

DISCIPLESHIP NOW!

West Virginia Baptist Convention

February 2018

DISCIPLESHIP NOW is a periodic resource provided for local churches from the office of Discipleship Ministries.

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Come and Join the Group! Faith in the Workplace Participating Churches

Helping churches do together what they cannot do alone with the goal of honoring Christ is an important part of the mission of the West Virginia Baptist Convention. The Discipleship Ministries Commission is moving full steam ahead in the 2018 emphasis, **Faith in the Workplace**.

While many resources and ideas have already been shared and will continue to be shared with our member churches, the **Faith in the Workplace Participating Churches** group will serve as a community of churches who are making faith in the workplace an emphasis in the church and who are interested in sharing ideas, receiving additional helps and coaching throughout the year.

Faith in the Workplace Participating Churches will receive coaching calls from the WVBC Discipleship Ministries department, access to two webinars concerning faith in the workplace, additional resources to assist in sermon preparation, adaptation of current materials for small groups throughout the year, Worker Dedication Sunday materials, Recognizing Workers in the Community ideas, tips on starting Faith in the Workplace groups in workplaces and recognition as a **Faith in the Workplace Participating Church** at the West Virginia Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, October 19-20, 2018 at South Parkersburg Baptist Church.

Please see the Faith in the Workplace checklist on the following page, fill out and return the registration form. Check off the items as your church completes them. We suggest that every participating church complete items 1-3. You may add other ideas that your church has created and done.

We will be checking back with you later in 2018! Thanks for joining the **Faith in the Workplace** movement!

If you have questions or need assistance planning the emphasis in your church, please contact Lisa Simmons, Director of Discipleship Ministries at Lsimmons@wvbc.org or call 304-273-9693.

Our mission is to empower local churches to be Christ honoring communities of faith, and to help them fulfill their mission by enabling them to do together what they cannot do alone.

Faith in the Workplace Participating Church Checklist

- ◇ Complete The Monday Morning Atheist/The Switch - 6 week study (see WorkLife.org for materials)
- ◇ Purchase the WorkLife Church Guide and read it. (see www.worklife.org)
- ◇ Focus on Faith in the Workplace through at least 5 sermons on Sunday mornings (complete by October 2018)
- ◇ Provide church members with general and registration information for the **West Virginia Baptist Convention SwitchTool** weekly email. (see www.wvbc.org using Chrome as your internet explorer to register)
- ◇ Provide church members with general and registration information for the **WVBC Disciple 18** weekly text group. (see www.wvbc.org)
- ◇ Plan and hold a Worker Dedication Day at the church (not on Labor Day).
- ◇ Equip facilitators and start at least 2 Switch groups in workplaces.
- ◇ Use the church website to advance the theme of Faith in the Workplace.
- ◇ Church leadership attend online webinars focusing on Faith in the Workplace (one will be provided by the WV Baptist Convention).
- ◇ Use local community media to communicate about Faith in the Workplace activities and opportunities at the church (ex. newspapers, community websites, church marquee, local TV station, etc).
- ◇ Plan and hold a project to celebrate work and workers throughout your community.
- ◇ Church leadership send personal encouragement notes or emails to workers.
- ◇ Schedule Switching God on at Work stories on Sunday from workers who have used the Switch study.
- ◇ Add a Faith in the Workplace article to weekly or monthly newsletters, emails, bulletins, or website.

Faith in the Workplace Participating Church Registration Form

SIGN US UP!

