



GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

#107 - November 2019

A Best Practice: Choices and Self-Direction in Adult Faith Formation (Part II)

In **GEMS #90** and our last newsletter, we explored some endeavors in offering choice and self-direction in faith formation opportunities for families and in adult faith formation in our parishes.

Because of so many advantages and various tools available to us today, we can provide adult faith formation with the opportunity for **personalized and customized learning and faith growth**, giving adults an active role in shaping their own learning and moving along their own personal trajectories of faith growth. Personalizing faith formation is tailoring learning around each adult's strengths, needs and interests – including enabling choice in what, how, when and where people learn, growing in faith and discipleship.

This issue will continue the exploration of **personalized and customized learning and faith growth** by looking at one approach: **personal pathways for adults**.

What is the Pathways Model?

A Pathways Model is a process for helping people discern where they are in their faith journey and to chart a path for faith growth – to get from where they are to a closer relationship with Jesus and a deeper practice of the Catholic faith.



People should be able to clearly understand where they are in their faith journey and their next steps in faith growth. They don't have to do everything, they just need to do the one next thing.

A pathway

- is life-centered, reaching into every area of a person's life (relationships, family life, life transitions, marriage, parenting, financial

stewardship, spiritual formation, professional and work life, service to others, and more

- is holistic, incorporating the whole person: head, heart, and hands
- focuses on faith maturing. The goal of a Pathway is to develop disciples and promote faith growth. A Pathway is created around the church's vision of discipleship and mature faith, identifying characteristics of faith maturing that can be used for people to discern their faith journey and chart a path for growth.

Designing a Pathways Model

One possible way of designing a pathways approach would be:

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

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Four Examples of the Pathway Model



Bear Creek United Methodist Church, Houston, TX (https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/mapping_your_spiritual_journey.pdf) provides an assessment tool to help adults determine where they are on their spiritual journey as a disciple.

Adults are invited to:

- Complete the 48 statements based on their immediate reaction.
- Transfer their answers to the sheet, Getting Your Bearings, which places their answers (and totals) in three categories: Worship, Walk and Work.

The tool then provides four possibilities of “Where You Are on Your Journey”: standing on the shore, wading in, splashing around and diving in. In each of the areas - *Worship*, *Walk*, *Work* – and for each of the four “places,” suggestions of ways of growth are given; for example:

Where you are on your journey

If your total in any area was...	0 – 28	29-48	49-67	68-80
You are ...	<i>Standing on the Shore</i>	<i>Wading In</i>	<i>Splashing Around</i>	<i>Diving In</i>
To move forward, try...				
<i>Worship</i>	Alpha	How to Read the Bible/How to Pray	Epic of Eden	Disciple, Christian Believer, Jesus and the Gospels
<i>Walk</i>	BC 101, Sunday School classes	Christian Life Studies	Spiritual Disciplines	Bible Studies
<i>Work</i>	Service Opportunities	Everyday Ethics	Everyday Evangelism; Spiritual Gifts	Leadership 101

Various churches explain the four “steps” or “levels” or “places” of where people are in different ways, for instance:

- Inquiring, Getting Started, Making Progress and Going Deeper
- planting, nurturing, shaping, and sharing
- exploring, getting started, going deeper, and centering
- believing in Christ, growing in Christ, close to Christ, and Christ-centered

Flowing from their name, Bear Creek United Methodist Church has used: standing on the shore, wading in, splashing around, and diving in.

Standing on the Shore (Exploring Christ)

Who are you?

- People who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ and/or are not involved in the life of a church
- People we do not know personally or as a congregation
- People not connected to Bear Creek UMC

What do you need now for the journey?

- Help in developing a relationship with Jesus Christ
- Compelling worship experiences that stretch them upward
- A sense of belonging
- Help in understanding the Bible in a deeper way
- Leaders who model spiritual growth

Wading In (Growing in Christ)

Who are you?

- People with some level of contact with Bear Creek UMC but have not become full participants in the life of our church
- People who are on board with the core beliefs of our faith
- People becoming more comfortable with spiritual practices and poised to grow spiritually
- People who are hesitant to make their faith known to people outside of church

What do you need now for the journey?

