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Developing a Lifelong Plan

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LifelongFaith.com

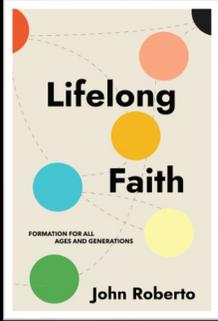
Download the Planning Guide & PowerPoint Presentation from the Lifelong Faith Website:

Home Tab  
New Jersey



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# Resources



The Lifelong Faith Website . . .

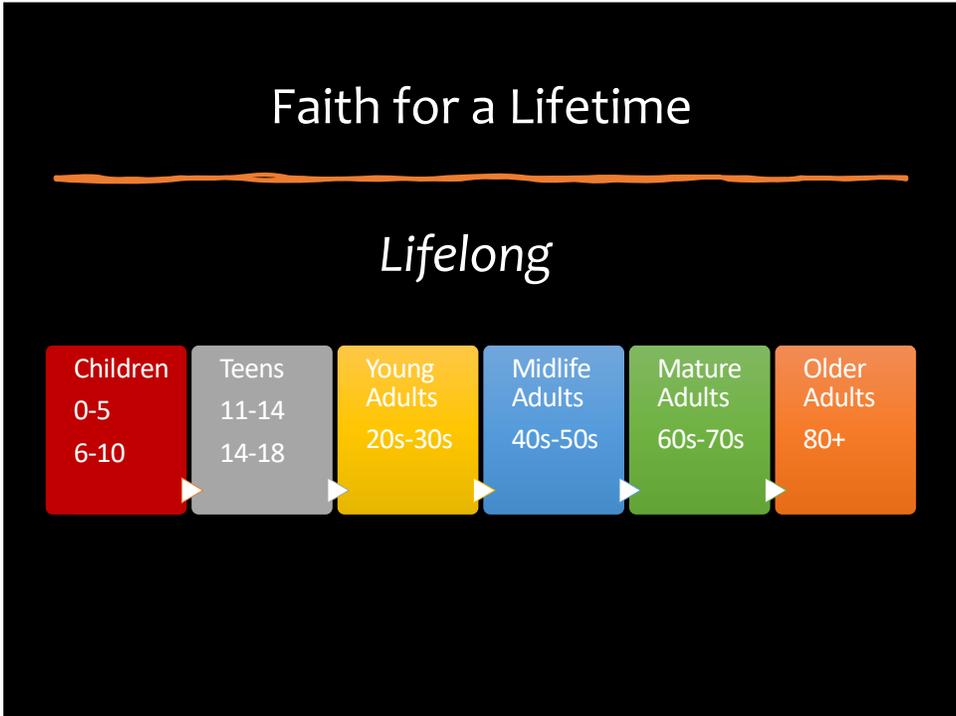
- Goals for Maturing in Faith
- Practices for Forming a Christian Way of Life
- Intergenerational Faith Formation
- Family Faith Formation with Three Generations
- Networks for Forming Faith with All Ages
- Hybrid Faith Formation
- Pathways for Personalizing Formation
- Playlists for Engaging All Ages in Faith Formation
- Models of Lifelong Faith Formation
- Lifelong Faith Library

