth
- First Smile
- Washing and folding baby clothes
- First Vacation or Travel
- First babysitter
- First Daycare moment
- First bottle
- First solid food
- First Church Visit
- First Friendships
- First Prayers
- First Songs
- New bed or bedroom
- First day of preschool
- Last day of preschool
- Changes in Childcare
- Pregnancy of new sibling
- Birth of new sibling
- Homecoming of new sibling
- First Steps
- First bicycle

- First play date
- First Friendships
- First artwork

6-10 years old:

- First Communion
- Receiving a Young Reader's Bible
- Meeting Teachers
- First heroes
- First disappointments
- First questions
- First lost tooth
- First phone
- First sleepover
- Changing bodies
- Marking the First Day of School
- Marking the Last Day of School
- Marking Sundays with Travel Sports

10-15 Years Old

- Body Changes
- First crushes
- Confirmation
- First church retreat or mission trip
- First day of Middle School
- Middle School Youth Group
- Middle School Choir
- Middle School Service Project/Mission Trip
- Middle School Worship Involvement
- First Phone
- First Week of Camp (this could probably be in 5-10)
- First Musical Instrument (this could probably be in 5-10 as well)
- Confirmation
- Exam Week

16-20 years old:

- First Day of High School
- High School Mission Trip
- Re-Confirmation
- Driver's permit
- Receiving a drivers' license
- First broken curfew
- First election
- First draft enlistment
- College visits
- First college applications

- Acceptance to a college!
- Graduation
- First day of college
- First job interview
- First day on the job

End Notes

ⁱ Roberto, John. “Strategy 3. Forming Faith through Milestones,” p.1.

ⁱⁱ As presented at the Family Faith Conference, Sept 28, 2016, Avon, Ct.

ⁱⁱⁱ Margie Gunnoe, <http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/faith-formation-from-birth-to-age-20/>

^{iv} Joiner and Ivy, *It’s Just a Phase*, p.15

^v Joiner, Reggie and Kristen Ivy. *It’s Just a Phase, So Don’t Miss it.*

^{vi} *Phase*, p. 109.