



GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

#145 - July 1, 2021

Best Practices: Some Things These Pandemic Times Have Taught Us (Part VI)

Five previous **GEMS** issues have explored some new things we have learned; new methods we have used; this issue continues that exploration.

In the midst of many challenges, we have discovered new insights, new practices. These realities are not only true for these times but for the days, months, and years ahead.

23- For some time, we have realized that there's a shift (or there should be) from passing on the faith to living into the faith.

In passing on the faith:

- We presume "I have it to give to you."
- Parents/parish leaders teach what they know (or believe, practice) so that others will know and believe it, too.
- We focus on saying and doing "religious" things.

In living into the faith:

- We believe "The Spirit is at work in you."
- Parish leaders/parents create and participate in shared experiences and practices through which faith comes to life.
- We focus on embodying faith in everyday life.

For years, we've talked about "passing on the faith." There's a sense of truth in that, but for this generation and especially for the needs of today's world, because of what we know now about what makes faith vibrant and lasting, we're called to do more than "passing on the faith." It's not just about "knowing" but it's about living the faith.

These pandemic times which call us to innovate, which call us to discern the core of our lives and faith, provides a time for doing new things in new ways.

This chart, from the Search Institute, delineates some of the new approaches to which we're called. Even though it talks about our partnership with parents, these attitudes and actions are also true of our approach to all people, including all adults, as we walk with them on the journey of faith.



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24- In these pandemic times, various places within our world have shut down for the time being. At the same time, many parishes are offering more than they did before!

Certainly not in the same way, but many parishes and (arch)dioceses have increased their services and opportunities. Partners for Sacred Places gathered data between June 26 and July 10, 2020 from a broad variety of faith traditions (19) and locations (37 states). One of their findings was that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of congregations pre-recording or live streaming both worship (increase from 20% to 85%) and education or small group activities (increase from 7% to 72%). <https://sacredplaces.org/covid-19-impact-survey-of-building-use-and-community-programs-summer-2020/>

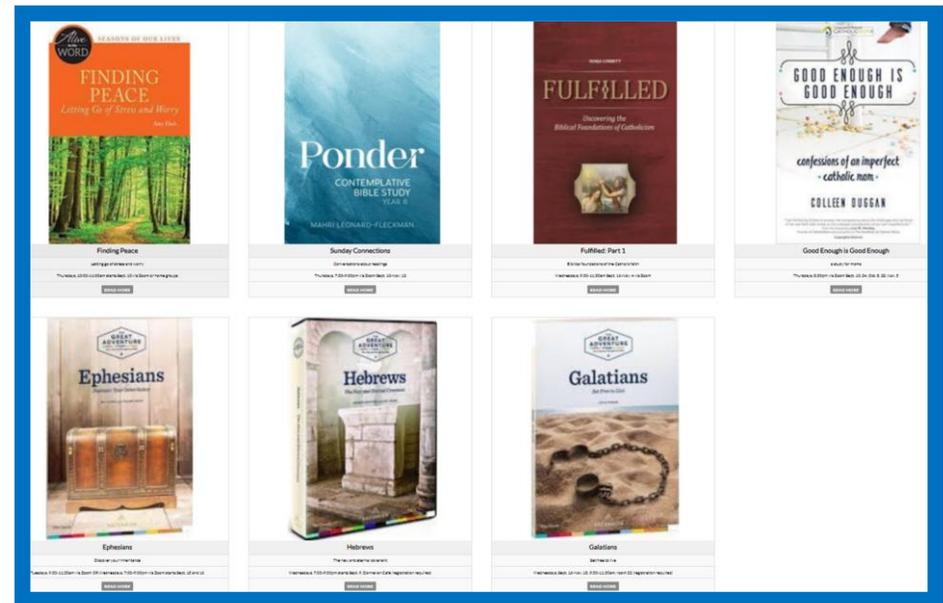
In addition to phone calls, mailings online newsletters and enhanced websites, pastoral leaders are using various internet platforms to connect and provide learning opportunities. As Amy S. McEntee, project manager for RCL Benziger, reminds us: online learning is not a tool, but an environment. It's one of the newer environments (settings, situations, locations, circumstances) of our lives today.

Early on during the stay-at-home experiences most people found themselves in, one adult faith formation director called me to do a webinar for a new group which he was beginning for maturing adults in the parish. He said, "Some people think I'm nuts for beginning something new when we find ourselves in these confusing, unforeseen times. Yet, I'm just thinking of all the possible ways to help people stay connected."

Mike echoed the feelings and actions of many throughout our parishes and (arch)dioceses:

- William Clarke, Associate Director of Professional Development and Senior Ministry, and Mary Cohen, consultant for Senior Ministry, for the archdiocese of Atlanta, began holding monthly Senior Adult Ministry Networking Calls to connect parish leadership working with senior adults across the archdiocese to share updates, best practices, and identify questions and concerns.
- During the Easter season, Blessed Sacrament Parish in Midland, MI provided daily reflections which included an action item and song for each day.