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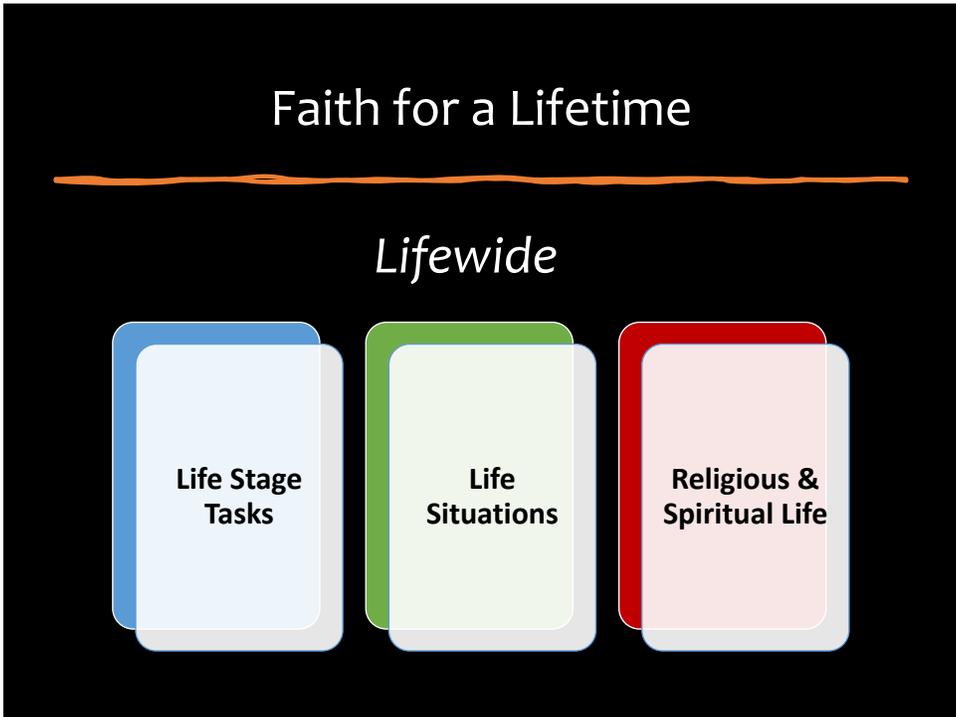
*Accompanying people throughout life as they learn, mature, and practice their faith*



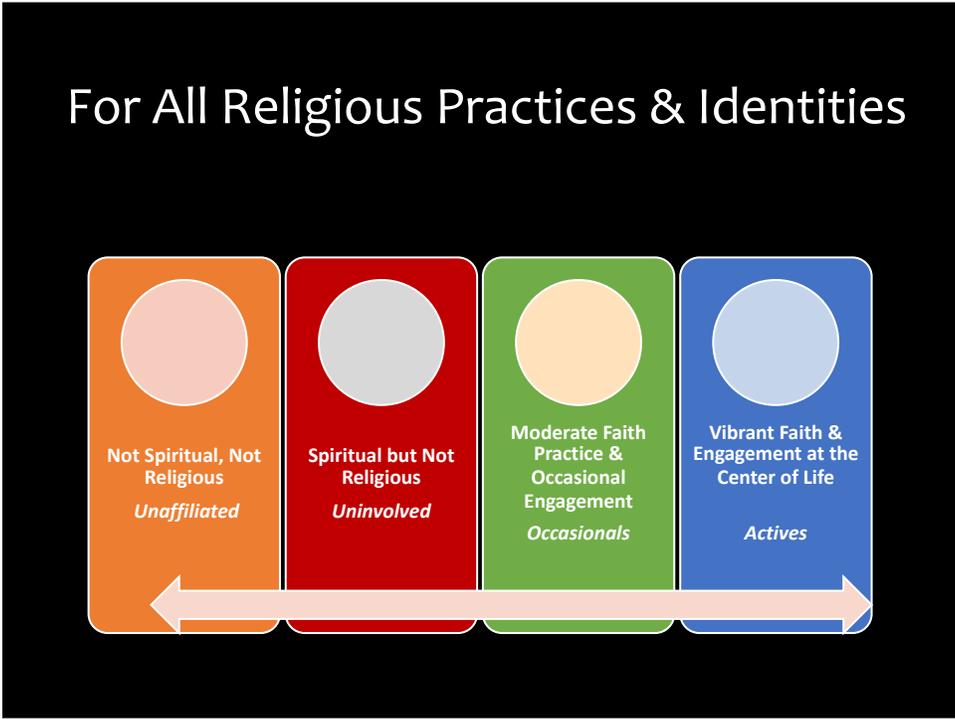
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## What Is This?

- It provides resources, programming, services, and live events for all ages - in physical locations and online formats.
- It provides its resources and programs in multiple languages and in ways that are inclusive of people with special needs and disabilities.
- It provides in-person and virtual career services and mentoring.
- It provides free Wi-Fi access for all ages and assistance in using technology.
- It offers resources, support groups, and programs for all ages, e.g., parents beginning with babies and toddlers and moving through the high school years.
- It offers family-centered programs throughout the year, and a variety of programs and experiences for children and families during the summertime—in person and online.
- It offers after-school programs for children and teens, including help with homework, staffed by older adults.

