



A faith that Carries

A faith development plan for the
United Methodist Church in Norway



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Here you will find resources for download



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A faith that Carries

All through the Bible we read about a God who wants to be present in people's lives. A God that shows us that children and youth are a natural and important part of the Christian fellowship. To God, age and experience are not what is most important, but the heart, the willingness, the faithfulness and maybe also the courage. The Bible tells us about the importance of teaching the children and the youth about God and of letting them participate in the experiences of the divine, so that their faith becomes one that carries throughout life.

In the New Testament, Jesus settles the score with the Pharisees and the teachers of the law and confirms that the children truly are both the kingdom of heaven and a model for the faith.

*Then he [Jesus] called a little child over to sit among the disciples and said, "I assure you that **if you don't turn your lives around and become like this little child**, you will definitely not enter the kingdom of heaven. Matt 18:2-3*

With the Methodist Church's faith development plan "A faith that carries" as a foundation, we hope that children and youth will develop a sustainable, lifelong faith. We will attain this through a solid education that manages to be both challenging and current. A faith that carries when life offers health, fortune and happiness as much as when it hands you pain, sorrow and challenges. We hope to provide a foundation for faith and a Christian perspective on life for children today, a foundation so current and sustainable that it will be passed on to the next generation.

*Our God is the Lord! Only the Lord! Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your being, and all your strength. These words that I am commanding you today must always be on your minds. **Recite them to your children. Talk about them when you are sitting around your house and when you are out and about**, when you are lying down and when you are getting up. Deut 6:4-7*



Goal and target groups

The goal for the **spiritual formation** of the Methodist church is to give children and youth a faith that carries. That children and youth get to know God, Jesus and The Holy Spirit, and learn to live like Jesus taught us, in love and service to our neighbour and ourselves.

The goal for the **faith development plan** of the Methodist church is to give the congregation a tool for teaching and caring for the group from 0 to 18 years. The plan is to contribute to a systematic and consistent spiritual formation which:

- provides children with a living, solid faith
- provides knowledge about the Bible, its contents and its origins
- provides knowledge about the theology of the Methodist Church
- challenges to commitment and

participation in the church and in society, locally, nationally and globally.

- contributes to a Christian life perspective and life management
- contributes to people taking a personal stand and becoming a member of the Methodist church

The plan will provide the congregation with a solid guidance for the teachers, qualified leaders and ample follow-up for those who are using the plan. The target group for the faith development plan is congregations, parish councils, employees, volunteers and others who are responsible for the spiritual formation within the congregation, in cooperation with the parents. The faith development plan must be founded in the parish council and the responsibility of executing it must belong to the entire congregation. Every congregation should have a plan for how children and youth are to be welcomed and taught in the Christian faith.

How to reach the goal?

To reach the goal of giving children and youth a faith that carries, it is necessary to have a targeted, current and motivating education. We believe this is possible by following the progression of the faith development plan. The content of the plan is structured according to age and theme. Thus it is clear what you should learn at what age, which creates good conditions for progression and development.

The online resource package of the faith development plan will supply the congregations and the teachers with ideas and methods for running target specific efforts.



The faith development plan is founded on the vision and commission of the Methodist church:

VISION:

The Methodist Church -people with open hearts, open minds and open doors! A relevant, open and vital church, where people find faith and belonging, and become equipped to serve as followers of Christ.

COMMISSION:

Create disciples for Jesus Christ so that the world can be changed.





The faith development plan

The faith development plan will grow and change, and updated plans will be available for download at www.metodistkirken.no/tro. You will also find resources and links for each theme.

The faith development plan has a systematic construction for progression and development. It is therefore important that the basic structure is followed, but at the same time it must be adapted to the needs and conditions of the individual congregation.

The age divisions in the plan are meant as guide lines. Repetition and reflection is important.

