

# LIFELONG PATHWAYS OF FAITH FORMATION

## Fact Sheet



Grow Ministries

LCA CHILD YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

Guiding Principles for  
Effective Child, Youth &  
Family Ministry

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE

#### #4

Lifelong Faith  
Formation  
- People of  
all ages are  
engaged in a  
lifelong journey  
of discipleship  
that nurtures  
their faith  
through the  
different  
stages of life.



I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone. Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvellous deeds. Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come. *Psalm 71:16-18*

**In the twenty-first century, faith formation involves planning a journey of lifelong discipleship—a process of experiencing, learning, and practising the Christian faith as we seek to follow Jesus in today's world.**

This faith-formation journey integrates all age groups and provides whole-community experiences and learning, focused on events of church life and seasons of the Christian faith. It also seeks to support the needs, interests, and spiritual growth of every age group. It's holistic—it's about nurturing the way of the head, the heart, and the hands—informing, forming, and transforming people in Christian faith and identity.

To provide this holistic pathway requires intentional planning. Being intentional about celebrating faith milestones or rites of passage, in order to place all of life under the care, blessing and direction of our gracious God. Every ending, beginning, transition, and moment in life is an opportunity to actively claim God's grace and blessing for our lives, and celebrate with all of those in our lives.

It is an opportunity to weave our stories with God's story, to live with confidence in God's care in every way, every place—all the time.

*"A faith milestone is a marker along life's journey that says, 'This is something important and God is here, too.' It is a faith formation practice for both home and congregation that helps all generations recognise God's presence in everyday life."* Dr David Anderson

As leaders in congregations, it is up to us to help others understand and recognise how

God is present in everyday life. How we go about doing that and the tools we use is part of the challenge we face. But let's not overlook the impact these events can have on building a connected faith community.

One way Grow Ministries can assist is through our Faith Trail ministry resource. The encouragement provided in Psalm 71:16-18 gives us a framework and the basis for this ministry. It reminds us to tell the story of God's marvellous deeds to the next generation.

Faith Trail integrates four basic elements into a vital partnership between the congregation and the home. That home could be a house in the suburbs, a farmhouse, a share house, a small group, or a room in an aged care facility. These elements can be incorporated into any life or faith milestone: a birth, a baptism, a new puppy, a graduation, a wedding, receiving a driver's licence, a retirement, a funeral, or any occasion related to a stage, age or moment in life.

## 1 NAMING

Naming the sacred and ordinary events in the life of a congregation and in our daily life creates rituals and traditions that shape us and give us a sense of belonging to the family of Jesus Christ.

## 2 EQUIPPING

Equipping provides instruction related to the Faith Trail event, builds community, gathers generations, invites conversation and encourages story telling. Participants learn from each other as they engage in intergenerational learning and are provided with take home resources to encourage continued learning.

## 3 BLESSING

Blessing the individual, marking the occasion in worship and providing tools for blessing in the home say 'this is all about faith'. God is present in all of daily life, making the ordinary sacred and the sacred ordinary.

## 4 GIFTING

Gifting is a tangible way of providing a symbol and a reminder of the occasion being marked. Gifting serves as a resource for the ongoing nurture of faith in daily life.

At the moment, our Faith Trail ministry resource is focused on supporting families and homes of pre-school and primary school children. It has been designed to help remind parents to celebrate and bless their children at every new beginning or transition in life.

We are in the process of identifying and developing these resources to include the life transitions of high school students, young adults and older adults.

*"Our milestones ministry started with conversations about what 'rites of passage' might look like in our context. Our essential question when developing faith milestones was: What does faith development look like in our community from birth to when our kids go off to college and beyond? Those conversations turned into ideas, then into small events and shifts, and then moved into consistent programs."* Steven Johnson—Milestones of Faith, Creating rhythms through rites of passage\*

Another resource Grow Ministries can provide to get your started is **Faith Stepping Stones** (Faith Inkubators).

There are eight stones beginning with baby through to high school graduation. Each Faith Stepping Stone includes an opportunity for parents and children to gather three times and culminates with a blessing. The first session, the physical needs of both parent and child are addressed. The second session is emotional needs and the third, spiritual needs. Each time parents and children meet, there are fun games, skits, a scripture verse set to music, and a small group time.

For more information:

[stickyfaith](http://stickyfaith.org)

\*Milestones of Faith (Sticky Faith) USA:  
<http://stickyfaith.org/articles/milestones-of-faith>



Milestones Ministry USA:  
<http://milestonesministry.org>



Here 2 Stay Australia - Rites of Passage:  
<http://here2stay.org.au/10pillars/anchors>



-  baptism
-  first baptism anniversary
-  prayer
-  first steps
-  family worship
-  beginning school
-  lord's prayer
-  my bible
-  ten commandments
-  first communion
-  serving as a family
-  apostles' creed
-  i am special