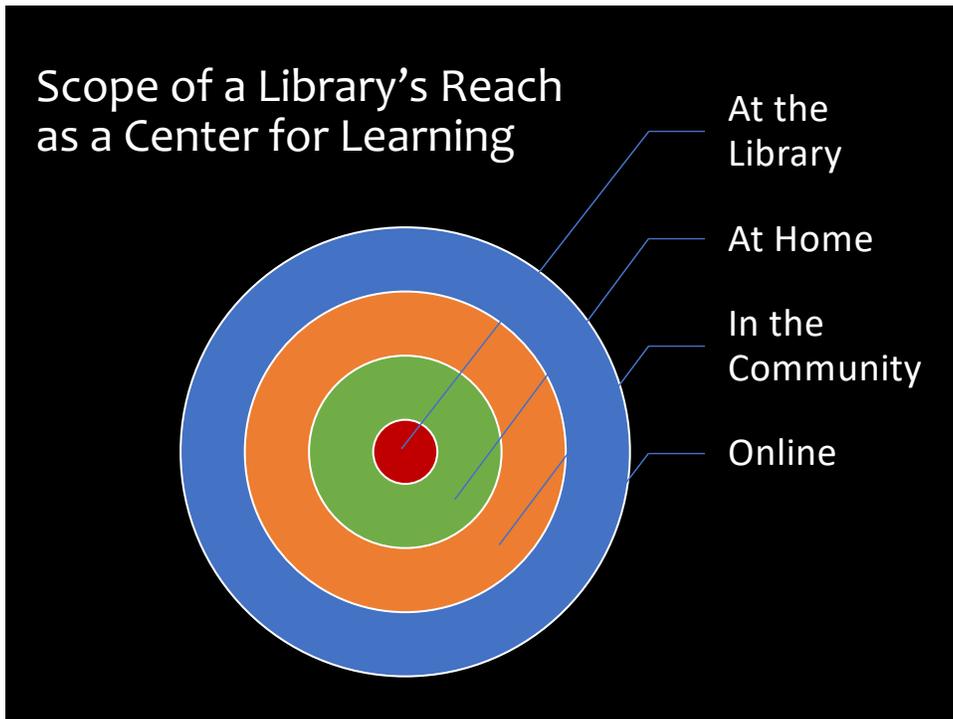
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*How can a church become  
a center for lifelong  
learning and faith  
formation for its members  
and the whole community?*

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## Need to Think and Act Systemically

Systems thinking is a way of helping us view the challenges we face in faith formation from a broader perspective that includes seeing the whole life span and the context of people's lives today, rather than seeing only a specific issue or concern in isolation.

If a problem (or challenge) lingers on, despite our attempts to solve it, maybe the problem is systemic (and not a people or resource problem).

By focusing on the entire system of faith formation, we can attempt to identify solutions that address as many problems as possible in the system. The positive effect of those solutions leverages improvement throughout the system. Thus, they are called "leverage points" in the system. This priority on the entire system and its leverage points is called whole systems thinking.

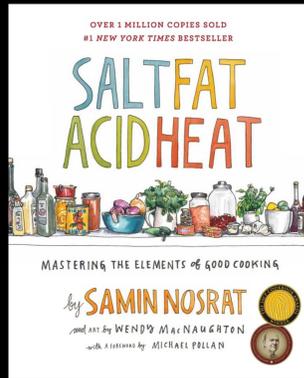
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The 7 Elements of Lifelong Formation

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## What If...



*“The whole idea behind Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat is that if we can learn how to use those four elements—which play a role in everything that we cook—we can learn how, why, and when to use them, and make anything taste good with or without a recipe. The rest, she says, is just a combination of cultural, seasonal, or technical details, for which we could consult cookbooks and experts, histories, and maps.”*

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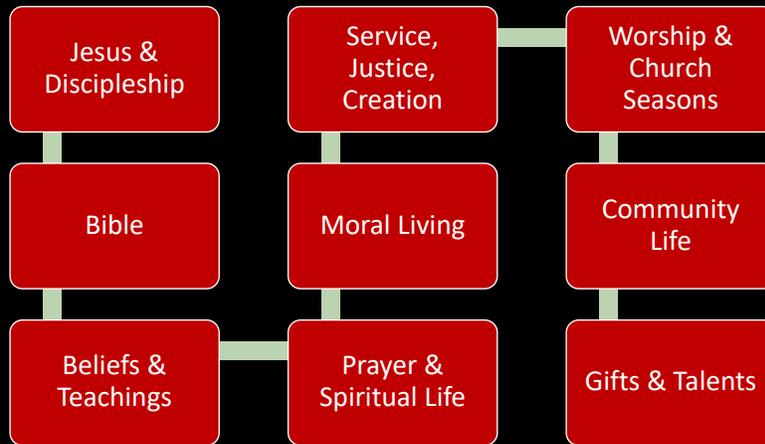
## Elements of Lifelong Faith Formation

