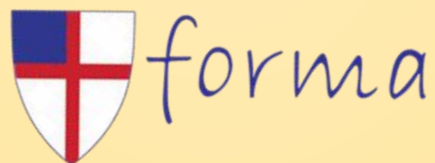




# Faith Milestones



Conference 2018

Charleston, SC



# What is your definition of a milestone?

A milestone is one of a series of numbered markers placed along a road or boundary at intervals of one mile or occasionally, parts of a mile. Mileage is the distance along the road from a fixed commencement point.



# What is your definition of a faith connected milestone?

A milestone is a meaningful, memorable moment in the lives of individuals and communities.



Milestones in our lives can be life changing. Some are happy. Some can be sad and fearful times.



# What does it mean to form faith through milestones?

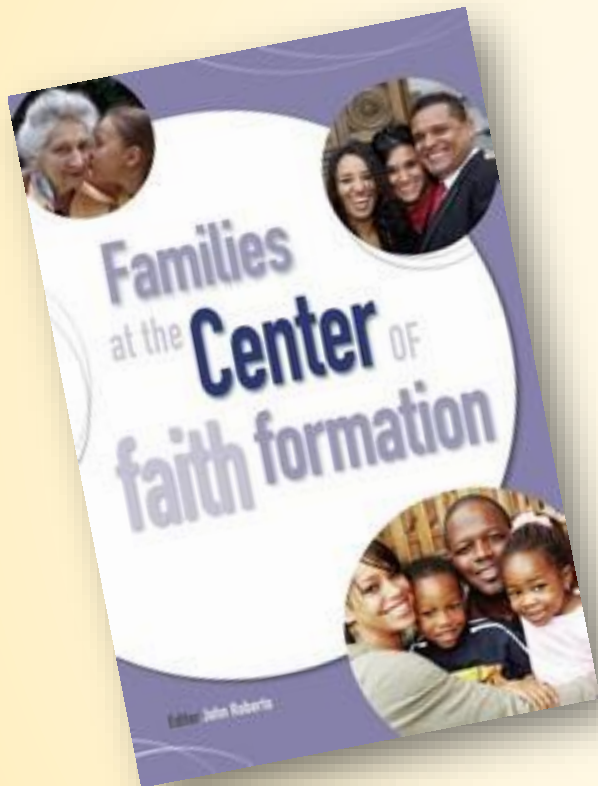
Connecting the meaningful, memorable moments in our lives to God's presence in those moments.



Adding scripture, prayer, and a blessing makes this a faith formation moment and becomes part of our faith journey.







*“A milestone is an action or event marking a significant change or stage in development. These life and faith markers can provide important times for engaging families when they are most open to change and growth.”*  
– John Roberto

# Milestones celebrated in the congregation

- Baptism
- Communion
- First Bible
- Entering Sunday School
- Confirmation
- Graduation



# What milestones do we recognize in our homes and in everyday living?

- Getting a Driver's License
- New Home
- Family Reunion
- Loss of a Pet
- First Cell Phone
- Birthdays



# Why aren't we all in the same place in our faith journeys?



- Faith Formation is like learning a language
- Not everyone is fluent because they haven't been immersed in it
- One hour a week does not do it



# Why is it important for faith formation to happen in the home?



- The home is an essential part of our faith formation.
- Like learning a language, it is where we are immersed in it
- How do we encourage faith formation in the home?
- Milestones is a good place to start!

Where do we start?

**Name it!**

# 1. Name it

Identify a moment as significant to one's life and faith directly related to the name of the Milestone Ministry event.

# 2. Equip it

Provide support, modeling, and resources to help people **Opportunity!** see in life as an opportunity to again embrace the grace of God in Christ

### 3. Bless it

Offer a prayer in a worship service, cross+generational event, and/or the small group or home event to embrace people's lives with the grace, mercy, and peace of God in Christ.

