



Christian Education & Formation Newsletter

March 2017 News & Updates

As Faith Formation leaders we periodically evaluate the tools we are using in our ministry. Whether we are starting to plan for next year or just doing a mid-year "checkup", we ask ourselves if our current resources effectively meet the needs of the children, youth and adults we serve.

This month's Newsletter presents **four different types of curriculum** commonly used in faith formation settings. While there is no "one size fits all", as you review these different approaches may you reflect on which is most compatible with the learning styles of those you are encouraging to grow in their faith.

Workshop Rotation Model of Faith Formation

The Workshop Rotation Model focuses on teaching one major Bible story or concept at a time by "rotating" classes through a variety of creative "workshop" learning experiences and teachers over a four to eight week period. These learning experiences allow participants to engage with the Bible story in several different ways ranging from drama to cooking; computers to art; science to storytelling; and music to games.

Workshop Rotation Model Resources

- Neil MacQueen, an originator of this model, tells the story of how the [Workshop Rotation Model \(WoRM\)](#) came into being, along with some insights for successful implementation.
- Visit the website, www.rotation.org, for a wealth of information and to share ideas and exchange lesson plans with others using this model.
- Sharon Ely Pearson, editor and the Christian Formation Specialist for Church Publishing Incorporated, shares her thoughts on this approach in an [article on the Building Faith website](#).
- SparkHouse offers a [Rotation Model curriculum](#) that includes eight workshops about each Bible story.
- Cokesbury offers two Rotation Model options with their [Deep Blue](#)

[Rotation Stations](#) and [PowerXpress](#) curricula.

Montessori Based Faith Formation

Developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, this approach to education focuses on the whole child. It allows children the freedom to develop their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual sides. Using this approach Faith Formation leaders share a biblical story following a particular method of storytelling that employs hands-on materials allowing the children to engage in the story through all their senses and wondering questions.

Montessori Based Faith Formation Resources

- Debi Miller shares a comprehensive view of this approach in her article, [Developing the Spirit of a Child in a Montessori Way](#), featured on the Ministry Matters website in July of 2014.
 - The [Godly Play](#) curriculum, created by [Jerome Berryman](#)., is based on Montessori principles to help children to explore their faith through story, wonder and play.
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Lectionary Based Faith Formation

Many churches follow the [Revised Common Lectionary](#) (RCL) in preparing for their worship services. Lectionary based curriculum for faith formation programs also follow the RCL. This approach facilitates a connection between children, youth and adults as everyone is learning and worshiping focused on the same scripture passages.

Lectionary Based Faith Formation Resources

- Learn more about lectionary based faith formation in [this article](#), written by Sharon Ely Pearson.
- [The Best of Whole People of God Online](#) is a complete online Lectionary-based Sunday school curriculum. It includes weekly age-level lessons (for ages 3-18) as well as worship resources for leaders.
- [Spark Lectionary](#) is a three-year curriculum, corresponding to the RCL, that connects Sunday school and worship.
- The new [Feasting on the Word Curriculum: Teaching the Revised](#)

[Common Lectionary](#) is an ecumenical, downloadable resource that provides faith formation options for all ages (kindergarten through adults).

Thematic Story Based Faith Formation

The story based approach to faith formation is often equated with the traditional model of Sunday school. The stories typically follow the church year seasons (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost) or progress chronologically through the Bible (starting with the Old Testament in the fall and the New Testament in the spring).

Thematic Story Based Faith Formation Resources

- The [Shine curriculum](#), for toddlers through youth in Grade 8, encourages children to experience the transforming power of God's love and to let that love shine through them.
 - [Spark Classroom](#) is a two-year curriculum that focuses on Old Testament stories in the fall and the New Testament in the winter and spring.
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Upcoming Events & Training Opportunities

Wisdom From the Field Webinar Series



The Center for the Ministry of Teaching at Virginia Theological Seminar offers a monthly webinar series, [Wisdom From the Field](#), focusing on critical issues in Faith Formation as well as digital media for ministry.

Register for Upcoming webinars by clicking on the links below:

- April 12 [Snapchat...and the church](#)
- May 17 [Preventing the Summer Formation Slump](#)

46th Annual New England Association of United Church Educators (NEAUCE) Conference

"Toward Common Ground - Living Faithfully in a Diverse World Community"

May 2 - 4, 2017

Pilgrim Pines, Swanzey, NH



Join Christian Educators, Youth Leaders, Clergy, and Lay Leaders for a three day gathering filled with worship, fellowship, music, workshops, fun and relaxation. This year's event will feature a Racial Justice Keynote Address by The Rev. Da Vita D. McCallister; an Interfaith Keynote Address from Dr. Heidi Hadsell; and a Faith Formation/Practical Theology Keynote Address by Dr. Courtney T. Goto. Learn more by [downloading the event brochure](#).

[Register before April 10th and save \\$30!](#)

New Hampshire Scholarship funds are available to attend NEAUCE.

[Download the Scholarship Applications and Instructions](#).

Note: Scholarship Application deadline is April 1, 2017

Learn about [more events](#) on the Christian Formation Ministry [Resources webpage](#).

Quick Links

- The [Association of United Church Educators](#) (AUCE). A membership organization, of and for lay and ordained, paid and volunteer pastors, educators, and youth workers, which has been providing advocacy and support for church education and educators in the United Church of Christ since 1971.
 - "[The Guide](#)" Called to Educational and Formational Ministries: A Guide for Local Churches, Educators, and Youth Workers.
 - Working on your summer plans? Check out the [2017 VBS Comparison Chart](#) from Cokesbury or watch a replay of the March webinar *from Wisdom From the Field*, [VBS 2017](#).
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Employment Opportunities

Local (New Hampshire):

- **Atkinson Congregational Church** is looking for a part-time Director of

Children and Youth Ministries. Visit the [Classifieds/Help Wanted](#) section of the NH Conference UCC website for more details on this position.

- The **Brookline Community Church** is looking for a [Faith Formation Director](#) to create something from the ground up that helps the church reach out to the children of Brookline.

National: Willing to relocate? The [UCC Ministry Opportunities webpage](#) is a great source for Christian Education and Faith Formation openings nationwide.

The Word of God

"The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out." Proverbs 18:15 (NIV)

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