

AUCE-Recommended Study Plan for Leadership in Faith Formation Ministries



Are you a newly hired staff person for faith formation and Christian education at your United Church of Christ church and are looking for some training opportunities in this ministry? Do you have limited funds and limited time such that a formal program of courses would be out of your reach?

The following outline will give you the background and knowledge needed to guide the children, youth, and families in your congregation in growing in their faith.

Aligned with the beliefs and values of the United Church of Christ, this curated list will offer background in serving your congregation faithfully, intentionally, and with a theological grounding that will meet their needs.

It is recommended that you work with your senior pastor or another mentor who has ministerial and/or faith formation leadership experience within the United Church of Christ. They can help you to design a program of study that meets your specific needs as you serve in your particular church — an order of study, written assignments, projects to use in your ministry, due dates, and opportunities for consultations with mentors.

Blessings on your studies!

Topics of Study with Reading Materials

The Ministry of a Church Staff Faith Formation Leader

Read:

The UCC Church Educators Code and Study Guide

https://www.auce-ucc.org/files/ugd/064a57_7ec9f7d9593f4defb47dd4067fc271d3.pdf

https://www.auce-ucc.org/files/ugd/064a57_b3a596c3a39047d49d4a54b9d1219d8b.pdf

and

Marks of Faithful and Effective Faith Formation Practitioners

https://www.auce-ucc.org/files/ugd/064a57_c0a341ac9f904ce39bb2984cbd12685c.pdf

and

Formational Children's Ministry: Shaping Children Using Story, Ritual, and Relationship by Ivy Beckwith

https://bakerpublishinggroup.com/products/9780801071874_formational-childrens-ministry

Web Resources:

Faith Formation and Youth Ministry Leaders Handbook

https://www.auce-ucc.org/files/ugd/064a57_1ab716f20d8841d99057f526cc7570a3.pdf

Why Relationships Matter

<https://searchinstitute.org/resources-hub>

Safe Environments, Practices, and Policies

<https://www.auce-ucc.org/safe-environments>

Videos:

Basics of Child Protection Policies

<https://www.prcli.org/project/basics-of-child-protection-policies/>

A Sacred Trust: Part 1 (Boundaries, Power and Vulnerability)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUeckXvFA4A>

Hiring a Staff Person From the Congregation (with thanks to Westfield (CT) Church, UCC)
https://www.auce-ucc.org/files/ugd/064a57_63d13a465ff54986b3823049b72fa61c.pdf

The United Church of Christ

Read:

What Matters to You Matters to Us: Engaging Six Vital Themes of Our Faith by Sidney D. Fowler
(Search on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))

and

The Bible and the United Church of Christ

https://www.auce-ucc.org/files/ugd/064a57_a0fd0e9a564b46f4940df575f442e008.pdf

Web Resources:

A Short Course in the History of the United Church of Christ
<https://www.ucc.org/who-we-are/about/history/>

Afro-Christian Convention: The Fifth Stream of the United Church of Christ by Yvonne V. Delk, ed.
(search on [ThePilgrimPress.com](https://www.thepilgrimpress.com))
and Study Guide

https://www.auce-ucc.org/files/ugd/064a57_e23b2c9f471747b6a4bc1e2674b29810.pdf

The Bible

Read: *The Bible's Big Story: Our Story* by Dr. Harry Wendt

https://www.solapublishing.com/the-bible's-big-story-timeline--student_H-4701

Resource:

Wonder: 52 Conversations to Help Kids Fall in Love With Scripture (A Grown-Up's Guide to Exploring the Bible with Children) by Meredith Miller

<https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/meredith-miller/wonder/9781546009436/>

Spiritual Development of Children and Youth

Read: *The Spiritual Child: The New Science on Parenting for Health and Lifelong Thriving* by Lisa Miller

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-spiritual-child-lisa-miller/1120420366?ean=9781250032928>

and

Little Steps Big Faith: How the Science of Early Childhood Development Can Help You Grow Your Child's Faith by Dawn Rundman