1. A Vision of Maturing in Faith
2. Practices for Forming a Christian Way of Life
3. Intergenerational Relationships and Faith Forming Experiences
4. Family Faith and Practice
5. Networks of Life Stage Formation
6. Pathways to Faith Growth
7. Playlists of Faith Forming Experiences



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## A Vision of Lifelong Maturing in Faith



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## Maturing in Faith Goals

Jesus	Developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ
Discipleship	Living as a disciple of Jesus Christ and making the Christian faith a way of life
Bible	Reading and studying the Bible—its message, meaning, and application to life today
Teachings	Learning the Christian story and foundational teachings of the Catholic faith and integrating its meaning into one's life
Praying	Praying—together and by ourselves—and seeking spiritual growth through spiritual disciplines

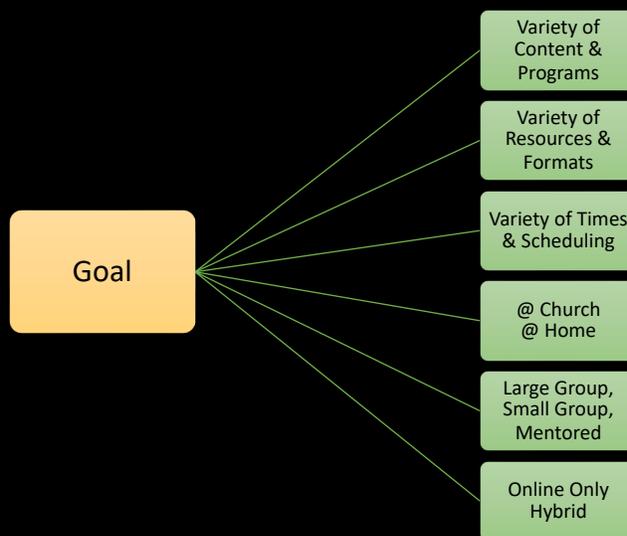
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## Maturing in Faith Goals

Morality	Living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values
Serve, Justice	Living the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace.
Worship	Worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship, ritual celebrations, and the seasons of the church year
Engaged	Being actively engaged in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community
Gifts	Practicing faith in Jesus Christ by using one’s gifts and talents within the Christian community and in the world

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## Many Ways to Address a Goal



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## Practices for Living the Christian Faith

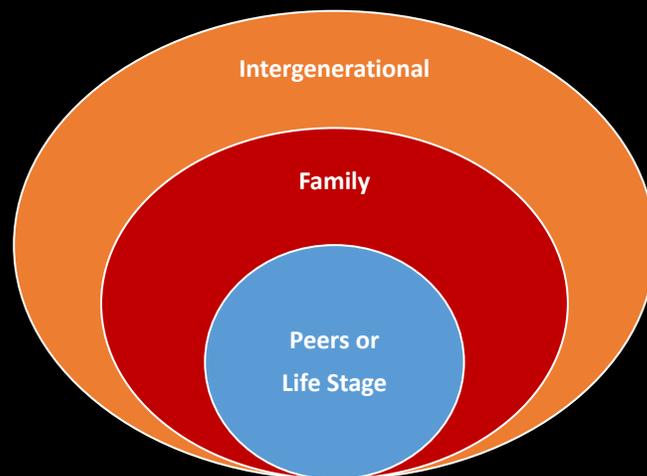
*What if faith formation was more like learning a musical instrument, learning to paint, learning to sing, learning to play a sport, learning to cook, etc.*

Guiding people in learning how to live the Christian way of life

- Learning the practices of the Christian faith
- Being drawn into participation in them
- Learning to do them with increasingly deepened understanding and skill

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## Holistic Faith Formation



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## Intergenerational

*At every stage of life people need to be connected to other generations and have intergenerational faith forming experiences*

