



Faith Practices Toolkit from the Office of Christian Formation

Welcome to the Practices Resource! We're thrilled that you decided to pick up this toolkit. Whether you're just joining the conversation on *Christian practices* or you're a seasoned veteran, we hope you'll find this resource stimulating and helpful for cultivating a renewed interest in formative rituals within your faith community.

Although there are dozens of Christian practices we could have emphasized in this resource, we are beginning this journey with five that allow for a wide range of generational participation and which could be adapted for a variety of ministry settings. These five practices were curated through a Christian formation symposium hosted by the Office of Christian Formation in 2017. Over 30 notable ministry practitioners and academics came together to discern a short list of practices that could be used through various types of age and stage ministry. When used regularly in your faith community, these practices offer a means to connect the different life stages in life-long formation.

These practices are **Hospitality**, **Prayer**, **Service**, **Storytelling**, and **Retreat**

Each toolkit explores one of these Sabbath practices and includes "age and stage" guides to help you dig deeper into the practical application for your specific ministry context. We like to think of them as *Sabbath practices* because each one taps into the essential nature of what it means to celebrate Sabbath communally. Not surprisingly, it's through our communal participation that we connect with God and one another in a qualitatively different kind of way.

tips for using this toolkit

Start with Sabbath. We encourage you to explore the foundational piece on sabbath to understand why we believe sabbath practices are essential to experiencing practices as a community.

The Essential Practices are an important foundation. Each of our 5 practices are explored in depth in the essential documents. You can use these as the basis for a Bible study on practice or for your own understanding as a faith formation leader. The Biblical basis and theological approach to each practice is important as you dig deeper.

The Ministry Kits will offer practical ways to engage and things to consider. We have further explored each practice for different ages and settings. You'll find a kit for children, youth, adults, intergenerational gatherings, camps and households. These are guides for faith formation leaders and meant to be a launching pad.



Practices overlap and relate to each other. You will notice reoccurrences of key concepts and ideas for engagement across ages, settings and practices. These faith practices are meant to be repeated and ritualized so that your community knows that they pray and serve together, engage regularly in hospitality and storytelling and value retreat with one another. They should be a thread throughout our faith lives where repetition creates a holy rhythm and rituals that bring richness to our life together as Christians.

possible ways to engage in practices

Consider approaching a different practice in depth as a community for a period of time. Connect engagement at-home with worship and age-related gatherings. Everyone exploring the same practice in different ways.

This toolkit is being released at a time of many churches meeting online or in hybrid forms. Many of the activities can be modified to an online format. We also believe that focusing on faith practices is something you can encourage that decreases screen time. Consider coming together to explore a practice and then going out to “practice”!

Use the toolkit as a lens to view your community of faith. Do you regularly participate in storytelling and hear from a variety of ages in worship? Do you encourage prayer practices that connect in your different age-related programs? What rituals and traditions does your faith community engage in and does it include all ages?

are you ready to begin?

This toolkit is not meant as a program for you to begin in your faith community, rather it is meant to facilitate an intentional use of practices that supports intergenerational lifelong faith formation and a Christian community. We look forward to adding additional resources this toolkit as needed and continuing the conversation about practices and how they are engaging your faith community. Make sure to reach out to us with your ideas!

This resource was born from several years of gatherings and a variety of practitioners and leaders participated with the Office of Christian Formation in its production. We offer deep gratitude for the collaboration, writing, designing and editing from the following: Steven Bohn, Becky D’Angelo Veitch, Andrew Esqueda, Whitney Fauntleroy, Brian Frick, Stephanie Fritz, Julie Gvillo, Holly Inglis, Lea Kone, Heather Leoncini, Kathryn McGregor, Jason Brian Santos and Kellie Von Borstel.

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