- Help in developing a personal relationship with Christ
- Help in understanding the Bible in greater depth
- Church leaders who model spiritual growth

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- Compelling worship experiences that stretch them upward
- Challenge to grow and move onward in faith

Making a Splash (Close to Christ)

Who are you?

- People who have made a commitment to Bear Creek UMC and are actively involved in the life of the church
- People making their relationship with Jesus part of everyday life
- People who are confident of God's presence and power
- People who connect daily with God through personal spiritual practices
- People beginning to show signs of spiritual transformation

What do you need now for the journey?

- Help in understanding the Bible in greater depth
- Help in developing a personal relationship with Christ
- Church leaders who model spiritual growth
- Challenge to grow and move onward in faith
- Encouragement to take personal responsibility for spiritual growth

Diving In (Christ-Centered)

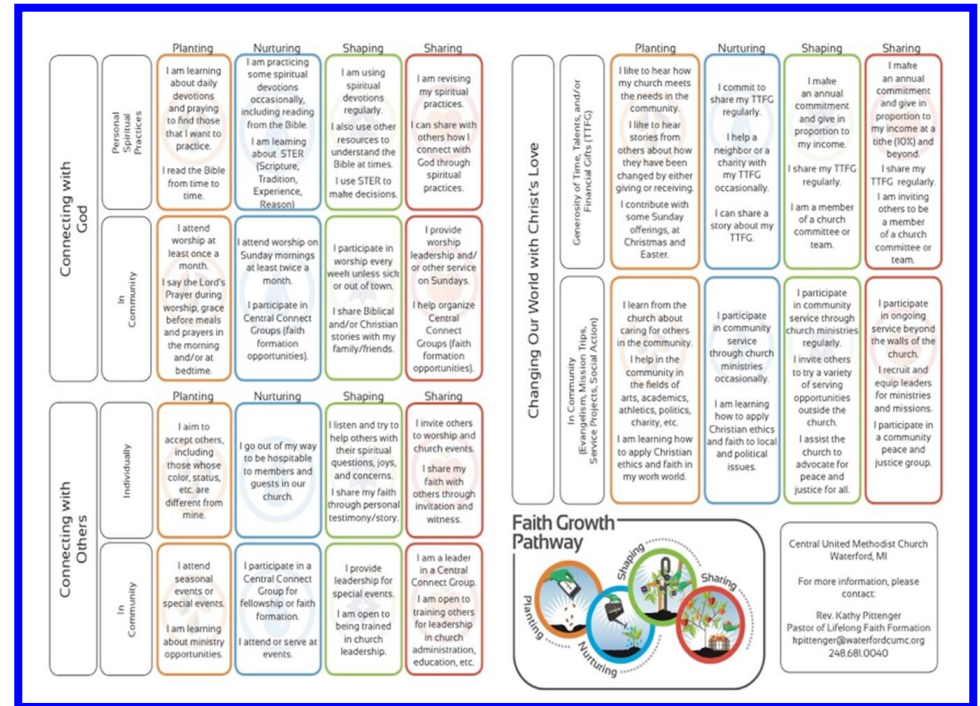
Who are you?

- People who are in love with God and exhibit the love of Christ in every facet of their lives as they serve through Bear Creek UMC
- People who tithe, serve, and evangelize as a way of life
- People willing to risk everything for Christ

What do you need now for the journey?

- Help in understanding the Bible in greater depth
- Help in developing a personal relationship with Christ
- Church leaders who model spiritual growth
- Challenge to grow and move onward in faith
- Encouragement to take personal responsibility for spiritual growth

https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/faith_growth_pathway_central_umc.pdf has used a gardening image to explore four different “places” people might be in their faith journey: planting, nurturing, shaping, and sharing as they connect with God, connect with others, and changing our world with God’s love.



As this chart (pathway) is completed on their website, people will be able to click on each square to find suggestions for formation and activities for growth.



