



# Build a Team & Let the Spirit Lead:

Adventures in Cross+Generational Faith Formation  
in Small Churches  
with Rev. Breen Marie Sipes

**CONFERENCE 2021**





Stir up in us the gift  
of your Holy Spirit:

the spirit of wisdom and  
understanding, the spirit of  
counsel and might,

the spirit of knowledge  
and the fear of the Lord,

the spirit of joy in your  
presence, now and always.

Amen.



## Questions:

- How could we better connect and interconnect generations who are already together in one place?
- What are our missed opportunities?
- Where is this happening in your own context?

(Time to write/reflect in journal or chat box)

#1

# Spirit of Experimentation



Chemical Experiment by clement127 on flickr.com

## Anatomy of an Experiment:

- A PROBLEM, a burning QUESTION, or something that you WONDER about
- A HYPOTHESIS of how to explore the problem, question, or wondering
- TEST the hypothesis through an EXPERIMENT
- RECORD and REPORT the results. Make a plan for future experiments

#1

# Spirit of Experimentation



Chemical Experiment by clement127 on flickr.com

## Experiments:

- Don't last forever
- Can be tweaked and changed
- Help us to get our feet wet
- Help us to dive into the deep end
- Often lead to more experiments
- Are meant to be evaluated

#1

# Spirit of Experimentation



Chemical Experiment by clement127 on flickr.com

## Questions:

- What kind of experiment would you like to try?
  - What problem would you like to try solving, question to answer, wondering to explore?
  - Where is experimentation happening in your own context?
- (Time to write/reflect in journal or chat box)

#2

## **Spirit of Teamwork**

**When we work together,  
the work is sustainable**



- Who is ready for a new thing?
- Who has an open mind and willing hands?
- Who keeps showing up as a participant?
- How many generations can you include? (small church strength)



#2

## **Spirit of Teamwork**



School Diversity by wildrose115 on flickr.com

## **Questions:**

- Who is ready for a new thing?
- Who has an open mind and willing hands?
- Who keeps showing up as a participant?
- How many generations can you include?

(Time to write/reflect in journal or chat box)



#3

## **Spirit of Vibrancy**

**There is no need to  
reinvent the wheel!**



- What is already working?
- Intentional and consistent invitations
- What might need to change?
- What needs a critical mass?

Ride the Colour Wave by Rodger Evans on flickr.com

#3

## Spirit of Vibrancy



Ride the Colour Wave by Rodger Evans on flickr.com

## Questions:

- What is already working?
- How can we intentionally and consistently invite more generations to participate?
- What might need to change?
- What exciting ministry needs a critical mass?

(Time to write/reflect in journal or chat box)

#4

## Spirit of Curiosity

### Every generation is still learning

- Cultivate our own curiosity
- Every generation is invited to be curious
- Barriers to curiosity
- Set the tone for curiosity every. single. time.



Curiosity by brian donovan on flickr.com

#4

## Spirit of Curiosity



Curiosity by brian donovan on flickr.com

## Questions:

- What sparks your curiosity?
- What do we have to learn from one another?
- How can we lower the stakes?
- How can we provide experiences which help us to be surprised by the Spirit?
- How can we issue clear invitations?

(Time to write/reflect)



#5

## **Spirit of Invitation**



Curiosity by brian donovan on flickr.com

## Each of us has something to teach

- We are experts in our own lives
- Youth enthusiasm and passion
- Elder wisdom and experience
- Teaching pairs of different generations
- Reflect on what we know, give opportunities to share

#5

## Spirit of Invitation



Curiosity by brian donovan on flickr.com

## Questions:

- What sparks enthusiasm and passion in your youth?
- Who are the wise among you?  
How can they be invited to share?
- In what ways can we facilitate teaching partnerships?
- How can we provide space for reflection and opportunities to share with one another?

(Time to write/reflect)

#6

## **Spirit of Tenacity**



"Rock Wall Climbing" by 115thmpad on flickr.com

## **Culture shift requires consistent support**

- Institutional memory is strong, easy to slip back into old habits.
- Paradigm shift/culture change requires consistent support and advocacy
- A cycle, not a checklist: Cast the vision, invite, train, retrain, cast vision, invite...
- Engage a partner(s) to help you "Stay the course"