1. Design All-Ages Faith Formation around Intergenerational Church Life Events
2. Transform multigenerational into intergenerational
3. Transform age-specific into intergenerational
4. Design new intergenerational initiatives
5. Make intergenerational learning central to church life

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## Family

1. **Focus on parents** – the most significant influence on the religious and spiritual outcomes of young people – their faith and practice, the parent-child relationship, modeling and teaching, family conversations, family faith practices.
2. **Focus on home life** – the primary way by which a religious identity becomes rooted in children's lives are the day-to-day religious practices of the family and the ways parents model their faith and share it.
3. **Focus on faith practices** – that make a significant difference in nurturing the faith of children and teens at home. Raising religious children should primarily be a practice-centered process, not a didactic teaching program.
4. **Focus on parent's relationship with child and parenting style** – warmth and love, balancing religious firmness with flexibility and continuity with agency, talking about religious matters during the week, listening more and preaching less.

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## Family

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- ✓ **Encourage** parents to grow in faith and become faith formers
- ✓ **Equip** parents to incorporate faith practices into family life at home
- ✓ **Engage** parents in education and formation, as well as the **whole family** in faith forming experiences and program

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## Programming *Networks of Faith Formation*

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- ✓ a wide variety of faith-forming experiences in intergenerational, family, and life stage settings
- ✓ a variety of content, programs, activities, and resources
- ✓ content personalized to their spiritual-religious growth
- ✓ a variety of formats: on your own, mentored, at home, in small groups, and in large groups
- ✓ in-person, online, and hybrid
- ✓ anytime, anywhere

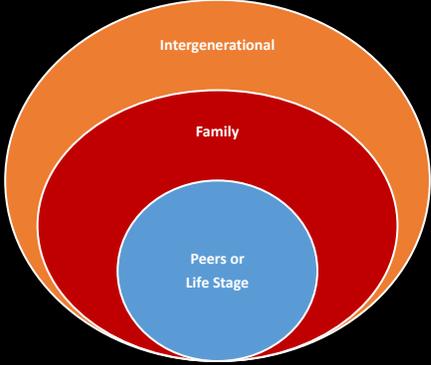
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# Programming

## *Build a Menu of Participation*

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1. Intergenerational Experiences
2. Family Experiences @ Home and @ Church
3. Age-Group Experiences



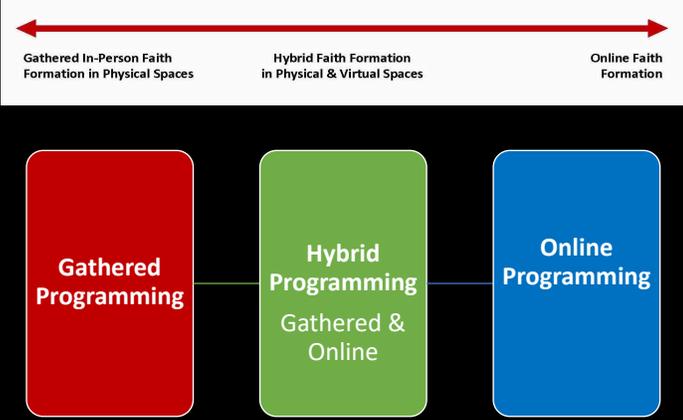
The diagram consists of three overlapping circles. The largest, outermost circle is orange and labeled 'Intergenerational'. Inside it is a red circle labeled 'Family'. The smallest, innermost circle is blue and labeled 'Peers or Life Stage'. The circles overlap in the center, creating a common intersection for all three.

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# Programming

## *Synchronous and Asynchronous*

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The diagram features a horizontal red double-headed arrow at the top, indicating a spectrum. Below the arrow, three boxes represent different faith formation models: 'Gathered In-Person Faith Formation in Physical Spaces' on the left, 'Hybrid Faith Formation in Physical & Virtual Spaces' in the middle, and 'Online Faith Formation' on the right. Below these boxes, three colored rounded rectangles represent programming types: a red box for 'Gathered Programming', a green box for 'Hybrid Programming Gathered & Online', and a blue box for 'Online Programming'. Lines connect the boxes to their respective programming types.

