



GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

#265 – July 2026

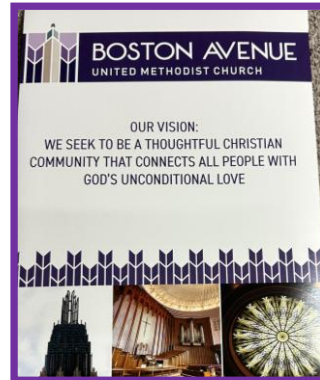
A Best Practice:

Most GEMS readers are Roman Catholic (but not all!). This issue touches upon an issue about which we are all concerned and involved: walking with people who are preparing for the celebration of Confirmation. This endeavor is shared with us by Rev. EvaMarie Campbell, Associate Minister, Lifelong Faith Formation Director at Boston Avenue United Methodist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

GEMS Suggestions

As you read about this opportunity at Boston Avenue United Methodist Church,

- How might you tweak it to meet the needs of your adults who are preparing for Confirmation?
- Are there elements/components of this program that you could adapt for other adult faith formation programs in your parish?



The structure and components of the endeavor

The Adult Confirmation Series was composed of four modules from January through April. Participants were asked to attend at least one offering in each module:

- Module One: Our History and Heritage
 - Workshop - Sunday evening presentation by the Senior Pastor "United Methodist: Who We Are"
 - Classes - "Radicle Methodism: Getting to the Root of Us" presented by Rev. Campbell offered on Mondays at 2:00 p.m. and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

- Module Two: What We Believe
 - Workshop - Boston Avenue 101 - the Iconography of the building.

Lunch provided with a guided tour throughout the building describing the iconography and what it tells us about who we are and what we believe.



- Open Tables – Interfaith dinner hosted at the Hindu Temple
- Module Three: Our Life Together
 - Workshop - Sunday evening presentation by the Senior Pastor "The General Rules 101"
 - Classes - Lenten study led by the Senior Pastor; Mondays at 2:00 and Wednesdays at 6:30
 - Open Tables - Interfaith dinner hosted by All Souls Unitarian Church
- Module Four: Our Commitment of Faith
 - Workshop - Sunday evening presentation by the Senior Pastor "Our Membership Vows"
 - Attend Holy Week services: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Eve, Easter Sunday

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- Confirmation Sunday recognition in Worship: Sunday, April 27th

How this endeavor came about

The church had a wonderful influx of new members joining from either different denominations or from other United Methodist Churches. The staff recognized the need to educate the new people about who United Methodists and the Boston Avenue United Methodist Church are.

EvaMarie worked closely with the Senior Pastor, Rev. Dr. Sam Powers and the Theologian In Residence, Rev. Dr. Gary Peluso-Verdend.

How the process was received

The target audience – when the planning was done - was visitors and new members (Adults can join a United Methodist Church without having celebrated Confirmation; that focus is usually on 6th Graders.) The staff felt that an Adult Confirmation component would be helpful for those new to Boston Avenue Church and United Methodism.

Fascinatingly enough - the largest group to participate were long-term members of Boston Avenue Church. The next group were those who were new to the church and over the course of the four modules there were a few visitors.

Motivation to Participate

There were many motivating factors for the various attendees:

- Fellowship
- Connection to one another
- Interest in a deeper dive into beliefs as United Methodists and members of Boston Avenue Church
- Desiring community after the disaffiliation of some within the denomination
- Reaffirmation of beliefs

Resources used:

- Curriculum from United Methodist Archives and History
- Local members with expertise in the topics

- Senior Pastor sharing
- Theologian In Residence who has a PhD. in Church history and a passion for United Methodism.



The involvement of various learning styles

The process included numerous activities and methods: video, small group conversations, large group presentations, actual tour of the building, food at each event; personal encounters with church leaders, etc.



Hospitality

Hospitality surrounded the gatherings! Refreshments at every event; greeters for each gathering; a brief time of fellowship before and after meeting time.

Childcare was provided for the Sunday evening workshops and Wednesday evening sessions. Parking lot shepherds assisted: helping people safely cross the street to the church building. Assistance was available at the accessible entrance.

Evaluation

The Senior Pastor and Theologian In Residence continually evaluated the process, with the feedback and comments from the participants.

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The attendance records also helped the evaluation: 95 individuals participated in at least one of the offerings in each module. A total of 27 individuals participated in all the offerings.

What People Said

- "I've been a member here for years and never knew that!"
- "I'm so glad I'm part of a welcoming and inclusive congregation and denomination."
- "I enjoyed meeting people I might not otherwise have met."
- "I'm now proud to be a United Methodist."



What were the effects of this?

As the staff reflected on the experience, they felt and witnessed:

- A wider network of community within the congregation
- Long-time members bonded with new members and visitors in their learnings and discussions
- Better informed members about United Methodism
- Increased devotion to The United Methodist Church and to Boston Avenue United Methodist Church due to deepening of understanding and beliefs

Factors that made this successful

In every gathering, there might be multiple reasons for success, and they probably differ for each person. The staff surfaced some of these reasons for success in this endeavor:

- The unfortunate harm done through other congregations and the pain of disaffiliation within the United Methodist Church
- Spreading the joy of the beliefs and missions of Boston Avenue United Methodist Church
- Hunger for community where all are beloved children of God

What would you do differently?

Rev. EvaMarie Campbell reflects: "I would like to have a retreat component. We offered one, but many did not choose it. Off-site/UM Campground would be a great addition. Hopefully we can make that happen. Our children and youth attend our camps, but our adults have not. Yet!



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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>
- *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