Church Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Primary Contact _____

Contact Phone _____ Contact Email _____

Return to: Discipleship Ministries, West Virginia Baptist Convention, PO Box 1019, Parkersburg WV 26102 ATTN: Valma Adams

For questions: Lisa Simmons, Lsimmons@wvbc.org or 304-273-9693

Online registration is available at www.wvbc.org, click Faith in the Workplace 2018 and click on Faith in the Workplace Participating Churches registration.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES - Mix It Up

“When you do the opposite of what kids expect, you capture their attention.” That idea captures me. It’s true, isn’t it? Even with adults. I remember the time I showed up for a staff meeting expecting to sit around the table like usual and hammer away at problems and issues. Instead, our pastor announced we were escaping to a restaurant, where we had a successful and memorable discussion. And I remember the time I showed up for biology class, ready to sit in rows and yawn – but our teacher took us outside. I still recall what we learned and how exciting it was so do something unexpected.

Those situations captured my attention because they blew apart my expectations. How does this apply to your ministry?

Veer away from what kids expect, and you’ll grab their attention – and keep it. You don’t have to toss your entire routine – kids actually thrive in routines – but you can throw in numerous surprises each week that delight and excite.

Read on to find ideas for mixing it up in ministry. You’ll get deeper learning, better engagement and happier kids in return.

MIX IT UP: Teaching Environment

The Expectation: Kids sit on chairs, around the table or on the floor while an adult presents the lesson.

Mix It Up: You can do a lot of things to shake up expectations in the presentation, from rearranging segments to inviting special teaching guests to adding or subtracting video and music. Have extended free time to create room for kids to build friendships. Do what my teacher did and go outside for a change.

From a physical standpoint, one of the most powerful things you can do with kids is change up where and how they sit. For instance; position chairs and kids in a giant circle while you teach the lesson from the center. Or turn chairs around so kids use the chair backs as fronts. Arrange chairs around tables. Have kids stand when they’d usually sit and sit when they’d usually stand. Have kids face a direction away from the teacher. The more you upend kids’ expectations the more they’ll pay attention as they try to anticipate what’ll be different each week.

MIX IT UP: Scripture

Kids may know the drill when it comes to learning God’s Word – which is the best reason to mix it up. You’ll help kids better understand why scripture applies to their lives – not just how to successfully memorize words on a page – when you mix things up.

The Expectation: A teacher reads or presents the verse in a creative way, and kids repeat it until they can recite it.

Mix It Up: Continue to present the verse creatively but change the presentation every week. Make a song (serious or silly) out of the verse and have kids sing along. Make a video out of the verse with images kids relate to. Read the verse with an accent. Let kids discuss what they think it means and why. Put them in the role of detectives to find out what it means. And remember: always, always attach real meaning to kids’ lives. Why does the verse matter to them? What does it mean at school and at home? There are tons of creative ways to help kids remember God’s Word – the point is to present the verse differently every time you review it so kids participate and internalize it.

MIX IT UP: The Bible

One of the great challenges of children’s ministry is getting kids to learn and absorb God’s Word. You can bring new interest and deeper comprehension when you teach the Bible in unexpected ways.

The Expectation: Kids listen to an adult tell about the Bible passage, or they watch a video depicting it. Few child volunteers may be chosen to participate in some fashion.

Mix It Up: Flip the script. If a teacher always tells the Bible story, do it by video once in awhile. If kids always sit during the story, have them stand or lie down. Have the entire group act out the passage as you read. Have the storyteller create an exercise routine out to the passage (think: Jesus jumping jacks and Paul push-ups). Or have a small group from another part of your church creatively tell the story. Shake up how you convey that Bible passage each week; this helps kids with different learning styles engage with the story and remember it. Plus, inviting all kids to actively participate encourages more regular attendance and ups the fun factor.

MIX IT UP: Prayer

Prayer can be intimidating for kids, so adding a splash of fun and a dose of familiarity will go a long way toward making it something they look forward to.

The Expectation: The teacher asks if anyone has prayer requests and then the group prays.

Mix It Up: Instead of asking if anyone has a prayer request, ask each child what his or her prayer request is. If kids can’t think of one, prompt them to think about other’s needs. This helps kids realize there’s always something to pray about and that prayer isn’t only about them. Have kids write their requests on sticky notes. Keep a class journal. Create a prayer wall for kids to write their prayers on. Trade prayers with each other. Have kids form prayer pairs for the week. Have kids pray for you or one specific person in your church or community. Have kids toss a ball around the circle until each person has prayed for a need. When you come at prayers from unexpected angles, you give kids practice praying and more confidence to pray in public.