### 4. Gift it

Provide a gift to help the participants recall a particular milestone in their lives with faith, hope, and love



## 5. Reinforce it

Offer a follow up event to help deepen the faith formation impact of the Milestone Ministry experience. Encourage and support faith practices recommended at the initial Milestone event and, when helpful, explore new ones.

1. Name it
2. Equip it
3. Bless it
4. Gift it
5. Reinforce it

An important  
ingredient...establish  
faith practices!

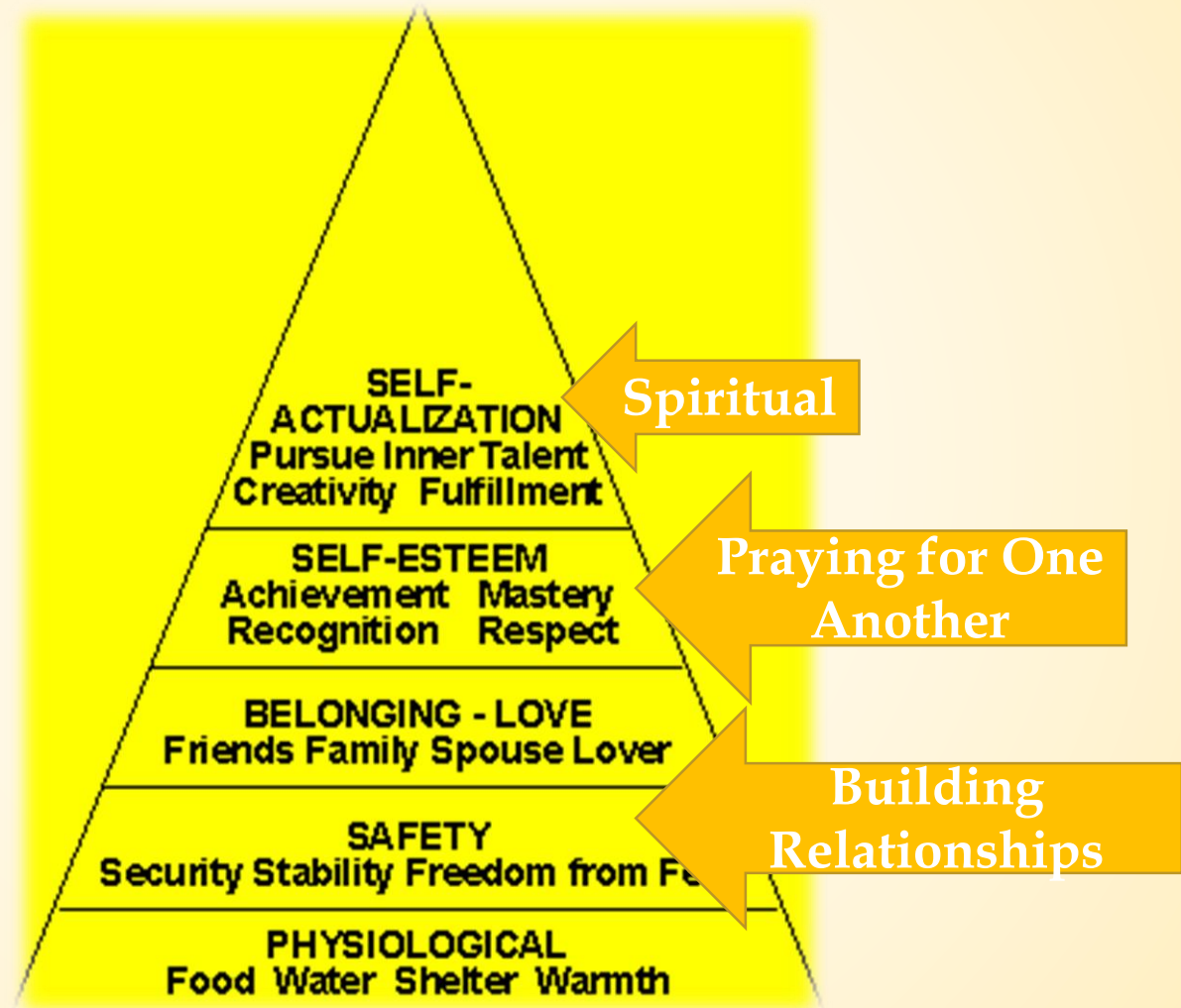
**Four Key Faith Practices**

1. Caring Conversations
2. Devotions
3. Service
4. Rituals and Traditions

**FAITH5**

1. Share
2. Read
3. Talk
4. Pray
5. Bless

# Maslow Hierarchy of Needs



# The Goal:

- Lifelong Faith Formation
- Relationships over programs
- Growing the church by growing people in faith





# Examples of Forming Faith Through Milestones



Congregation, Community, Home, and Digital World

# Congregation Example



## + High School Graduation Equipping Graduates for the

### Desired Outcomes

- Connect a graduate's choices for an intentional faith journey to his or her future.
- Reaffirm the graduate's and his or her family's commitment to faith traditions at home and in the congregation.
- Experience blessings that keep the graduate in the love of God.
- Receive a fun-filled laundry bag of handy items or other gifts from a filled community that wishes to surround the graduate.

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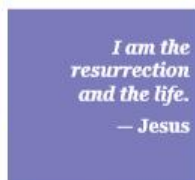


## Milestones: Living at Home and Away

...by many although traveled by only a few.  
...er from the home community.  
...es in a unique faith journey.  
...an practice while gaining insights into how others live and  
...f the Christian faith.

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## Easter Egg Blessing Milestone Moment

Milestones Ministry brings an awareness of the presence of God to individuals of all generations by recognizing the home as church, too. A Milestone Moment brings family and friends together to mark a special time in their lives and to acknowledge and affirm God's presence in their midst. Milestone Moments provide a model for connecting significant occasions in people's lives with the ongoing journey of faith.

