

101 Ideas for Adults to Grow in Faith

Goal — This workshop is designed to help participants discover adult education opportunities and resources for use in the setting of the local church.

Objectives — Activities in this workshop are designed to enable participants to:

1. List learning activities for adults which are already happening in their local church setting and to list activities to which an educational component might be added.
2. Identify resources which might be used in their local church with new or existing adult groups.
3. Describe next steps they might take to bring this information back to their local churches.

Preparation — Set up a display of adult education resources on a table in the front of the room so the leader and participants can demonstrate ideas from the resources. The attached bibliography suggests resources which you might include. Many UCC resource centers or conference offices have or can obtain samples of these materials for display. There are specific suggestions in the design below for using several resources:

- ! *Feasting with God: Adventures in Table Spirituality* by Holly W. Whitcomb, which has ideas easily adaptable to gatherings which include men, women, youth and children.
- ! Resources from *The Inviting Word* curriculum, particularly *Imaging the Word* and *The Word and You*.
- ! *The Book of Daily Prayer* for the current year.

Since many of the settings in the local church are for small groups, be sure to include small group resources on a variety of topics.

Select a poem, image, or prayer from *Imaging the Word* or a prayer from *The Book of Daily Prayer* for the opening worship moment.

If you don't have 90 minutes – This workshop, while designed for 90 minutes, may be adapted to fit the time allocated. When time is limited allow less time for each activity even though it will limit discussion. It saves some time to have the whole group brainstorm a list of settings for adult education during the last two activities, eliminating the small group work and the reports from small groups.

Introductions (10 minutes)

Get acquainted informally with people as they arrive. To begin, ask group members to introduce themselves, sharing their role in their local church and why they are interested in this workshop.

Opening Worship Moment (5 minutes)

Share a reading, poem, image, or prayer from *Imaging the Word*, selecting one from the Sunday before or after the date of the workshop, or use the prayer for today from *The Book of Daily Prayer*. This will illustrate how these resources might be used with an adult group to begin a meeting or an event.

Small Groups — Collecting Information (20 minutes)

Ask participants to form small groups of two to four persons or, if there are natural small groups from local churches, ask people to cluster with others from their local church. Ask each group to create four lists on newsprint sheets:

- ! List all the **intentional education activities for adults** which are already happening in the your local church. Who attends, what age(s), interests?
- ! List any groups at your church involving adults or **programs which do not include intentional education**. Who attends, what ages(s), interests?
- ! List the **informal gatherings** associated with your church, such as people meeting for lunch after church, for coffee before church, or evening social gatherings. Who gathers informally, when and where? Who attends, what age(s), interests?
- ! List any **other gatherings, committees, fellowship groups, and activities** which happen at your church and include adults. Who attends, what ages(s), interests?

Reports on Current Adult Education Activities and Programs (15 minutes)

Display the newsprint lists for all to see. Ask small groups to report briefly about their lists of **current adult education activities** from local churches. Affirm these activities as helpful and encourage participants to take notes about what is working in other congregations. Many of these activities meet real needs in the local church. The old adage, “If it isn’t broken, don’t fix it,” may apply here.

Ideas for Adult Education Activities (20 minutes)

Ask small groups to report their lists of **other events and activities** in the life of their congregation, asking the group to think about: “How can we add some education time to these events?” Some ideas you might share are:

- ! Openings with lectionary study. Suggest that resources from *Seasons of the Spirit* are excellent to use here.
- ! Start small; open with sharing time; scripture reading; build to discussion and prayer.
- ! Examples of using resources with an existing group:
 - ! Select a scripture related to an event theme. Use a Bible story which has several characters and, to facilitate discussion, ask people to move into clusters with others who like or identify with a particular character. Then ask people in the clusters to share with others why they chose the character.
 - ! Sharing memories around sights, sounds, or smells for event. Select an example from *Feasting with God: Adventures in Table Spirituality*. Ask the group to think with you about how many different ways we could present the same theme to a variety of groups.
- ! Explore using resources in different groups already gathering such as:
 - ! Choir – use a lectionary reading, or discuss the words of an anthem or hymn text and how they fit worship on the next Sunday.
 - ! Committee meetings – open with sharing ways the lectionary readings for the coming Sunday impact business for the gathering.
 - ! Fellowship groups – discuss resources which might be used for the opening and closing of the event.