Bridge of Hope and the Work Jungle - A Skit



Scene 1 – A lush, green, highly forested, mature jungle in the middle of “Somewhere”. Animal calls can be heard and the buzz of mosquitoes and other flying insects provides additional background noise. A distressed, tired, fearful person, anxiously stands on one side of a deep, deep, fog covered chasm. In front of him a homemade, long, swinging bridge stretching the length of a football field from his side of a mountain trail to another mountain trail. On the other side, a friend.

Adventurer #1 (excited) - Come on! I made it, so can you. Look, look, just cross the bridge!

Adventurer #2 (frighten) - Are you serious? This is insane. I don't think I am going to make it **here**, but really? The bridge?

Adventurer #1 - Yes. Seriously! You have no other way, just take some steps, get started and come on!

Adventurer #2 - What makes you think this is a good idea? How do you know it is safe?

Adventurer #1 - Two things. I know who built it and I came across already.

Adventurer #2 - (skeptical)-You are going to vouch for the creator of this, this BRIDGE!?

Adventurer #1 - (confident and urgent) - Yes, I am. I know his abilities, his care and concern with the design and I know the materials he used are the best. I came across and made it, you come too! What choices do you have?

Adventurer #2 - (pensively thinking) Well I tried to just tough it out. **That** didn't work! I tried to go down another trail and **that** didn't work. Same problems again and again. Of course, I complained a lot – you know the squeaky wheel gets the grease! **That** didn't work. All I got was more people squeaking along with me and nothing changed. Actually just added more noise to the situation. You know I even tried just going along with the way everyone else was going and truly **that** was a waste.

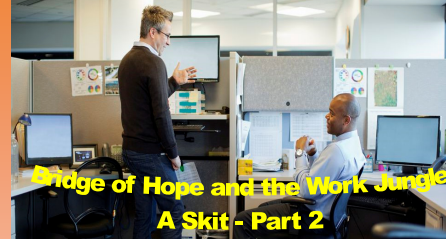
Adventurer #1 - (urgent) - I tried all that to and believe me this is the best way. Yes, it is scary. Yes, it is not the usual way that others make it out. But it truly is the best way. Come on!

Adventurer #2 - (doubtful) - I still don't know

Adventurer #1 - Ok, here's an idea. I start coming toward you, you make some steps toward me, we will meet and I will walk the rest of the way with you and on the way I can share with you a new way of continuing that will give you confidence, assurance and security in the future.

Adventurer #2 - Ok, on three

Adventurer #1 and #2 - (walking toward each other) One, two, three. . .



Scene 2 – Very busy, orderly office space with multiple cubicles. People are hard at work, people are coming and going. Background noise of phones ringing, machines running, people talking, computers, buzzers, etc. Two workers in their cubicles. Both standing and talking just outside the dividers.

Worker 1 - Well I feel you. I have had the same situations, but you know it really is working for me. Not always a smooth road but it works.

Worker 2 - (doubtful) I don't know . . . Seems quite old fashioned and out of date to me. One of those “out in the sky” kind of ideas.

Worker 1 - (chuckling) Well, I don't think so and it has really made a difference in my life. So do you think I am “out in the sky” somewhere?

Worker 2 - No, not really, but you know what I mean. Seems like I should be able to take care of this in another way. I have read books, listened to those “talks” on the internet, been to classes, I've tried to just ignore things. **That** doesn't work for sure. I even decided to just put my head down and go for it with everything I had. **That** didn't work either; just ask my friends and family. I really am having a hard time and it is affecting me here, at home and everywhere. How can you be so sure your suggestion is for me?