Historically, eggs have been associated with new life, rebirth, and springtime. Many ancient cultures used eggs in their religious ceremonies. It was not long before the Christian church took up the tradition of decorating and giving eggs as gifts as part of the springtime festival of Easter to celebrate the resurrection. Decorating Easter eggs and hiding them for an Easter egg hunt has been a fun tradition for many a family gathering. Having an Easter egg hunt at one's home or at a community park can be a simple and effective way of celebrating the message of Christ's resurrection with family, friends, and neighbors. A congregation can also use the Easter egg hunt as an outreach tool for the surrounding community.

Milestones Ministry uses a simple five stage structure that includes naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing so that the Milestone Moment will have a greater chance to take deeper root in one's lifelong faith formation.

Moments that cause us to pause and shift gears like the celebration of the resurrection and the beginning of a new season in the church year happen once a year. Providing opportunities to take a breath and find God's presence in these moments is important. This Easter Egg Blessing Milestone Moment incorporates the five stage structure.

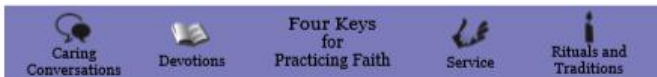
**Naming** – It is important to recognize a time of coloring eggs for Easter and the traditions we have of using eggs in baskets and for hunts. This can play a role in passing faith from one generation to the next.

**Equipping** – This Milestone Moment encourages caring conversations that connect our faith while participating in the tradition of coloring eggs for Easter and having an awareness of its history in the Christian church.

**Blessing** – Blessing the eggs and the Easter egg hunt reminds us of the joy of the resurrection and our new life in Christ.

**Gifting** – Giving a tangible gift like a plastic egg with a special message, Bible verse, or gift inside is a good way to be reminded of this milestone every year during Easter.

**Reinforcing** – It is a good idea to follow up after the Blessing of the Easter Egg Milestone Moment by gathering a few weeks after Easter Sunday to talk about how the Easter egg hunt and coloring eggs enriched relationship, combining playfulness, celebration of the resurrection, and fellowship time.