<https://www.beamingbooks.com/store/product/9781506446851/Little-Steps-Big-Faith>

and

Woven: Nurturing a Faith Your Kid Doesn't Have to Heal From by Meredith Miller

<https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/meredith-miller/woven/9781546004363/>

Worship & Sacraments in the United Church of Christ

Read:

Book of Worship United Church of Christ (each Introduction to sections selected by your mentor)

https://thepilgrimpress.com/products/book-of-worship-united-church-of-christ-pdf?_pos=3&_sid=f2e2591d0&_ss=r

Web Resources:

Communion

https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/mesa/ministers/ministers_local-church-leaders/worship_communion/

Baptism

https://www.ucc.org/what-we-do/justice-local-church-ministries/mesa/ministers/ministers_local-church-leaders/worship_baptism/

Intergenerational Worship

Read: *I Wonder: Engaging a Child's Curiosity About the Bible* by Elizabeth Caldwell

Web Resources:

Intergenerational Ministries Resources

<https://www.auce-ucc.org/intergenerational-resources>

Intergenerational Learning Models

<https://www.auce-ucc.org/intergenerational-learning-models>

Video:

Regeneration: Introducing Churches to Intergenerational Ministry Through Gathered Worship

<https://intergen.org.au/regenerational>

Curriculum Resources — Evaluating, Selecting, and Adapting

Read: *Christian Educators' Guide to Evaluating and Developing Curriculum* by Nancy Ferguson

Web Resources:

Links to curriculum resource charts, reviews, and specific curriculum focuses

<https://www.auce-ucc.org/curriculum-resources>

Neurodiversity

Read: *Blessed Minds: Breaking the Silence About Neurodiversity* by Sarah Griffith Lund

https://chalicepress.com/products/blessed-minds-breaking-the-silence-about-neurodiversity?_pos=3&_sid=589855730&_ss=r

Web Resources:

Neurodiversity in Faith Formation

<https://www.auce-ucc.org/neurodiversity>

Video:

Creating Ministries for Neurodivergent Families

<https://www.prcli.org/project/creating-ministries-for-neurodivergent-families/>

Antiracism and Racial Justice

Web Resources:

Racial Justice with Children and Families

<https://www.auce-ucc.org/racial-justice-with-families>

Training Opportunity:

Animating Antiracism in Faith Formation

<https://www.auce-ucc.org/racial-justice-with-families/animating-antiracism>

Supplemental Webinars, Workshops, Cohorts, and Resources on a Wide Variety of Topics

Practical Resources for Churches (PRC)

<https://www.prcli.org/>

Association of United Church Educators

<https://www.auce-ucc.org/>

AUCE is an networking and support organization for faith formation practitioners (volunteer, paid, clergy) that together becomes a national voice that advocates for excellence in faith formation and education ministries in the United Church of Christ for people of all ages. Your membership dues support its library of curated resources, networking opportunities, and scholarships for attending the national faith formation event of the Association of Partners In Education (<https://apcenet.org/annual-event-2027/>).

Building Faith

<https://buildfaith.org>

A searchable collection of blogs covering a wide variety of faith formation topics, provided by Lifelong Learning at Virginia Theological Seminary.

Training Programs from Other Denominations

Opening Doors to Discipleship

<https://odtd.net/>

Free videos to view on a wide variety of faith formation topics through the lens of reformed theology: Equipping Others (Volunteer Training, Policies & Procedures, etc.), Theology, Educational Practices (Teaching Methods, Lesson Planning, Evaluating Curriculum, etc.), Disabilities Ministries, Intergenerational Ministries, Children's & Youth Ministries, Faith Formation with Older Adults.

BeADisciple

<https://beadisciple.com/>

Online asynchronous classes that cover a wide variety of ministry topics: Biblical Studies, Children's Ministry, Christian Education, Church Administration & Leadership, Prayer & Meditation, People with Disabilities, Spiritual Formation, Technology & Communication, Theology, and others. Certification programs are available as well. There is a fee charged for each course offering.