Worker 1 - Two things. One, I can attest that it really works! I have been in the same place you have been and I am sure things will come up again to cause me great stress and problems, but now I am not afraid and I am not clueless about what to do. Two, the designer of this “bridge of hope” for everyone, can be counted on 100 percent every time! That has been my experience and the experience of every person who has started on this journey. I know the designer created this for everyone in every situation, and it is not about money – He gets none!

Worker 2 - (pensively)- HmMMMM

Worker 1 - Tell you what! Tomorrow, let's meet about 45 minutes early at McDonald's. We can eat breakfast and talk about some first steps. I'll even pay!

Worker 2 - What? What? You? Yes, sir! I am in!

Discussion Starters or Sermon Springboards:

1. When have you found yourself in a tough situation at work?
2. Where did you see yourself in the two scenes?
3. What is your default action or thought when you deal with problems at work?
4. What makes you afraid or hesitate to depend on God at work?
5. What was the role of relationships and experience in the two scenes?
6. What are some practical ways Christians can be Bridges of Hope at work?

YOUTH MINISTRIES - Answering the Question: Who am I?

Have you ever struggled with the question: Who am I? Turns out that is a very important question to ask. That is one of those *key life questions*. The questions of “Who am I?” “Why am I here?” and “Where am I going?” are foundational to our lives. The answers to those questions give us identity, purpose and direction. How would you answer the question: Who am I?

Reading someone’s bio or playing getting-to-know-you games often leads people to answering that question from a few perspectives. 1-Based on *profession*: I am a teacher. A nurse. A receptionist. A child caregiver. 2- With *personality traits*: I’m shy. Emotional. Talkative. A giver. 3- Using *relationships*: I’m a wife, mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend. 4- Sharing *hobbies/interests*: I play sports. I’m an avid reader. I enjoy video games. I’m a movie junkie.

The question, “Who am I?” is deceptively simple. It isn’t always easy to answer and yet it is critical. The trouble with our answers is that all too often they let us down, we can’t live up, sometimes they no longer fit. Relationships go through hard times; our personality shifts or seems to fall short of where we’d like to be; sometimes companies close, we get fired or aren’t successful at our jobs. And when our “Who am I?” is based on those alone we can be left feeling adrift, without an anchor.

When parenting teens or working in youth ministry, we need to acknowledge how important identity is in adolescent development. The need for belonging, a teen’s emerging sense of self-identity, and the development of critical thinking are crucial issues facing teens and young adults. How do we as fellow believers and church leaders consciously step into this crucial time of developing in the lives of the teens in our congregations and communities?

Recognizing the importance the “Who am I?” question has in the lives of teens, both currently and as they are maturing into adulthood, compels us to speak truth into this critical issue. Teens, just like adults, struggle to identify who they are... almost mirroring the answers adults give: Students will define who they are based on what they do, their personality traits, relationships and hobbies/interests.

And *just like adults*, teens struggle to feel fulfilled by those answers and deal with the disorienting disappointment when those areas let them down. Have you ever dealt with a straight A student who encounters a class they are suddenly struggling to pass? Talk about world shaking! How about a teen who has been a dancer her whole life that has recently learned she needs foot surgery and won’t be able to dance for 6-9 months? How does she find identity when that passion has been “taken away?” What about a young adult in your church who is dealing with the loss of a parent? Not only is life filled with grief and the pain of loss, but now their support structure has changed and even more, their family identity.

How do we as parents, teachers or leaders within our congregations help our youth develop a God centered identity? We start by clearly speaking truth about who God is, who we are and what that means for our lives. 1 John 3:1 says, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” Ephesians 2 makes it clear that this isn’t an identity that we earn. It didn’t come because we were good enough or tried hard enough. This *who I am* doesn’t only fit on our good days but is big enough to answer our bad days. God knows all about us and through Christ gave us the greatest gift of love I can imagine: the identity as children of God.