## + Easter Egg Blessing Milestone Moment

*For a Small Group or Family Gathering*

### + Grow the Church by Growing People in Faith

*A follow up for the Blessing of Easter Egg Milestone Moment can be done with caring conversations about Easter egg hunts and gatherings with family and friends during the Easter season. Gather together with family and friends for a follow up time to pray and reflect upon God's presence in the age long tradition of using colored eggs for Easter.*

*An important step after experiencing the Four Keys for practicing faith in the small groups or home setting is to bless and equip friends and families to continue practicing faith by using the Four Keys daily as an intentional step to encourage faith traditions in the home.*

*A suggested resource for continued caring conversations:*

[Taking Faith Home FaithTalk® Cards](#)

*Additional Milestones and Milestone Moments can be found at: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)*



At the heart of equipping people for their lifelong faith formation are the Four Keys for practicing faith. These faith practices are central to every milestone and integrated into people's daily lives as well as the life of the local congregation. These four daily faith practices are simple, doable, and practical: Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions.

Faith in Jesus Christ is at the center of our lives. This includes in the midst of our conversations and texts with others. Gather around a meal or snack and use this Four Keys outline.



#### Caring Conversations

Process these thoughts and questions:

- What are some memories you have about coloring Easter eggs?
- Have you ever gone to an Easter egg hunt? Tell a story about that experience.
- How do Easter eggs remind you of the message of Easter?



#### Devotions

Read John 11:25-26 (CEV)

*Jesus then said, "I am the one who raises the dead to life! Everyone who has faith in me will live, even if they die. And everyone who lives because of faith in me will never really die. Do you believe this?"*

- What question would you like to ask Jesus about the resurrection?
- Coloring Easter eggs is more than a fun activity. The eggs and the colors remind us of new life filled with joy in Christ. How do you experience the joy of the resurrection in your daily life?

Suggested Songs: *Jesus Loves Me* and *Jesus Christ is Risen Today*



#### Service

Schedule a time to color eggs together with family and friends. Fill plastic eggs with candy or other gifts. Deliver these eggs in baskets to those who are home bound or in nursing and assisted living homes. Take time to engage in caring conversations and prayer with those you visit.



#### Rituals and Traditions

Place an egg in each person's hand as you bless them with this prayer:

*Dear God, we thank you for the gift of Easter eggs, a sign of new life and of Christ's resurrection. May the joy of Easter be a reminder of the joy we have in you now and always through Christ's death and resurrection. Christ is risen. He is risen, indeed. Alleluia.*



Reverend Caroline Kelly



## Faith Story Spotlight June 2017

### Pictures of the Easter Egg Blessing Milestone Moment



Pastor Caroline tells the Easter story using Resurrection Eggs before the egg hunt.



Caring Conversations took place while eggs were colored. After blessing the eggs, parents and grandparents delivered them to members who are homebound.

### Meet the Reverend Caroline Kelly and her Faith Formation Team at First Presbyterian in Cumberland, MD



#### Milestones Ministry Resource Used:

The Youth and Children and the Adult Milestones Ministry manuals and Milestone Moments for the Home

#### Two stories about Milestones used recently:



Pastor Caroline tells the Easter story using Resurrection Eggs before the egg hunt.



Caring Conversations took place while eggs were colored. After blessing the eggs, parents and grandparents delivered them to members who are homebound.



# Community Example



**MILESTONES MINISTRY**

Each generation will reap what the former generation has sown.

— Proverb

## Family Reunion Milestone Moment

Milestones Ministry brings an awareness of the presence of God to individuals of all generations by recognizing the home as church, too. Milestones Ministry provides a clear and usable model for congregations, homes, and community to connect faith formation resources with daily life experiences. The rich variety of life experiences represented in the church: promoting Christian faith formation ministry of the church: promoting Christian faith formation with family, friends, and others with whom we can reach.