- ! One church has “Lunch Bunch” gatherings after worship on Sunday to share ideas and reactions to the sermon and worship. In this congregation there are four restaurants where groups gather weekly for brunch after worship. The pastor attends a different group each week. Each week, a church member in each group convenes the gathering.
- ! Discuss ways education time might be added to fund-raising activities, work activities, or to planning meetings.
 - ! Dinners – *Feasting with God* has suggestions for openings at planning sessions and for the meals themselves.
 - ! Bazaar groups – Sharing memories from childhood, comfort foods, smells, candles.
 - ! Men's and women's gatherings.

Ideas for Developing New Adult Education Activities (20 minutes)

Ask the group to identify possibilities for adults learning in the church which are missing in their own local church. Where can you start new groups? How can you help people with similar interests find one another in your church community? Consider support groups, care giving groups, fellowship groups, age groupings.

Many of the titles published by Pilgrim Press and United Church Press may be used for adult discussion groups. Give people an opportunity to look at resources on display. Ask them to choose one to “introduce” to the group, describing ways it might be used with a current or new group of adults in their local church.

Ask people to consider how they will share the information they have gained from this workshop with others in their church. Give each person or church group an opportunity to share their plans.

Close with prayer.

Suggested Adult Education Resources 2002

Those resources marked with an asterisk (*) are published by The Pilgrim Press or United Church Press. United Church of Christ conferences and resource centers may have sample copies of these books for display. They are available for sale from United Church of Christ Resources, 1-800-537-3394.

Personal Growth

- **Dancing With Disabilities*, Brett Webb-Mitchell
- Dealing With Change: LifeSearch*
- Life After Fifty: A Positive Look at Aging in the Faith Community*, Katie Funk Weibe, ed.
- **Living with Cancer: Meditations on Patience and Love*, Melody Kee Smith and Richard A. Smith
- **My Rose: An African-American Mother's Story of AIDS*, Geneva E. Bell
- **My Son Eric: A Mother Struggles to accept Her Gay Son and Discovers Herself*, Mary V. Borhek
- **Our Daughter Martha: A Family Struggles with Coming Out*, Marcy Clements Hendrikson
- **The Vintage Journey: A Guide to Artful Aging*, Trish Herbert
- You Can Help with Your Healing*, Vernon J. Bittner
- Woman's Work: A Guide to Growth and Self Discovery*, Anne Baxter and Nora O. Lozano-Diaz

The Bible

- **Calmly Plotting the Resurrection*, Donna E. Schaper
- **Bad Girls of the Bible: Exploring Women of Questionable Virtue*, Barbara J. Essex
- **Bad Boys of the Bible: Exploring Men of Questionable Virtue*, Barbara J. Essex
- **Biblical Women*, Elizabeth Huwiler (accompanied by a video tape)
- Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation*, Bruce M. Metzger
- **Encounters with the Ever-present God*, Howard W. Roberts
- Ephesians: Reconciled in Christ*, Donna Ritchey Martin
- First Samuel: Fathers, Brothers, Friends, and Others*, H. Michael Brewer
- Get Acquainted with Jesus*, Larry Beman and Barbara Bruce
- **Imaging The Word*, Susan A. Blain, ed., Volumes 1, 2, 3.
- **Insights: The Bible and Decision Making*, Stephanie Boughton Haines
- **Insights: The Bible and Spiritual Disciplines*, Holly Whitcomb
- **Insights: Facing Change*, Leah Matthews
- **Insights: Women in the Bible, A Short Overview*, Barbara J. Essex
- **Insights: A User's Guide to the Bible*, Lynn Deming
- **John for Beginners: A Bible Study for Individual or Groups Use*, James Taylor (Wood Lake Books)
- **Journey to the Cross: Lenten Reflections for Individuals and Groups*, Myra B. Nagel
- Leading Ladies: Transformative Biblical Images for Women's Leadership*, Jeanne Porter, Ph.D
- **Living Toward a Vision: Biblical Reflections on Shalom*, Walter Brueggemann
- The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, Walter Brueggemann
- **Science, Scripture, and Homosexuality*, Alice Ogden Bellis and Terry L. Hufford
- **The Subversive Gospel: A New Testament Commentary of Liberation*, Tom Hanks
- Ten Key Events from the Bible*, Bob Kaul
- **To Liberate and Redeem: Moral Reflections on the Biblical Narrative*, Edward L. Long
- **Wisdom's Daughters: Stories of Women Around Jesus*, Elizabeth G. Watson
- **The Word and You: A Lectionary-based Exploration of the Bible*, Nan Duerling, ed., Volumes 1, 2, 3

