



# GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

*from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study*

#243 - August 2025

## A Best Practice: Ministry for Prime Timers

Previous **GEMS** issues have reflected on ministry to the eldering population in our parishes and archdioceses (**GEMS #64-66, #75-77, #83, #105, #167, #169, #171**). Fortunately, with the growing awareness of the seasons of adult life, especially the [seasons of adult faith formation](#), there is an increasing recognition of the necessity to respond to the needs of our eldering adults.

This issue highlights the Prime Timers Ministry at Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church, Brookhaven, Georgia. Sara Cash, ministry leader of the Prime Timers, began and organized the ministry as a volunteer (<https://www.olachurch.org/parish-life-ministries>). In telling me about the ministry, Sara said, “Thank you for your interest in this ministry that means the world to me. I just love its members!”

Sara explains that the ministry is open to people 65 and older. Their focus is on faith, service and fellowship. They plan a yearly calendar to incorporate all three areas, trying to offer activities at different times to accommodate schedules as well as being aware of ways to accommodate differences in mobility.

Some of the general activities in each of these three areas include:

## Faith

- Gathering together for prayer services, liturgies or to pray the Rosary
- Bolstering faith with speakers on special topics
- Sharing information on newly released books or podcasts
- Organizing local outings (to other parishes/Monastery of the Holy Spirit etc.)



## Service

- Collaborating with other ministries within the parish such as the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts
- Establishing relationships with local nonprofit organizations or charities to understand their needs and volunteer opportunities (e.g. Children’s Hospital of Atlanta and Mercy Care)
- Incorporating opportunities for those who can travel and being mindful of creating activities for seniors with limited mobility or who are homebound



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## Fellowship

- Organizing dinners that are usually held in the parish hall, offering different themes throughout the year including Summer Cookout, Oktoberfest, Derby Party, Murder Mystery, Dinner and a Movie, Soup and Salad Night
- Plan fun outings such as riding around the area to view Christmas lights; trips to museums and performances; and various tours
- Recognize members during the year, such as on birthdays or Veterans Day
- Provide opportunities for unstructured gatherings; reserve space on the parish campus and furnish items like playing cards or puzzles
- Prime Timers Garden



Let's highlight a few of the events

## Lunch & Learns

These gatherings are held monthly in a room at the parish where members bring a bagged lunch and listen speakers on various topics.

Often members of the parish clergy pop in to say hello and join the group in learning.

When COVID impacted their ability to gather in person, they began meeting on Zoom every Tuesday and Friday for 40 minutes. Today they continue to Zoom twice a week.



## “Spotlight” on a Prime Timer

One feature that came about during the past year includes a monthly “Spotlight” on a member where someone shares his or her life story with the group via Zoom.

People have found it to be a wonderful way to learn about one another; it's an opportunity to invite someone to share details not previously known.

## Intergenerational Collaboration and Gatherings

The various ministry teams of the parish work with other ministries so that can various ages can be involved together in some of the activities. Events include:

- Veterans banquet where veterans of the parish are recognized. Girl Scouts helped host this by making desserts and serving. They also create centerpieces for the event (including rocks with inspiring messages for guests to take home) and learned songs that they sang.
- Murder mystery dinners where other parishioners come in as characters.



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- Host a trunk at Trunk or Treat where the Prime Timers give out candy. They also had a mini pumpkin patch (the theme was “It’s the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown”) where children could decorate their mini pumpkins with the prime timers.



- A “Peppermint Shoppe” where children can shop for small Christmas presents with a prime timer in the parish hall and then prime timers help the children wrap the presents.



- An intergenerational tea is planned around Valentine’s Day where parishioners of all ages gather together to listen to songs sung by the children as well as an adult choir.
- A cookout with the members of youth group where the youth group helps grill and serve the food.
- Boy Scouts help to build raised gardens which seniors use.
- Preschool parents are often willing to help with decorations for events.

## Questions/Answers

Sara responded to questions that parish leadership (from parishes wishing to do something similar) often has about their ministry:

- What were some of the key factors you had to face and overcome?
  - We started with a survey of parishioners on what they need; the survey was the foundation. Our struggle is getting volunteers.
- What does it cost to run the ministry?
  - We collaborate with the Knights of Columbus and tap into other ministries for help. We engage preschool parents as well for decoration help. We have optional dues of \$5.00. We call places ahead of time to get discounts for activities.
- How did you help seniors with technology in the beginning of the pandemic?
  - We contacted the men’s group for tech-savvy individuals and started a tech-partnering program. The coaches worked with the seniors.
- What do you provide for people in the younger senior age bracket?
  - They are welcome attend if they want but most are involved in other ministries like the women’s guild and Knights.

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## Some Resources for Ministry with Older Adults

- [Older adult ministry leader shares insights at 'Ageing and Spirituality' conference](#)
- [Pope establishes World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly](#)
- [What God Says About Getting Older](#)
- [Don't Joke About Old Age \(It's Bad for Your Health\)](#)
- [Let This Be the Time – Spiritual Essentials for Life's Second Act](#)
- [48 Older Adult Ministry Ideas](#)
- [Faith Formation after 70: Ministry with Older Adults](#)
- [What makes ministry to older adults more effective?](#)
- [Intentional Older Adult Ministry: S.E.N.I.O.R.S. Ministry Model](#)
- [Staying Focused on Older Adults](#)



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Past issues of **GEMS** are archived at [www.janetschaeffler.com](http://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>
- *Guided by the Directory for Catechesis: Transforming the Vision and Practice of Parish Catechesis:*  
<https://twentythirdpublications.com/products/guided-by-the-directory-for-catechesis>
- Lifelong Faith Training: <https://www.lifelongfaithtraining.com/>
- Lifelong Faith: <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/>
- Seasons of Adult Faith website: <http://adultfaith.weebly.com/>
- The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation:  
[https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/seasons\\_of\\_aff\\_-\\_journal\\_special\\_issue.pdf](https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/seasons_of_aff_-_journal_special_issue.pdf)