When a family gathers for a reunion, it is a wonderful blessing that provides an opportunity to embrace the past, time for renewing relationships and meeting new members of the family. This milestone is a good time to reflect on past generations and the lives of those who have gone before. There has been a history specific to each participating household that includes disappointments, joys, and hopes. It is important to be sensitive to a wide variety of experiences. This Milestone Moment offers an opportunity for family members to be excited about traveling side-by-side into the future with the encouragement that the Christian faith has brought and continues to bring to families.

Milestones incorporate a simple structure that includes naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing so that the Milestones Ministry Moment has a greater chance to take deeper root in lifelong faith formation.

**Four Keys for Practicing Faith**

- Caring Conversations
- Devotions

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Being at a family reunion creates an opportunity to pause and recognize and celebrate the importance of the extended family. Providing an opportunity to experience God's presence in this moment is important. This Milestone Moment incorporates a simple structure that includes:

- Naming** – It is important to recognize the significance of family reunion. It helps to identify the generations of families as descendants of a particular family lineage.
- Equipping** – This Milestone Moment encourages caring conversations that draw out memories and stories of the present and past among family members and encourages the renewing of relationships.
- Blessing** – Praying with and for one another and remembering the longevity of generations.
- Gifting** – Giving other meaningful milestones for family members.
- Reinforcing** – Family Reunion numbers, etc. page to stay and to help





**MILESTONES MINISTRY**

Scripture alone  
Faith alone  
Grace alone

— Reformation Themes

## Reformation Anniversary Milestone Moment

On October 31, 1517 Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the door of a church in Wittenberg, Germany. That event is recognized as the beginning of the Reformation. Luther would continue to clarify his message to emphasize salvation by grace through faith in Christ. What began in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome launched a renewal of the church that continues to this day.

The Reformation directly impacted church and society. Luther helped bring the Christian faith into the daily lives of people by translating the Bible and liturgy into the German language and bringing faith to the common people.

Some by emphasizing love God and his work as people, raising and Christian life.

**Blessing** – The Reformation promotes a life of prayer for all people. Offering a blessing to others is a sacred and relational moment for Christians that extends God's love and grace to others.

**Gifting** – Giving a tangible gift like a bookmark, Bible, crosses, Small Catechism, or other reminder of this occasion for years to come.

**Reinforcing** – Following the Reformation Anniversary how salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ transforms our lives every day.

The 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation encourages us to pause and give thanks for how Martin Luther and other reformers proclaimed the heart of the gospel. It provides opportunities to reflect on how the Reformation continues to impact our lives of faith. This Milestone Moment incorporates a five part structure:

**Naming** – Observing the Reformation gives attention to the importance of trusting God's action and not our efforts to love God and neighbor and to share the Christian faith with the world.

**Equipping** – Experience the importance of the Reformation in people's lives by engaging in caring conversations, devotional reflections, service, and Christian rituals and traditions that reflect key Reformation themes.

**Blessing** – The Reformation promotes a life of prayer for all people. Offering a blessing to others is a sacred and relational moment for Christians that extends God's love and grace to others.

**Gifting** – Giving a tangible gift like a bookmark, Bible, crosses, Small Catechism, or other reminder of this occasion for years to come.

**Reinforcing** – Following the Reformation Anniversary how salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ transforms our lives every day.

**Service Rituals and Traditions**

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**The 50th PEECHATKA FAMILY REUNION**



# Home Example



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**Sue Van Oss**  
Director of Christian Formation



## Faith Story Spotlight November 2016

Milestone Modules

Child and Youth  
Adult

Milestone Moments  
for the Home

Gifting Stones

Taking Faith Home

*At Milestones Ministry we are privileged to hear many faith stories from congregations and individuals who are engaged in using Milestones Ministry resources. Each month, we highlight one ministry.*

**Please let us know if you have a story to share.**

**Meet Sue Van Oss**  
Director of Christian Formation  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Duluth, MN

### Glossary of Resources

The resources at Milestones Ministry continue to grow.