Family Life

- *Celebrating at Home: Prayers and Liturgies for Families*, Deborah Alberswerth Payden and Laura Loving
- Divorce: Survival and Hope*, Russell E. Fink and Barbara Owens-Fink
- Families Valued: Parenting and Politics for the Good of All Children*, Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer
- Growing Together: Understanding and Nurturing Your Child's Faith Journey*, Anne Neufeld Rupp
- Loving, Launching, and Letting Go: Preparing Your Nearly-Grown Children for Adulthood*, Virelle Kidder
- Parenting Your Parents: LifeSearch*, Dorothy Gager
- *Pilgrim Prayers for Single Mothers*, Michele Howe
- Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*, William Pollack
- Recreating Marriage with the Same Old Spouse: A Guide for Couples*, Sandra Gray Bender
- Reviving Ophelia*, Mary Pipher
- *Standing the Test of Time: Love Stories of African American Elders*, Julie rainbow

The Church

- The Babylonian Captivity of the Mainline Church*, Charles H. Bayer
- *Behold, I Do a New Thing: Transforming Communities of Faith*, C. Kirk Hadaway
- Bowling Alone*, Robert D. Putnam
- Caring and Community: Perspectives from Ephesians*, Robert H. Albers
- *Come Unto Me: Rethinking the Sacraments for Children*, Elizabeth Francis Caldwell
- *Confessing Our Faith*, Roger L. Shinn
- Difficult Conversations: Taking Risks, Acting with Integrity*, Katie Day
- *Discovering The New Century Hymnal*
- *Ending Racism in the Church*, Susan E. Davies and Sister Paul Teresa Hennessee, eds.
- The Enduring Church: Christians in China and Hong Kong*, Gail V. Coulson
- *The Feast of Our Lives: Re-Imaging Communion*, June Christine Goudey
- *The Language of The New Century Hymnal*, Arthur G. Clyde
- *Listening to the Least: Doing Theology from the Outside In*, Ian McFarland
- The Once and Future Church: Reinventing the Congregation for a New Mission Frontier*, Loren B. Mead
- *The New Century Hymnal Companion: A Guide to the Hymns*, Kristen Forman, ed.
- *Praising in Black and White: Unity and Diversity in Christian Worship*, Breanda Eatman Aghahowa
- *The Rite of Confirmation: Moments When Faith Is Strengthened*, Peter R. Monkres and R. Kenneth Ostermiller
- *Sacred Seasons: A Journey through the Church Year*, Brett Webb-Mitchell and Diane Archer
- Transforming Congregations for the Future*, Loren B. Mead
- *United and Uniting: The Meaning of an Ecclesial Journey*, Louis H. Gunnemann
- *You Belong: A Handbook for Church Members*, Allen H. Marheine, ed.

Spirituality

- *The Book of Daily Prayer: Morning And Evening*, Kim Sadler, ed., 2003
- *Feasting with God: Adventures in Table Spirituality*, Holly W. Whitcomb
- *The Feminine Mystic: Readings from Early Spiritual Writers*, Lynne M. Deming
- Hidden Wholeness: An African American Spirituality for Individuals and Groups*, Michael I.N. Dash, Jonathan Jackson, and Stephen C. Rasor
- *Island Lighthouse Inn: A Chronicle*, Jeffrey Burke
- Journey of the Soul*, Doris Klein, CSA
- *The Labyrinth and the Enneagram: Circling into Prayer*, Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion and Elizabeth Catherine Nagel
- *Living the Labyrinth: 101 Paths to a Deeper connection with the Sacred*, Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion and Elizabeth Catherine Nagel
- Listening for God, Volume 2: Contemporary Literature and the Life of Faith*, Paula J. Carlson and Peter S. Hawkins, eds.
- *Midlife Journeys: A Traveler's Guide*, Richard P. Olson

