

# Transformed and Renewing – Why faith formation means so much more than Sunday School alone

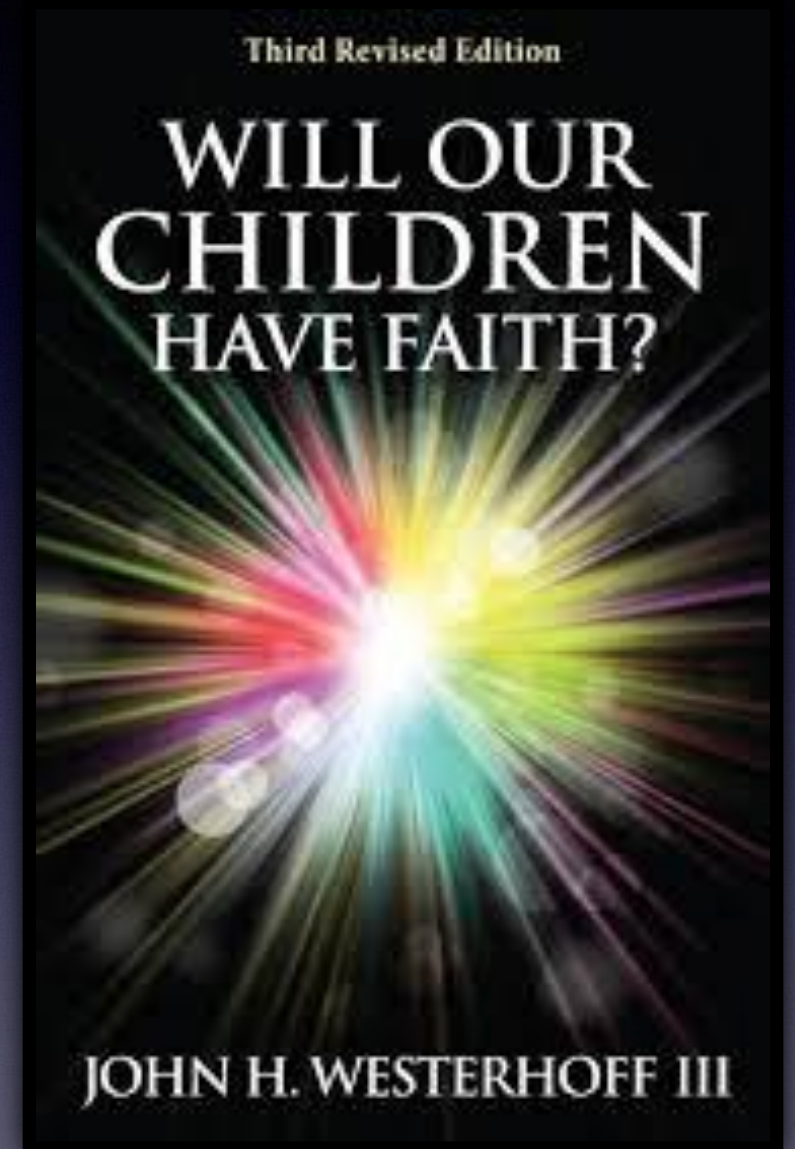
Conversations with Leaders in the Milwaukee Presbytery

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# Faith is...

- Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Heb. 11:1
- For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. Eph. 2:8-9

Faith is a verb. Faith is a way of behaving which involves knowing, being, and willing. The content of faith is best described in terms of our worldview and value system, but faith itself is something we do. Faith is an action. It results from our actions with others, it changes and expands through our actions with others, and it expresses itself daily in our actions with others. John Westerhoff



# Faith Formation

- **Best done together in a community of faith**, meaning that our consistent participation in the worship of God and the many ministries of the community of faith are essential.
- **A combination of knowing and acting**, meaning that we fully engage both the mind and the body inspired by the Holy Spirit to grow in faithfulness.
- **For the glory of God alone**, meaning that our goal in faith formation is to glorify the God of the universe who is *relational* in the Trinity as God the Father and Mother, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, *incarnational* in the person of Jesus Christ and in every Christian believer, and is *missional* in sending believers out to the whole world to share the good news of the gospel.

# Faith Formation

A lifelong process of growing in relationship with Jesus Christ and Christ's body, the Church.

Engaging in experiences that deepen and expand one's faith

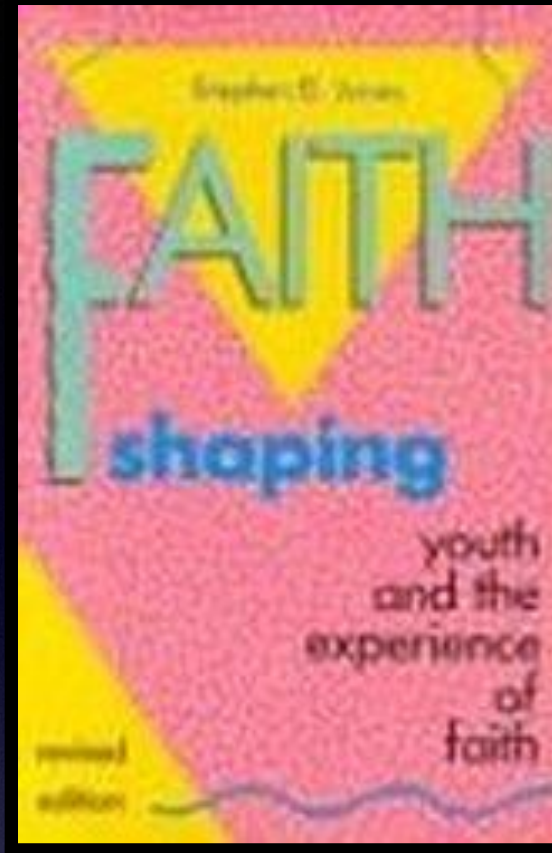
Consistently participating in a small group of other Christians

Growing knowledge of the Bible and the Christian tradition

Applying the foundational spiritual practices

Acting in the world as a witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Demonstrating leadership as part of the Body of Christ



Author Stephen Jones writes in his book, *Faithshaping*, that faith in adolescents is formed in two complementary ways: nearness and directness. For healthy faith to form, both need to be present.

# Being near to faith is pivotal to faith nurture.

- One is near to faith when they consistently experience others being faithful in natural and expressive ways.
- One is near to faith when they feel they belong in the faith community.
- One is near to faith when they develop deep relationships with other faithful Christians.
- One is near to faith when families consistently and genuinely express their faith and faith commitments.





Directness happens when persons are directly confronted and challenged with faith.

- Faith is presented directly to the individual on God's timetable rather than the institution's or the leader's or parent's.
- Individuals are invited to a deeper commitment resulting in more faithful action.
- The challenge comes from persons who have already demonstrated genuine care for the person and will continue to do so regardless of the person's response.
- This invitation relates to the individual's maturity, life experience, and interest.



Faith is formed by the  
grace of God in the Holy  
Spirit through  
Nearness & Directness