Here is a brief description of each:

#### Taking Faith Home:

This is an annual resource that provides a different bulletin insert each week during the church year. This enables individuals and families to bring the Christian faith into the home and daily life by experiencing the Word of God through the Four Key Faith Practices that are also used in Milestones Ministry modules and



**Sample Milestone Kits**



# Digital Example



Skype  
Google Hang Out  
Face Time



[HOME](#)[ABOUT ▾](#)[MILESTONES ▾](#)[TAKING FAITH HOME ▾](#)[TOOLBOX](#)[FAITH FORMATION STORIES](#)[STORE](#)

Faith Formation  
Stories



### Off to College Milestone Celebration

Meet Kerri Hardy Zietlow. She shares about a milestone celebration she designed to use with her family in their home for her son as they were sending him off to college. "Oh my. I just wanted to tell you what a wonderful evening we had sending our son off to college with a milestone celebration at home. We opened with prayer. I shared his faith formation story (highlights from baptism to confirmation). His sister read his confirmation verse (Isaiah 40:30-31). We gave him a watch and his dad read the verses from Psalm 121 as we told him we'd enjoyed "watching him grow" and that "God would continue to watch over him." [Read more](#)

A Taking Milestones Ministry Home Story from Robin Souhrada

Connect with us:



Sign Up for Enews

### Faith Story Spotlight

Each month Milestones Ministry sends out a special edition e-news highlighting faith formation stories we hear from across the country. Click on the links below to download the Faith Story Spotlights to read and learn from faith formation leaders we have met and interviewed.

October 2016: [faith-story-spotlight-october-2016](#)

November 2016: [faith-story-spotlight-november-2016](#)

December 2016: [faith-story-spotlight-december-2016](#)



*Milestones Ministry is a  
faith formation practice  
for both home and con-  
gregation that helps all  
generations recognize  
God's presence in  
everyday life.*

**Five Steps:**



**Name it** -  
identify meaningful,  
memorable moments

**Equip it** - provide  
faith practices

**Bless it** - offer a pray-  
er and a blessing

**Gift it** - give a visual  
reminder

**Reinforce it** - follow  
up to firmly root faith



Let's  
do it!

1. Name it
2. Equip it
3. Bless it
4. Gift it
5. Reinforce it

How will you form  
faith through  
milestones?

# What happens between milestones?

## What faith practices?

JANUARY 28, 2018  
FOURTH SUNDAY  
AFTER EPIPHANY



*Jesus teaches with power and authority.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 1:21-28	Jesus teaches in the synagogue
Monday	Deuteronomy 18:15-20	Treat everyone with justice
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 8:1-13	Love builds up others
Wednesday	Matthew 7:24-29	Jesus teaches with authority
Thursday	John 14:23-31	Obedying Jesus' teaching
Friday	Joshua 1:6-9	The Lord speaks to Joshua
Saturday	Psalms 111	Praise for God's wonderful works
Sunday	Mark 1:29-39	Jesus heals many people

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. **Mark 1:22 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, you rule with steadfast love and faithfulness. Teach us to trust your ways and to extend your love to others. Amen.

#### Mealtime Prayer:

The Lord is kind and merciful. God provides food for one and all. Thanks be to God! Amen.  
(Psalm 111:4-5)

#### A Blessing to Give:

May God guide you in the way of Christ. May the grace and mercy of the Lord be your strength and comfort, now and always. (Psalm 111:4)



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JANUARY 28, 2018

### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*O, for a Thousand  
Tongues to Sing*



### CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Talk about a teacher you liked and respected. What did you learn from him or her?
- In Mark 1:21-28, Jesus' teaching was more than learning information. How is he different from other religious leaders of his day?
- The unclean spirit knew who Jesus was, the Holy one of God. Faith is about a relationship to God that is more than knowing about God. How do you have a relationship to Jesus that is more than information?

### DEVOTIONS

Read: Psalm 111.