- A new group started during the pandemic at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish in Schenectady, NY. The participants listen to a James Finley podcast and then meet online for conversations and reflections. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/turning-to-the-mystics-with-james-finley/id1494041647>
- Holy Spirit Catholic Community, Naperville, IL has an active *That Man Is You* program which continued to meet during the stay-at-home times. When its usual programming concluded in early May, they continued with supplemental programming. A group of twenty men continue to meet every Saturday morning at 7:30 am.
- St. Ann Parish in Marietta, GA is offering seven different Scripture studies during the fall of 2020.



- Kris Rooney from St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish in Schenectady, NY relates that during the strict stay-at-home protocols, they offered something daily at 9:00 am through either Facebook Live or Google

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Meet. People appreciated having something consistently available to them.

- Mondays: either liturgy or rosary with their pastor
- Tuesdays: Taize Prayer
- Wednesdays: Contemplative Prayer
- Thursdays: Reflecting on the Sunday Readings
- Fridays: Check-in with the pastor.

They also had Mass live-streaming on Saturday evenings on their Facebook page, as well as are other groups that have been continuing to meet through Google Meet. They have a Google calendar on their website, so people could access the groups through that, which was been easier for them than Zoom.

Many of the additional opportunities to which parishes and (arch)dioceses were attentive were times for prayer, as indicated above with St. Kateri Tekakwitha. In addition to Sunday and weekday liturgy, parishes included the rich prayer heritage of our faith.

- At Holy Spirit Catholic Community, Naperville, IL, their *That Man Is You group* taped the praying of the rosary at various spots within the church. They were posted on YouTube, giving people the feeling of being present within their church space.
- St. Cecilia Parish in Boston, MA offers Liturgy of the Hours several times a week.

Liturgy of the Hours

Please join us for Liturgy of the Hours Live on Facebook this week:

- Saturday, August 22 - Morning Prayer at 9:00 a.m. - Memorial of the Queenship of Mary
- Thursday, August 27 - Evening Prayer at 6:30 p.m. - Memorial of Saint Monica
- Saturday, August 29 - Morning Prayer at 9:00 a.m. - Memorial of the Passion of Saint John the Baptist

- St. Monica Catholic Community in Santa Monica, CA offered an online morning retreat for young adults in their 20s and 30s. This virtual opportunity included opportunity for prayer, meditation and small group fellowship.



YMA Morning Retreat Aug 22

Detachment: Letting Go and the Experience of Spiritual Freedom

📅 Saturday, August 22, 2020 | 9:30-11:00 a.m.
Featuring: Fr. Dave Ayotte, Associate Pastor

All young adults in their 20's and 30's are invited to a morning retreat focusing on how we become attached to things, people and behaviors, and the spiritual movement towards detachment. Retreat includes opportunity for prayer, meditation and small group fellowship.

- Teri Burns, pastoral associate for faith formation at St. Robert of Newminster Parish, Ada, MI relates that as soon as the COVID quarantine started in March, they began offering weekly prayer opportunities via Zoom.
 - Stations of the Cross on Fridays through Lent
 - A Monday Lunchtime Rosary each week
 - Contemplative (Centering) Prayer each Thursday at noon, with discussion of a spiritual reading. This prayer group had regularly met on Thursdays at noon through the year.

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Because of COVID they moved to Zoom Teri commented, “Surprisingly, it works well to have twenty minutes of silent prayer, and then discussion of our reading.”

CENTERING PRAYER

Thursdays, 12-1 p.m., Room 205

Centering Prayer is a method of prayer to cultivate the development of Contemplative Prayer. Come from 12-12:30 p.m. for the practice of Centering Prayer, then you may choose to leave or stay to discuss a particular reading. You may also opt to participate via Zoom. For more information or to sign up, contact [Teri Burns](#), ext 115.

Many parishes, also, used their website, e-newsletter and social media to alert parishioners to the many opportunities that are available on the internet for prayer, meditation and reflection on the Scriptures, such as:

- Weekly Faith Sharing with Fr. James Martin, SJ: https://www.facebook.com/FrJamesMartin/live_videos/
- Pray As You Go: <https://pray-as-you-go.org/home/>
- Daily Prayer: <https://www.plough.com/en/subscriptions/daily-prayer>
- Sacred Space: <https://www.sacredspace.ie/daily-prayer>
- A Concord Pastor Comments: <https://concordpastor.blogspot.com/>
- One Prayer a Day: <https://bobhostetler.blogspot.com/>
- Praying Each Day: <http://www.prayingeachday.org/reflect.html>
- Prayer for Each Day – Taizé: https://www.taize.fr/en_article5806.html
- Prayer live from Taizé: https://www.taize.fr/en_article28227.html
- Daily Reflections: <https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/daily.html>

- Daily Reflections: <https://bible.usccb.org/podcasts/video>
- Daily Reflections from the Passionists: <https://passionist.org/daily-reflections/>
- Mass Reading and Meditation from The Word Among Us: <https://wau.org/meditations/>
- Pencil Preaching: <https://www.ncronline.org/columns/pencil-preaching?c>



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Past issues of **GEMS** are archived at www.janetschaeffler.com

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>
- *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation*
http://www.lifelongfaith.com/store/p25/The_Seasons_of_Adult_Faith_Formation.html and <http://www.lifelongfaith.com/2015-adult-faith-formation-symposium.html>