Spirituality (continued)

- **Outside the Lines: Meditations on an Expansive God*, Andrea La Sonde Anastos
- **Prayers for the Common Good*, A. Jean Leshner
- **Praying the Labyrinth: A Journal for Spiritual Exploration*, Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion and Elizabeth Catherine Nagel
- **Proclaim Jubilee! A Spirituality for the Twenty-first Century*, Maria Harris
- Spiritual Gifts: LifeSearch*
- A Spirituality of Compassion: Covenant Bible Studies*, Harriet Finney and Suzanne Martin

Theology

- Biblical Imagery for God*, Christina Bucher
- Becoming a Thinking Christian*, John B. Cobb, Jr.
- **Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse, and Ransom*, Darby Kathleen Ray
- Get Acquainted with Your Christian Faith*, Kent Millard
- **The Great Commandment: A Theology of Resistance and Transformation*, Eleanor Haney
- Jesus: Divine and Human: Reflections for Matthew*, John L. Heagle
- **Privileged Conversations: Dramatic Stories for Christmas*, Richard P. Olson
- Rambo and the Dalai Lama: The compulsion to Win and Its Threat to Human Survival*, Gordon Fellman
- Relating to People of Other Religions: What Every Christian Needs to Know*, M. Thomas Thangaraj
- **Theology of Creation in an Evolutionary World*, Karl Schmitz-Moormann
- **To Begin at the Beginning: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*, Martin B. Copenhaver
- The Will of God: A Workbook*, Rebecca Laird

Discipleship

- Beyond News: Money* (video)
- **Conflicting Agendas: Personal Morality in Institutional Settings*, D. Don Welch Creative Disobedience, Dorothee Soelle
- Ethics for Real People: A Guide for the Morally Perplexed*, Loren Broadus
- A Feminist Ethic of Risk*, Sharon D. Welch
- Finding a Faith That Makes Sense*, R. Scott Colglazier
- Living Simply, Simply Living*, Delia Halverson
- **The Men's Ministry Action Plan, UCC Edition*, David Holden, ed.
- **Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*, Michael Battle
- Reconciliation: Our Greatest Challenge, Our Only Hope*, Curtiss Paul DeYoung
- **A Sense of the Divine: The Natural Environment from a Theocentric Perspective*, James Gustafson
- When Christ Lives in Us*, Justo L. González

Current Issues

- **Abortion: A Reader*, Lloyd Steffen
- **Amistad: The Slave Uprising Aboard the Spanish Schooner*, Helen Kromer.
- The Bottom Line: Making Christian Choices in the Marketplace*, Gregory Mellema
- The Environment: LifeSearch*
- **Ethics and Technology: Transformation in Community Contexts*, John Hart Genetics: Issues of Social Justice, Ted Peters
- First We Must Listen: Living in a Multicultural Society*, Anne Leo Ellis
- **Genetics: Issues of Social Justice*, Ted Peters, ed.
- God is One: The Way of Islam* (second edition), R. Marston Speight
- **Human genetics: Fabricating the Future*, Robert Song
- **Information Technology An Extra-connected Community?*, David Pullinger
- **Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*, Glen Stassen
- Justice That Heals: A Biblical Vision for Victims and Offenders*, Arthur Paul Boers

Current Issues (continued)

- **Standing On the Promises: The Promise Keepers and the Revival of Manhood*, Dane S. Claussen, ed.

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5.2.7

**The Wealth or Health of Nations: Transforming Capitalism from Within*, Carol Johnston

**Whose Kids Are They Anyway? Religion and Morality in America's Public Schools*, Raymond R. Roberts

**Why the Homeless Don't Have Homes and What to Do About It*, Michael Elliott