It is a song of praise that gives examples of who God is in the community of the congregation (v. 1); God's righteousness lasts forever (v. 3); God is gracious and merciful (v. 4); and, God is faithful, just, and trustworthy (v. 7). It is a psalm of praise that describes who God is. God does not need our praise. Our neighbors need the message of praise to encourage them and us in our faith. Make your own list of how you see God at work in the world and in your life. Make that into a prayer that begins, "God, you who (then use your list of descriptions), we praise you for your goodness. Holy and awesome is your name. In Christ we pray. Amen."

### SERVICE

In 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Paul directs those who have the greater insight regarding the Christian faith not to use their insight to hurt those who don't have the same understanding. Knowledge by itself is not enough. As he wrote, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (v. 1b). The Christian life is not about knowing more than the next person, but caring for the other person. This next week, think about someone whose opinion you disagree with. Find some way of affirming that person as an act of love in a way that moves beyond who is right and who is wrong.

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Meals are filled with rituals and traditions that can reflect one's faith. Research shows that there is great benefit to people when they eat meals together. Make a commitment to eat at least five meals a week with family or close friends. A simple mealtime practice is to pray before your meals and talk about your day and what you are most (and least) grateful for.

#### Mealtime Prayer:

The Lord is kind and merciful. God provides food for one and all. Thanks be to God! Amen.



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)

How will you.....?

Be Intentional



Set Expectations



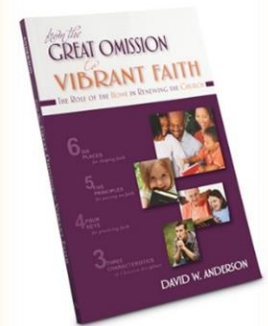
Plan for  
Accountability



# Milestones Ministry Frame

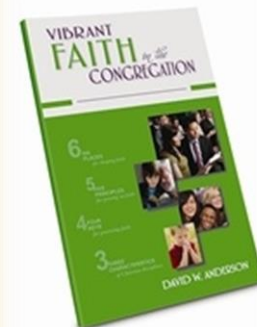
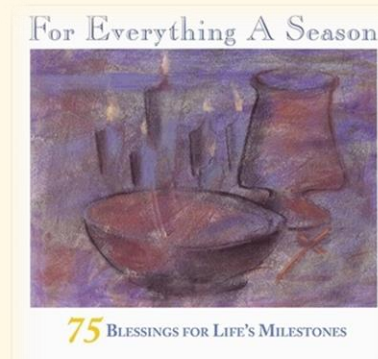
## Five Principles of *faith formation*

- Faith is formed by the power of the Holy Spirit through personal, trusted relationships often in our own homes.
- The church is a living partnership between the ministry of the congregation and ministry of the home.
- Where Christ is present in faith, the home is church too.
- Faith is caught more than it is taught.
- If we want Christian children and youth, we need Christian adults who practice the faith.



## Four Key Faith Practices

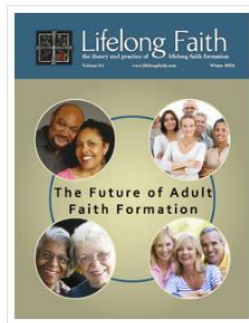
- Caring Conversations
- Devotions
- Service
- Rituals and Traditions



# Lifelong Faith Journals

JOIN THE LIFELONG FAITH MAILING LIST

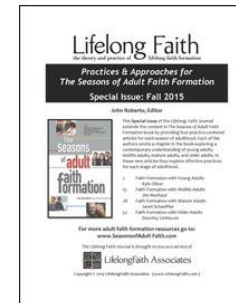
## Fall 2015 & Winter 2016 Special Issues on Adult Faith Formation



Download your copy!

At the 2015 Adult Faith Formation Symposium participants were guided through a scenario planning process to create four scenarios for the future of adult faith formation in congregations and to design strategies for using the scenarios to design new initiatives and projects in adult faith formation. The Winter 2016 Journal issue - **A Guide to Envisioning the Future of Adult Faith Formation** - includes the summary report and adds documentation from the Symposium and additional strategy resources, including tools for facilitating an Adult Faith Formation Scenario Process in your faith community or denomination.

