Intentional Faith Development

First presented for Circuit 32 Laity, October 15, 2011

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Opening Worship:
Ephesians 4:13, 15-16

“. . . come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. . . . Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”
Opening Worship:

Spirit of the Living God

Spirit of the living God
fall afresh on us.

Spirit of the living God
fall afresh on us.

Melt us, mold us, fill us, use us.

Spirit of the living God
fall afresh on us.
INTRODUCTION: DEFINING TERMS
“As we mature in Christ, God cultivates in us the fruit of the spirit: ‘love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control’ (Gal. 5:22-23). . . . These interior spiritual qualities are all radically relational, and we only learn them in the presence of others through the practice of love. They are honed in community, and not just by reading books and studying Scripture. They become real in our lives in the love we give and receive from others and in the things we learn and teach with others.”

God brings gradual transformation to our lives, and we experience a deeper awareness of God's presence and will and an increasing desire to serve God and neighbor.”
What Is Faith Development?
Romans 12:2

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good, and acceptable, and perfect.”
Stages of the Journey of Faith

Conception
Birth/Infancy
Early Childhood
Seeking
Saying Yes
Learning
Exploring
Adolescence
Maturity
Serving

Dependency → Independence → Interdependence

Conception → Birth/Infancy → Early Childhood → Seeking → Saying Yes → Learning → Exploring → Adolescence → Maturity → Serving

Inward Focus → Outward Focus
Who Does Faith Development?

- Individuals
- We say yes to God
  - In obedience to God
  - In gratitude for God’s love
  - As God’s love in and for the world
Who Does Faith Development?

- Community of faith
  - Providing learning environment, maps for the journey
  - Resources for all levels of development
  - Encouraging risk taking
Who Does Faith Development?

✓ Holy Spirit
  – *Ruach / pneuma* that fills us with life (Genesis 2)
  – pillar of cloud / fire that goes before (Exodus)
  – encourages us when we fear (1 Kings 19)
  – emboldens us to share (Acts 2)
What Is Intentional Faith Development?

✓ Does faith development happen on its own?
  – Share first encounter with or exposure to the gospel.
  – What has changed since then in your understanding of God and God’s loving call?
  – What made the difference (people, events, activities)?

✓ Can faith development be forced or legislated?

✓ What is the difference between motivation and manipulation?
Mapping the Journey
Choosing a Destination

- Where are we now?
  - Current Reality Assessment
    - Individual
    - Congregational
Choosing a Destination

- Where do we want to go?
  - Use visual metaphors and imagery
  - Start with the Bible for inspiration
Choosing a Destination: Biblical Inspiration

- Garden of Eden (Genesis 2)
Choosing a Destination: Biblical Inspiration

- Promised Land (Exodus)
Choosing a Destination: Biblical Inspiration

- New Heavens and New Earth (Isaiah 65:17-25)
City on a Hill (Matthew 5:14)
Choosing a Destination:
Biblical Inspiration

- Body of Christ (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4)
Choosing a Destination: Biblical Inspiration

- Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
River of the Water of Life (Revelation 22:1-5)
Choosing a Destination: Does It Matter How We Get There?

✓ Ends vs. means
  – simply doing more?
  – integrity and good process: learning who we are and listening for God’s call, then following with experience, reason, tradition, and Scripture to guide us.
Choosing a Destination: Does It Matter How We Get There?

- Clarity of identity and purpose
  - Who are we? What is our story?
  - Why are we here? What is our purpose?
Choosing a Destination: Does It Matter How We Get There?

✓ The difference between

  – Productivity
    • Moving toward the promised land: acting with purpose and energy on heartfelt, deeply held shared values and vision

  – Activity
    • Wandering in the wilderness: simply keeping busy
Provisions and Preparation

✓ What do we have?
  – Current reality
  – Human resources
  – Material resources
  – Intention
  – Vision
  – Holy Spirit power
  – Prayer
  – Scripture, tradition, experience, reason
Provisions and Preparation: Conference Resources

- Wisconsinumc.org
  - Spiritual Formation Resource Team
    - Catalyst (catalyst2.wordpress.com)
    - Spiritual Formation Academies (5-day, 2-year)
    - Spiritual Gifts Discovery (equippedforeverygoodwork.wordpress.com)
  - Faith Alive
Provisions and Preparation

- What do we need?
  - Linear vs. global thinking
  - Mind mapping
Provisions and Preparation: Mind Mapping
Provisions and Preparation

- How do we get it?
  - Employ global thinking
  - Engage and design for multiple intelligences
  - Engage and design for diverse styles
  - Plan responses to resistance
  - Technical AND adaptive leadership
Key Elements for Success

- **Explicit**: no ambiguity
- **Universal**: applies to everyone
- **Ubiquitous**: no one can miss it
- **Organic**: constantly adapting
- **Measurable**: celebrate success along the way
- **Individual and Congregational**: full investment at every level
How long, O Lord, how long?

(No, really, how long will this take?)

- The rest of your life and then some . . .
- You will be gone long before your learning is complete
- Cultivate patience for the journey
DESIGNING INTENTIONAL FAITH DEVELOPMENT
Sharing Our Stories

- What has worked in your life, in your church?
- What did you learn from your mind maps?
Model Roadmaps: Stages of Faith Development

- Seeking
- Finding, Saying Yes
- Learning and Testing
- Growing and Exploring
- Being and Serving
Model Roadmaps: Personal Piety and the Means of Grace

- Prayer
- Study of Scripture
- Worship / Lord’s Supper
- Fasting
- Christian Conference
- Acts of Mercy
Model Roadmaps: Membership Vows

- Prayers
- Presence
- Gifts
- Service
- Witness
Model Roadmaps: Diversity in Approach and Experience
Model Roadmaps: Primary Task Process

Reach Out & Receive

Relate People to God

Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World

Send Forth to Live Transformed/Transforming Lives

Nurture & Strengthen in the Christian Faith
Mapping Our Journey

- Kinesthetic modeling
- Draft a map of intentional faith development for your church
- Sharing maps
Arriving at Our Destination

- Perfection as destination and as integrity on the journey
- How do we know we are there?
  - Transparency
  - Shared language
  - Positive Energy
  - Humor
  - Shared tasks
  - “Feels good”
  - True welcome for newcomers
  - Variety of levels of learning and sharing
First Steps

What will you do when you get home tonight, tomorrow morning, this week?
“Come and Fill Our Hearts”
Come and fill our hearts with your peace.
You alone, O Lord, are holy.
Come and fill our hearts with your peace.
Alleluia!
Closing Worship: Deep Rest

“My Soul Is at Rest”
My soul is at rest in God alone.
My salvation comes from God.
Closing Worship: Unloading

“Jesus, Remember Me”

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.
“Bless the Lord”

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God’s holy name.
Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.