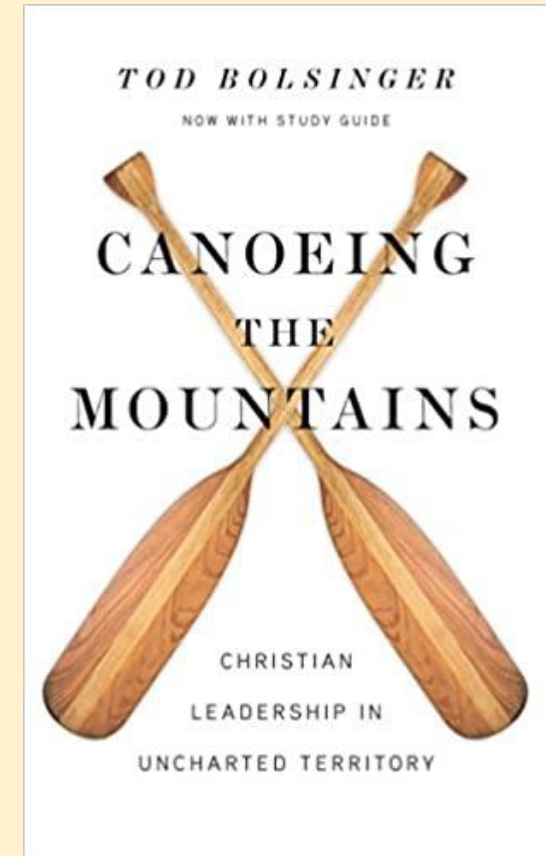
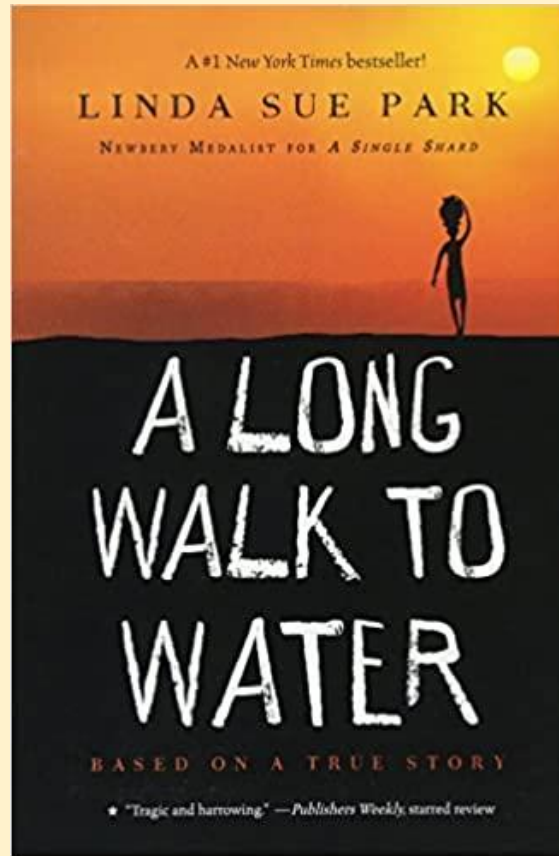
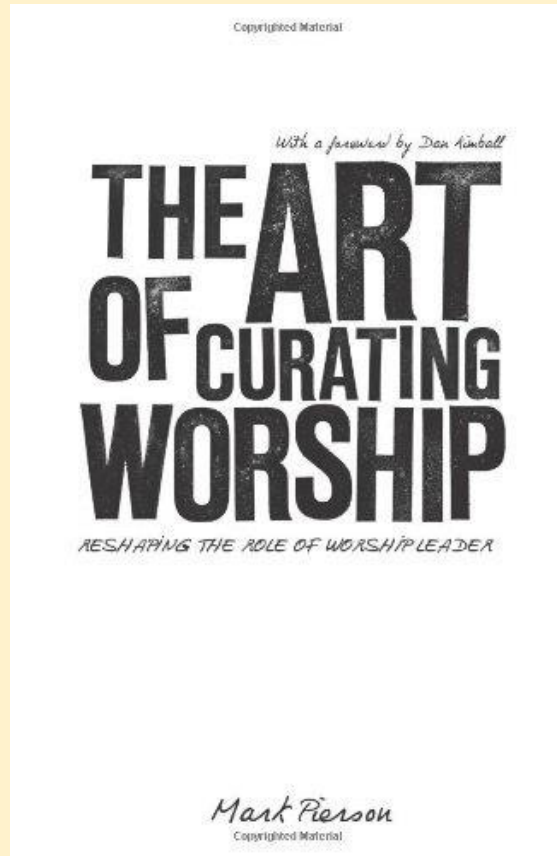


May God, who has a heart  
for all generations,  
stir up in you the gift  
of the Holy Spirit:

The spirit of experimentation  
and teamwork,

The spirit of vibrancy,  
of curiosity and invitation,

The spirit of fierce tenacity,  
and the spirit of joy in God's  
presence, now and always. Amen.



Growing God's Generous Generations:  
the 4G Network  
<https://www.nebraskasynod4g.org/>



**Come,  
Holy  
Spirit**

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Faith Formation in Small  
Churches**

**with Rev. Breen Marie Sipes**

<https://feedmyfaith.weebly.com/let-the-spirit-lead.html>