



GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

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A Best Practice:

We have previously explored offering adult faith formation for everyone (“one size fits all”) or for communities of like interest ([GEMS #251](#) and [#253](#)).

One community of like interest are certainly women – and men. Kristine Rooney, Pastoral Associate for Adult Faith Formation and Pastoral Care at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish, Schenectady, NY, shares with us an on-going group for women which she began several years ago.

How did the group come about?

For one adult faith formation event that was offered at the parish, there were only women in attendance. Many participants commented that they would like to continue having just-women offerings. (The importance of communities of like interest!) The group now meets about 3-4 times a year.

What are some of the events of the group?

The group has been described as predominantly a social group with a little faith element mixed in (isn't it always – if we live a wholistic life?).

Some of the events have included:

- Going to the movies together to see “Cabrini” {[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabrini_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabrini_(film))}.
- They explored the line of a Mary Oliver poem, “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” and considered how they could infuse more play, wonder and astonishment in their lives. This video added to the conversation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-rHc8tm5_c&t=2s.
- During Advent they reflected on the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Juan Diego and created rose garlands to be placed on the statues of Mary at both of their worship sites.

- They enjoyed a couple Paint & Sips. One time the women painted rocks with peaceful messages and then placed them around town. Another time they reflected on how the Lord is our Shepherd and were led by their talented bookkeeper, Toni LaFond, in painting a pastoral scene.



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- Prior to Lent, they went to a local retreat center, the Dominican Retreat and Conference Center and took part in their Winter Walking Club. The women walked the grounds and talked about what they were going to do/give up for Lent.
- The group also did a series with two different books, *Holy Women of Luke's Gospel*, by Good Ground Press (<https://goodgroundpress.com/product/women-of-luke/>) and *Women of the Old Testament: Their Lives, Our Hope* by Pia Septien (<https://www.stellamarisbooks.com/product/women-of-the-old-testament-their-lives-our-hopes-by-pia-septien/>).

GEMS Suggestions

- How might your parish meet the needs of women? Of men?
- How do your adult faith formation offerings integrate creativity, new learnings and experiences, fun, and spirituality?
- One of Kris' goals is also to connect the women with other parish and local offerings. Where might you look for places and organizations – retreat houses, seminaries, bookstores, museums, pilgrimage sites and shrines, libraries, historical societies, botanical gardens, sculpture parks, public art walks, nature centers, volunteer organizations, service clubs (Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis), wellness centers, walking groups, national and state parks, local festivals, cultural celebrations, ecumenical and interfaith dialogues, etc.?

Learning doesn't happen only in classrooms; socializing doesn't just happen at parties. They flourish wherever curiosity, conversation, beauty, service, prayer, and community come together. Retreat houses, seminaries, libraries, museums, gardens, volunteer sites, coffee shops, parks, book clubs, community centers, and even online communities can all become places of lifelong learning, transformation and community.



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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