How to know the answer to “Who am I?” is to know *whose* you are, to find your deepest identity as a child of God. It isn’t that the other things don’t matter. Because they do. Our personality, interests, relationships and careers are important... but they don’t define us. While they change or fail, God never changes and his love never fails.

In a world that is driven by performance, defined by labels, ever-changing values, and void of a God-centered world view... how will you take steps to speak truth and anchor yourself, your family and the teens in your church in the life-giving truth of who they are because of whose they are in Jesus Christ?

How do we do this? (Because while we may know the importance of this truth, we struggle to determine how to work this out on a practical, day-to-day level.) First, and foremost, we live this authentically in our own lives. Second, we clearly communicate the truths we believe. Thirdly, we invite and encourage our teens to discuss their struggles and doubts as they are formulating their identity and solidifying their faith values. Fourth, we develop relationships that encompass more of life than Sunday morning or Wednesday evening.

How does this speak to you today? Is there a teen in your home or church that God has placed on your heart? Pray for that person and pursue doors that God will open for you to minister. Have conversations with parents in your church, Sunday School teachers, youth leaders and church leadership to discuss this critical issue and how you can better work to disciple the youth and young adults in your congregation. There are some great resources available, one I would recommend is <http://stickyfaith.org> and the work of the Fuller Youth Institute. Check out their webpage for online resources, books, curriculum and more!

Jill Narraway
Associate Director of Camping and Youth

Refresh - Personal Spiritual Growth Retreat



Refresh Personal Spiritual Growth Retreat

March 12-14, 2018 or March 15-17, 2018

Parchment Valley Conference Center

*"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a **solitary place**, where he prayed."*

Working in partnership, the Discipleship Commission and Pastors4Pastors will host **Refresh**, a personal spiritual growth retreat, which can be attended on March 12-14 or March 15-17, 2018. Retreats begin at 3:00 p.m. and end after lunch. The retreats will be held at the Parchment Valley Conference Center in Ripley WV. These retreats are for men and women, pastors, associates in ministry, full time and bi-vocational ministers and laypersons.

Participants can expect extended opportunities for silence, solitude, reflection, prayer and spiritual listening. Guided small group discussions will also be part of the program. The book, Hearing God by Dallas Willard, is required reading prior to the retreat.

Attendees will have the opportunity to spend time with a spiritual listener, use the Prayer Labyrinth, enjoy relaxed, unhurried time in prayer and Bible study, create a personal spiritual journey portrait (for personal use only), go on a prayer walk and learn and share with others.

Only single rooms are available. The cost per person is \$125.00. This includes two nights in a lodge room, two breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners and a program fee. A confirmation letter and schedule will be sent to registrants. For more information, contact Lisa Simmons, Lsimmons@wvbc.org or 304-273-9693. Registration forms are also available at www.wvbc.org.

Refresh Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

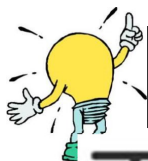
Retreat Attending: _____ March 12-14 _____ March 15-17

Special Dietary Requirements: _____

_____ \$125.00 payment included

Make Checks payable to: West Virginia Baptist Convention

Return with your payment to: **Refresh**, PO Box 1019, Parkersburg, WV 26102



Idea Bank



The Story of Jesus

Told in Easter Eggs



Easter: Time to Shine

Blow out the fun factor with an Easter egg hunt. These hunts, when done well are a highlight for your entire community. Many churches combine them with other activities such as pancake breakfasts and carnivals. You may have the means to drop thousands of stuffed eggs from a helicopter, or you may go with the more standard approach of asking your kindhearted congregants to fill a few hundred eggs and then hide them on the church grounds. Egg hunts are a great way to capture community interest and deliver Jesus' powerful message at the same time.

Check out *The Great Surprise* (group.com; \$69.99) for a complete community event designed to make egg hunts meaningful while motivating families to return to your church.