Consequences of the faith in my life		Consequences of the faith in my life		Consequences of the faith in my life		Consequences of the faith in my life		Consequences of the faith in my life		Consequences of the faith in my life	
Themes: Jesus, Prayer. • Our Father • Mealtime grace • Evening prayer • Learning to pray • Easy Bible stories • Songs with movements • Praying and singing along with the child • A sense of belonging to the congregation • Learning to know Jesus, who loves me and cares for me • The responsibility of godparenting • Baptism	Themes: God, My church, Jesus, Son of God.	Themes: Jesus loves everybody, Our Father, Jesus and me, The Wesley brothers, Green congregations.	Themes: My congregation and church, Prayer, Charity work, Pentecost, The Bible, Evangelism and missionary work.	Themes: Spiritual formation, The Holy Trinity, Diaconal work and missionary work/evangelism, Confirmation, Membership.	Themes: Mercy/Spiritual gifts, The Methodist Church, God in my life, A faith that carries.	• Getting to know Jesus and his life • Articulation/ dramatisation • Bible stories	• Taking care of God's creation • Charles and John Wesley's childhood and youth • The "Gospel in a nutshell"; John 3:16. • Famous persons and stories about Jesus in the Bible • Jesus in my life • Hearing/learning about Jesus as our saviour • Learning The Prayer, and the significance and meaning of the individual prayers in it • Communion • The significance and meaning of Easter • The Christian celebrations • The double love command • Charity and respect	• Getting to know the countries in which the church does missionary work • Learning The Great Commission and where in the Bible it is located • What is missionary work/ evangelism? • The books in the Bible and their origins • The Ten Commandments • Learning verses from the Bible and where they are located. • The Creed • Discussion/Reflection • The Holy Spirit • The story of Pentecost • John Wesley's view on charity work • What makes me a disciple of Jesus? • Who is my "neighbour"? • Prayer walking • Wonder/respect/tradition • The prayer and I/others • The personal prayer • Giving tithe • Being a representative of your congregation in society at large • Christianity in practice • Developing one's faith and sense of belonging through contributing in the congregation	• Being involved in the boards, councils and committees of the church. • Getting to know the membership vows • Membership in the church • The history, creed and faith of the Methodist church. • Attending confirmation tutoring • Passing it on • My faith • Taking part in the congregation's charity and missionary perspective home and abroad • Creating disciples for Jesus Christ so that the world can be changed • Knowing the apostolic creed • Who is the Holy Spirit? • Who is Jesus Christ? • Who is God? • Are you here, Jesus? • Becoming aware of own Spiritual formation in the congregation and in society	• A faith that carries • Where to now, God? • My faith and my future • Me, a role model for others/friends? • A sense of belonging to home/church • The story of my faith • More profound understanding of the Bible • A life in the service of God • Tutor training • God in the contemporary society • How do I spend my time? • In God's image • The social principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Globally ◦ Nationally ◦ Locally • How to receive spiritual gifts? • The Methodist understanding of mercy • Are spiritual gifts relevant for us today? • What does the Bible say about mercy/spiritual gifts?	
						age 0-3	age 4-5	age 6-9	age 10-13	age 14-15	age 16-18



- A faith that carries
- Where to now, God?
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- What does the Bible say about mercy/spiritual gifts?



Note that the table is to be read from the bottom up to achieve the right progression.





The responsibility of good parenting

In the baptism we, as a congregation and church, promise to receive the children and **“proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We surround them with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their service to others.”** We must take our baptismal vows seriously: A faith that carries is meant to be an aid in this respect. This plan is meant to supply a foundation for what we will teach children and youth age 0-18.

In the Methodist church the congregation is the child’s godparents. This is practiced by all congregations, but many people today choose to have personal godparents in addition. The fact that some may have personal godparents does not, however, exempt the congregation from this important responsibility. In the report “By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism”, it says:

“If persons are to be enabled to live faithfully the human side of the baptismal covenant, Christian nurture is essential. Christian nurture builds on baptism and is itself a means of grace. For infant baptism, an early step is instruction prior to baptism of parent(s) or sponsors in the gospel message, the meaning of the sacrament, and the responsibilities of a Christian home. [...]

After baptism, the faithful church provides the nurture which makes possible a comprehensive and lifelong process of growing in grace. The content of this nurturing will be appropriate to the stages of life and maturity of faith of individuals. Christian nurture includes both cognitive learning and spiritual formation. A crucial goal is the bringing of persons to recognition of their need for salvation and their acceptance of God’s gift in Jesus Christ.”

The faith development plan is meant to be an important contribution to this spiritual growth, and will be an aid for parents and congregations both before and after baptism.

The commission to be godparents is one of our most important congregational responsibilities. In the baptismal covenant the congregation and the parents promise that we, by living according to the example of Christ, will give them the best possible condition to live and grow in the Christian faith. This is a sacred responsibility, and a treasure to administer. For the congregation this means that we have to invite the children and parents to come to church.

The congregation must offer activities for children and youth, but at the same time make sure that they feel welcome in the already existing activities, such as the service.

As a church we also have a responsibility for those who were not baptised as children. Through a solid spiritual formation it is possible to give children and youth a positive experience with faith, which in turn will make them want to make a conscious choice of their own, and be baptised.

All generations in the congregation are a resource for each other.

As godparents for all of our baptised children and youth we are to carry them in our prayers, and just as much we must see, hear and attend to both them and their parents.

The faith development plan must be founded in the parish council and the responsibility of executing it must belong to the entire congregation.





Spiritual formation at home and in church

Today we live in a multicultural society with influences from all the religions, views of life and processes of secularisation of the world through friends, neighbours, television, the internet and other media.

In this regard we as a church have a crucial responsibility to preach the message of the Bible about the love of God, Jesus' work of salvation and the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This is a message whose content is constant, but which must be expressed in new ways for new generations. Thus, this eternal message becomes eternally relevant.

The spiritual formation is to prepare children and youth for life, help develop a positive self-image, and pass on a sustainable faith in a living God.

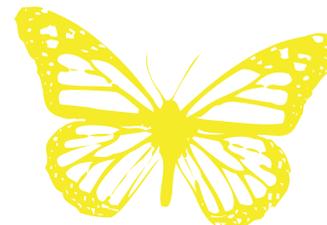
The meaning of term family has changed over the years. As a church we must focus on encompassing any family constellation and on showing respect, care and love.

The church wishes to be a support and a resource in the spiritual formation at home, and give parents the tools they might need. A close and open cooperation between church and home is the best starting point for an optimised and secure spiritual formation.



"The best of all is, God is with us".

John Wesley



Membership

At the age of 15 any person can decide which religion-supporting group he or she wishes to belong to. The goal for the spiritual formation is for children and youth to take a personal stand for Jesus, and that this in turn leads to membership in the Methodist church.

As a member one becomes a part of a worldwide movement with more than 80 million Methodist.