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# Pathways - Personalizing -

*Fashioning faith formation around the faith journeys of families and individuals at every stage of life*

*Guiding each person in his or her growth toward greater maturity in faith*



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## Pathways

Goals or Themes	1 = I'm a beginner in this aspect of my faith.	2 = I'm growing in this aspect of my faith	3 = I'm maturing and going deeper in this aspect of my faith.	4 = I'm sharing my faith and gifts with others.
Relationship with Jesus				
Living as a disciple				
Bible				
Prayer				
Moral Living				
Service / Justice				
Tradition/Teachings				
Worship				
Gifts & Talents				

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# Playlists

## 24x7 Faith Formation

The idea of a playlist is simple: it is a sequence of activities and resources on a topic designed for individual and/or small group learning, usually available on a digital platform.



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**MARCH 2, 2022**  
**ASH WEDNESDAY**

**taking faith home**

*God's grace is more powerful than sin.*

**ASH WEDNESDAY BIBLE READINGS**

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Ash Wednesday observance.

<p><b>Wednesday</b></p> <p><b>Joel 2:1-2, 12-17</b></p> <p><b>Psalm 51:1-17</b></p> <p><b>2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10</b></p> <p><b>Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21</b></p>	<p><b>Call to repentance</b></p> <p><b>A prayer for forgiveness</b></p> <p><b>Messengers of Christ</b></p> <p><b>The practice of faith</b></p>
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**SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR ASH WEDNESDAY**

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Psalm 51:1 (NRSV)*

**PRAYERS AND BLESSING**

**A Prayer for Ash Wednesday:**  
Dear God, forgive us and renew us with your constant love and mercy through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

**Mealttime Prayer:**  
God gives us water. God gives us bread. Let us give thanks for now being fed. In Jesus name we pray, amen.

**A Blessing to Give:**  
May the God of steadfast love restore your soul through Christ Jesus our Lord.

**MARCH 2, 2022**

**HYMN FOR ASH WEDNESDAY**  
*Return to God*

**taking faith home**

**ASH WEDNESDAY MILESTONES**

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

**CARING CONVERSATIONS**

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When is a time you were sorry for your actions and wanted to apologize?
- How does God's forgiveness free you to live your life for the care of others?

**DEVOTIONS**

*Read: Psalm 51:1-17.*

This psalm is referenced in hymns. Individual verses are used in Christian liturgy. Its beautiful poetry and powerful message of repentance and divine forgiveness have comforted the faithful for thousands of years. At the heart of the psalm is a recognition of human sin. More revealing than the various ways of describing human brokenness is the psalm's description of God's activity that forgives and renews lives: mercy, steadfast love, and abundant mercy (v. 1). These words can remind us of God's three essential characteristics: merciful, gracious, and steadfast love (see Exodus 34:6). God's ways are so powerful and loving that all our brokenness is overcome with divine mercy that creates in us a new heart, even though the new heart will break again and again.

*Discuss: What does it mean to you that God's grace is more powerful than your sin?*

*Pray: God of mercy, grace, and steadfast love, cleanse our hearts and renew our spirits to trust in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.*

**SERVICE**

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Ash Wednesday Bible Readings and the theme for the day, who is someone you know that you could tell about God's mercy and steadfast love?