For important, proven insights on how to have a successful egg hunt, check out childrensministry.com/articles/easter-egg-hunt-outreach-searching-for-jesus.

For more, see "*The Story of Jesus, Told in Easter Eggs*" printable booklet and church Easter egg hunt idea (ministry-to-children.com/easter-egg-hunt-booklet).

I Am A Church Member - Book Review

At a time when there seems to be much discussion about the necessity of church membership, Thom S. Rainer clearly defines what it means to be associated with a local church in his book, *I Am A Church Member*. Whether your membership is official or casual, Rainer would argue that this association is not optional for those who belong to the body of Christ. The subtitle, *Discovering the Attitude that Makes the Difference*, reveals the essence of this book.

In this short book of less than 80 pages, Rainer leads the reader to consider various aspects of what it means to be associated with a local church. From the need to be an active participant in the life of the church to the responsibility of leading your family to also be healthy church members, he challenges you to discover the attitude that makes the difference regarding church membership. Rainer ends the book by emphasizing that church membership is a gift to be treasured that requires an attitude of servanthood and not a country club attitude of entitlement.

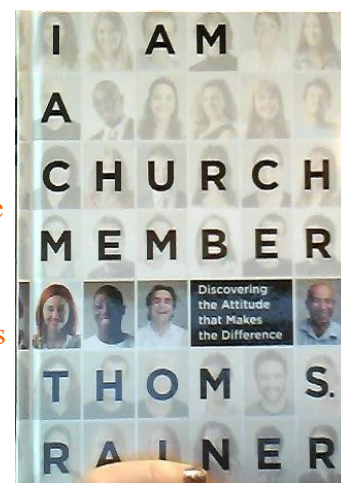
Although small, this book is packed full of thought-provoking observations, and each of its six chapters concludes with questions for personal study or small group discussion. Additionally, each chapter issues a challenge in the form of a pledge to be kept as a church member.

This book is the perfect gift for both new and longtime church members, and even for those considering church membership. When purchased in quantities of 20 from LifeWay the cost is only \$5.00 per book.

Pastors, this book can easily be used as a basis for preaching a series of sermons on church membership. All church members, including pastors, will be challenged by this book to live out God's intention for the local church.

It is true, your attitude towards church membership makes all the difference!

Reviewed by Scott Whetzel, pastor of Sabraton Baptist Church, Morgantown WV.



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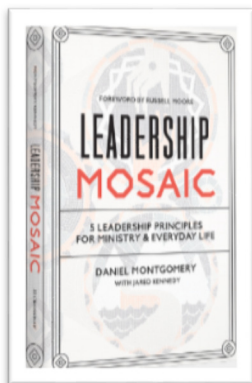
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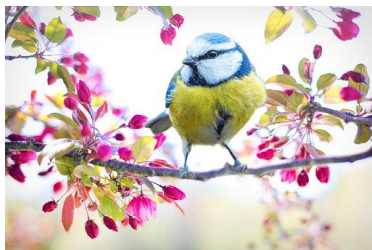
Valma Adams, Administrative Assistant for the
Discipleship Commission
adams@wvbc.org

Contact Valma at adams@wvbc.org
if you do not want to receive this mailing or if there
is someone else in your church who would benefit
by receiving it.



Leadership Mosaic: 5 Leadership Principles For Ministry And Everyday Life

There is plenty of information out there about how
to be a great leader, but simple, biblically based
leadership formulas are few and far between. In
Leadership Mosaic, author and pastor Daniel
Montgomery challenges conventional thinking
about what makes a good leader and gives a
framework for ministry and life. \$19.97;
leadershipmosaic.org/the-book



Spring Golden'eers Conference

April 30-May 2, 2018
(Monday-Wednesday)
Parchment Valley Conference Center, Ripley

Theme: "Spring is in the Air"

Bible Study Leader: Joel Harpold

*Go to www.wvbc.org/Commissions/Discipleship for a registration
form.*



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