Central United Methodist Church, Fayetteville, AR provides a tool for suggested pathways in a pamphlet form as well as on their website where it can be downloaded (<http://centraltolife.com/pathways/>)



The leadership of Central United Methodist Church in Waterford, MI (<http://waterfordcumc.org/worship/faith-pathway/>) and

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In addition to a reading list, the website lists various opportunities for ongoing formation which take place at the church.

PATHWAYS to Spiritual Growth
under the guidance of the Holy Spirit

How am I Doing with my Membership Vows?	BELIEVING IN CHRIST	GROWING IN CHRIST	CLOSE TO CHRIST	CHRIST-CENTERED
Prayers & Personal Devotional Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When I pray, I focus on my needs. I seek to grow closer to God through prayer. I ask God for things or circumstances that I desire. I seldom read the Bible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I acknowledge my sin and have received God's forgiveness. I thank God for who He is and what He is doing in my life. I pray occasionally to seek God's direction for my life. I pray occasionally for other people. I read the Bible occasionally to know God, the truth, and find direction for my life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I pray regularly with others. I pray regularly for the church, the city, the poor and the persecuted. I engage in spiritual disciplines like fasting, journaling, solitude, Sabbath, scripture memorization, etc. I experience times of solitude to listen to God's direction. I connect with God in a powerful way through prayer, solitude and/or Scripture. I am disciplined in my spiritual practices. I regularly read the Bible to apply God's teachings to my life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I pray daily with others. I pray daily for the church, the city, the poor and the persecuted. I pray for people I do not know. I view prayer as a constant conversation with God, as opposed to a specific time. I experience an ongoing dialogue with God throughout my day. I read the Bible daily to deepen my relationship with God.

Their Pathways moves from “Believing in Christ” to living a “Christ-Centered Life.”

Because of differing personalities, individual preferences, and past experiences, Christians often find they have experienced growth in some areas more easily than in others.

Pathways helps to identify those areas where more intentionality is needed.

The following screenshot shows one section of the pathways chart: prayer and personal devotional practices.

How am I Doing with my Membership Vows?	BELIEVING IN CHRIST	GROWING IN CHRIST	CLOSE TO CHRIST	CHRIST-CENTERED
Prayers & Personal Devotional Practices	<p>First steps toward spiritual growth for believers who desire to learn more about the Christian faith, the world and the Church.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When I pray, I focus on my needs. I seek to grow closer to God through prayer. I ask God for things or circumstances that I desire. I seldom read the Bible. 	<p>Believer growing in Christ primarily through large group experiences while developing a heart for the needs of others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I acknowledge my sin and have received God's forgiveness. I thank God for who He is and what He is doing in my life. I pray occasionally to seek God's direction for my life. I pray occasionally for other people. I read the Bible occasionally to know God, the truth, and find direction for my life. 	<p>Mature believer who desires a deeper level of shared life with others while also seeking ways to unselfishly serve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I pray regularly with others. I pray regularly for the church, the city, the poor and the persecuted. I engage in spiritual disciplines like fasting, journaling, solitude, Sabbath, scripture memorization, etc. I experience times of solitude to listen to God's direction. I connect with God in a powerful way through prayer, solitude and/or Scripture. I am disciplined in my spiritual practices. I regularly read the Bible to apply God's teachings to my life. 	<p>Christ-centered believer who consistently surrenders to God's will, reproduces the Christian faith in the life of others and lives a life of service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I pray daily with others. I pray daily for the church, the city, the poor and the persecuted. I pray for people I do not know. I view prayer as a constant conversation with God, as opposed to a specific time. I experience an ongoing dialogue with God throughout my day. I read the Bible daily to deepen my relationship with God.

2018 SPRING ADULT CLASSES

Classes are a great way to make lasting relationships and grow in the body of Christ. Registration for 2018 spring classes is now open! For more information, contact info@centralvalley.com or call the church office at 479-442-4237.