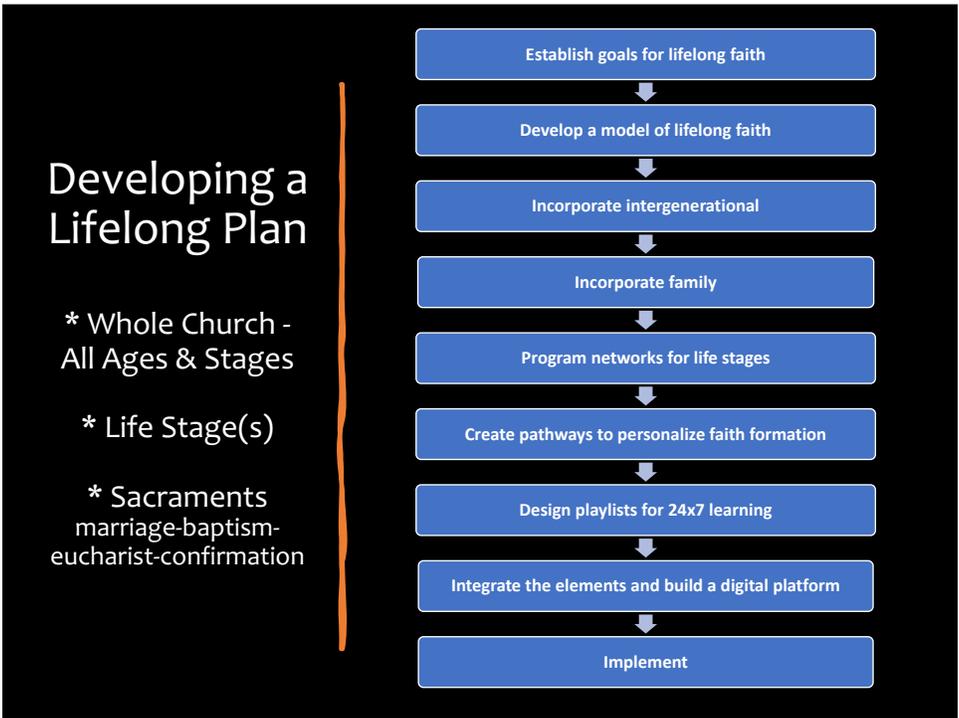
**RITUALS AND TRADITIONS**

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. Lent is a time of repentance and confession. As a way to recognize this day, gather around a fire pit with friends and family. Invite everyone to think about something they feel bad about doing or saying to someone. Then give each person a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Ask each person to write what they thought about on the paper. Small children can draw a picture with crayons. Next, tell each person to crumple up their paper and throw it into the fire. After the papers become ashes, say together: **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.** (Psalm 51:10)

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In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)

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## Developing Leadership

- **Work with the time commitments that fit people's schedules.** If leaders can serve for one day or one weekend per year, then have an opportunity ready for them. If leaders can serve for a month (four weeks) in the fall and again in the spring, have four-week program options for them.
- **Offer a variety of roles.** Many people don't want to teach or lead a program but would like to mentor or guide people one-to-one or in a small group. Develop mentoring relationships for people to learn how to pray, to serve those in need, and much more.
- **Develop leadership roles with fewer tasks and divide up a large leadership role into smaller responsibilities.** It's easier to find and prepare people for a more limited and clearly defined leadership role, than to find a leader to do a large job. It is also a way to involve more leaders in a project or program.

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## Developing Leadership

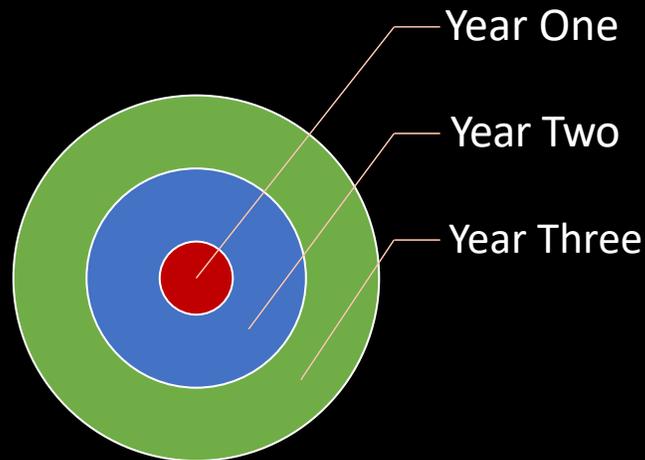
- **Design a program with a primary leadership role (teaching, presenting, facilitating activities) and support roles.** For example, a children's program might have a lead teacher (or two) and adults or youth who serve as small group activity leaders. Small group activity leaders make a four-week commitment each year. The same could apply to any other program where there are lead presenters or facilitators and small group leaders.
- **Design programming in shorter units of time.** Rather than a twenty-four-week program with one leader, create four, six-week minicourses—each with a different leader. Eight-week programs can be conducted in two four-week minicourses.

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## Involvement Over Time



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## Planning

*sustain – enhance – expand - create*



- **Short-Term Planning** – ideas that can be integrated into existing plans and programs OR can be designed and implemented quickly in the 2022-23 program year
- **Mid-Term Planning** – ideas that need more design time and that can be implemented within one or two years (2023-24)
- **Long-Term Planning** – ideas that need design time, piloting and testing, and then implementation over the next several years

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