The Fall 2015 issue of the *Lifelong Faith* Journal extends the content in *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation* book by providing four practice-centered articles for each season of adulthood. Each of the authors wrote a chapter in the book exploring a contemporary understanding of young adults, midlife adults,



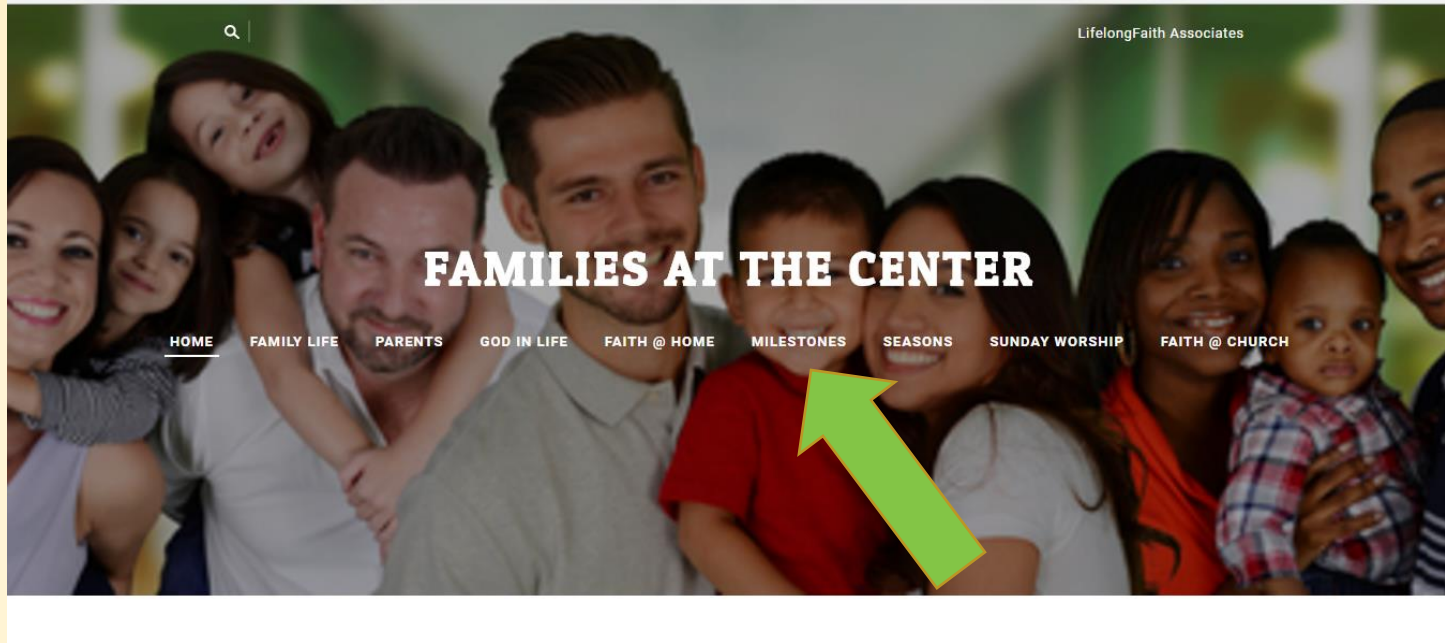
Download your copy!

<http://www.lifelongfaith.com/journal.html>

Fall 2014 – Milestones Ministry, An Effective Model for Lifelong Faith

Spring-Summer 2015 – A Milestones Focus on Adults: Replacing Programs with Relationships

Winter 2015– Milestones as a Means to Empower and Equip Lives of Faith



[www.familiesatthecenter.com](http://www.familiesatthecenter.com)



# *Growing People in Faith when at Home and Away*

*...and talk about them when you are at home and when  
you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.*

Deuteronomy 6:7b



[www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)