Click here for info on Central Children's Ministries
Click here for info on CSM Jr. & Jr. High

"Going Deeper" Small Group
Wednesdays at 6 p.m. | Beginning January 10
No Cost | Led by Megan Latta
Each Sunday at Central and Central at least three pastors are preaching from the same Scripture passage and on the same topic. Yet, the pastors deliver their messages quite differently. "Going Deeper" provides the chance for participants to come together and discuss Sunday's sermons and to review, personalize, and encourage application of the sermons as well as ask questions. The group will also discuss what impressed, surprised, encouraged, and challenged them. "Going Deeper" is a great way to learn from one another and grow deeper in discipleship.
Click Here to Register

Epic of Eden: Ruth
Wednesdays at 6 p.m. | 6-Week Study | Beginning Wednesday, January 24
No Cost | Led by Jack Skelley
God often uses the most unlikely people to accomplish His plans and purposes. No doubt Ruth was considered an unlikely choice, even an outsider. However, God watched Ruth into His purposes of redemption for all people.
Click Here to Register

Men's Bible Study
Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. (Fellowship at 6 p.m.) | Beginning January 10
No Cost | Led by Phillip Crippen and Bobby Farah
This group will spend twelve weeks studying "A Man and His Trade" and "A Man and His Work," Volumes 3 & 4 of the 33 Series by Authentic Manhood.
Click Here to Register

Young Marrieds Small Group
Wednesdays at 6:10 p.m. | Beginning January 10
No Cost | Led by Tom and Tammy Smith
Would you like a fresh breeze to blow in your marriage? Do you long for a marriage where intimacy and communication are a reality instead of a dream? The Young Married small group will be studying Chip Ingram's Experiencing God's Dream for Your Marriage. This twelve part topical series examines God's design for your marriage and provides practical instruction that will help you make your marriage what God desires it to be. This group is for married couples in their 20s & 30s and is limited to 12 people (6 couples).
Click Here to Register

Empty Nest - Launch Your Encore
Wednesdays at 6 p.m. | Beginning January 10
No Cost | Led by Lori Hayes
Navigating the waters of post-career life can be challenging. Launch Your Encore- Finding Adventure & Purpose Later in Life by Hans Finzel & Rick Hicks, speaks to boomers in a way that both confronts the reality of this stage and includes biblical



Paradise Valley United Methodist Church, Paradise Valley, AZ, (www.pvumc.org) suggests pathways of heart, mind, soul and strength to help people think about who they are and how they want to continue to grow.

Pathways: Step Out of Your Pew and Onto a Path

Pathways is PVUMC's approach to spiritual growth and formation.

Click here to read more about our current Pathways program

God's Love in Action

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Which Pathway Will I Follow? Heart, Mind, Soul or Strength?

- Step 1: Take the assessment. Ask yourself: Where is God leading me?
Step 2: If Christianity is new to you, select an (E) entry-level class.
Step 3: If you have been on the path for a while, step into a class that will challenge you, and help you continue your journey.

Register by calling the church at 602-840-8360, or email mfouahfi@pvumc.org. Email patforever@pvumc.org if you need guidance. Let us know how we can help you start or continue your journey of faith.

Pathway of the Heart

- I cherish warmth in my relationships.
- My decisions are led by my feelings.
- There are stories in the Bible that warm my heart.
- I value harmony and peace.
- I view God as a loving, nurturing parent.
- I connect with people through emotions.

Pathway of the Mind

- I use logical analysis to come to conclusions.
- I look for objective information.
- I try to determine the cause and effect of things.
- I like to study the Bible and think about its teachings.
- I view God's laws and precepts as rules for giving order to the world.
- I might appear aloof because I'm thinking deeply.

Pathway of the Soul

- I tend to project possibilities for the future.
- I sense and experience things that cannot be seen or measured.
- Silence, meditation, and reflection are important to me.
- I appreciate metaphorical language.

Pathway of Strength

- I have a strong desire to make life better for the poor and oppressed.
- I like to do things that are practical and help people.
- Doing hands-on, physical activities is more satisfying to me than reading and discussing what I read.

The assessment and explanation of their suggested pathways can be found on the church website.



Adding New Luster to an Older Gem

[GEMS #64-66](#) explored various ideas which parishes are doing to support grandparents in their role today. You might want to check these additional helps:

- Long distance grandparents
<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2019/08/21/long-distance-grandparenting-not-easy-heres-how-these-families-make-it-work>
- Connecting with Grandchildren
https://grandkidsmatter.org/hot-topics/grandchildren/9-creative-ways-to-connect-with-grandchildren-using-skype-or-facetime/?mc_cid=ac6b94b352&mc_eid=62ea809a65



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Past issues of **GEMS** are archived at www.janetschaeffler.com

Additional ideas for Adult Faith Formation Planning and Best Practices can be found in:

- *Deepening Faith: Adult Faith Formation in the Parish*
<https://www.litpress.org/Products/4652/Deepening-Faith>
- *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation*
http://www.lifelongfaith.com/store/p25/The_Seasons_of_Adult_Faith_Formation.html and <http://www.lifelongfaith.com/2015-adult-faith-formation-symposium.html>



Step Out of Your Pew and Onto a Path

Pathways is our approach to faith formation and spiritual growth for adults at Paradise Valley United Methodist Church. Whether Christianity is new to you, or whether you are a lifelong Christian, there's a pathway for you.

This spring, we invite you to step out of your pew and onto a path. Walk with others as you take a spiritual journey. Allow the Holy Spirit to ignite your faith and transform your life as you create community with others. Let Christ shape and enrich your heart, mind, soul and strength, in all the fullness of God's love and grace.

Journey of Faith: An Introduction to Pathways

Leaders: Senior Pastor Dave Summers and Kim Summers
Mondays, Jan 30-Feb 13, 2017
6:30-8:30pm, Fireside Room, F8
Not sure where to begin? Join our senior pastor and his wife, Kim, in this three-week course to help you get started or move further along in your spiritual journey. The class includes an introduction to the Bible and the United Methodist Church, how to discover your spiritual gifts, and devotional practices that enrich your life of faith. Gain a clearer sense of the pathways of the heart, mind, soul and strength, and be able to better discern where God is inviting you to journey further.

Heart

NEW: The Gathering Leaders: Clergy, in conjunction with Adult Learning / Welcoming and other Ministry Teams
Sundays in 2017, TBA
10:30-11am, Fellowship Center
Want to know more about PVUMC or about how to connect with others who are here on Sundays or

Centering Prayer

Leader: Kathy Kramer-Howe
2nd Thursday of the Month
Jan-May 2017 (no class in April)
6:15-7:15pm, H6
Experience the Thomas Keating method of centering prayer at this monthly class. Learn how to use meditative silence and contemplative prayer as a way to experience God's presence. Email Kathy at kramerhowe@gmail.com for more information, or just come to class.



Women's Retreat: Prayer: Mind, Body, Spirit

April 28-30, 2017
Spirit in the Desert
Retreat Center, Carefree, AZ
Registration begins February 1 and ends March 27 for our annual women's retreat. Brochures will be available January 22. Room with a friend and pay \$210/person for the weekend. A single room costs

Enneagram Opportunities

Visit <http://arizonanenneagram.org/> to read about and register for Enneagram classes hosted by PVUMC, including the 3rd Thursday of the month AEA (Arizona Enneagram Association) MeetUp, 6:30-8:45pm in H7. Scholarship assistance is available. For more information on classes, workshops and AEA speaker events, please contact Rev. Andrea Dress, 602.840.8360, ext 142, or andrea@pvumc.org.

New: Yoga for Everyone

Leaders: Mary McGill and Mary Thomson, RYT's, Desert Song
Wednesdays, year-round, beginning Jan 11, 2017
6-7:10 pm, H1
Yoga for Everyone, led by registered yoga teachers from **Desert Song** offers a free, weekly yoga group practice for all levels. Bring your mat and a towel or blanket, and wear comfortable clothing.

One Day Experiences and Weekly Reflections: Gifts of the Dark Wood

During Lent, which begins Ash Wednesday, March 1 and ends on Easter Sunday, April 16, the Transformational Liturgy Ministry

All that is offered for the current year – to accompany people on the various pathways - is also available on the website as well as in a printed booklet available for each member.