

Journey of Faith

Ministry Formation

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Part 1 Introductions

1. You?
2. Parish?
3. Why Ministry Formation?

Part 2 Discipleship as a Journey

1. “Land” or “Landed-ness” as a symbol
2. Journey in the OT – Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Kings, Exile, etc.
3. Journey in the NT – Luke’s Emmaus account in 24:13-35
4. Encounter – Accompany – Proclaim
5. Small Group Questions

Part 3 Faith: A Response to God’s Self-Revelation

1. Personal knowledge of God in Christ
2. Involves a heartfelt relationship
3. Necessitates conversion/metanoia
4. Transforms the total person
5. Witnessed to in daily living
6. “Abraham, the great model of faith, emerges as a curious mixture of faith and doubt, of certainty and confusion... In the Bible, faith is not viewed in the sterile and rationalistic sense of ‘assent of the mind to certain truths or propositions about God.’ It is not the mind that believes; it is rather the person... Faith, in the Bible, is a loving trusting commitment of the whole self to God, a holding on securely to God in spite of everything. At times we are confused; we struggle and doubt. This is not opposed to faith; it is part of faith, the part that says we care enough about our relationship to God to question and argue (Gen 15:2-3) and even at times to laugh (Gen 17:17).” Fr. Michael Guinan, OFM, [The Pentateuch](#)

Part 4 **Qualities of Mature Faith (OHWB #45-63, USCCB)**

1. Living Faith - Faith is living and active, sharing many of the qualities of living things: it grows and develops over time; it learns from experience; it adapts to changing conditions while maintaining its essential identity; it goes through seasons, some apparently dormant, others fruitful.
2. Explicit Faith - Adult faith is clearly and explicitly rooted in a personal relationship with Jesus lived in the Christian community.
3. Fruitful Faith -The adult disciple enjoys the fruits of the Spirit, which are “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22-23). Mature faith is open to the action and power of God’s Spirit and cannot remain idle or unproductive. Where the Spirit is active, faith is fruitful.

Part 5 **Six Stages of Faith Development**

- *How does faith change?*
- *How do we know if we’re losing our faith or actually growing in it?*
- *Will the faith we learned and practiced in our youth be enough to get us through the challenges of later life?*
- *What can we expect to experience as we mature in our faith?*

1. Imaginative

- Often found ... prior to the age of reason
- Faith at this stage is experiential and develops imaginatively through encounters with stories, images, the influence of others
- Indicates a lack of awareness of how things really are; fantasy is characteristic

2. Literal

- Often found in ... pre-adolescence, moves beyond imagination
- Strong belief in justice and fairness in transactions with God, who operates with predictability, resembles *quid pro quo*. God can be bargained with, keeps score
- All Biblical accounts are understood as literally + historically true

3. Group

- Often found in ... post-adolescence to adult
- Conforms to expectations, values + understandings of the affiliated group which provides clarity and consistency
- Faith is largely unquestioned; the group and its authority figures are dependable, change is threatening

4. Personal

- Often found in ... Early adulthood and beyond
- Feeling free to separate from the group's expectations, takes personal responsibility for beliefs or feelings, openness to alternate beliefs
- Owning personal belief often involves significant tension and struggle; doubts and questions emerge; "God may be leading them to probe the deeper meaning of their previous faith"

5. Mystical

- Often found in ... mid-life
- Involves an experience of deep communion with God; an awareness of God's inner presence in myself and others
- Embraces the paradoxes of faith, greater acceptance of Mystery and the voices of one's deeper self; "heightened awareness of the ultimate authority of the Holy Spirit"

6. Sacrificial

- Rarely experienced by most people
- Singular capacity for selfless love of others; focused on values of truth and justice and compassion, fully committed to God's will
- Models – Jesus, St. Teresa of Calcutta, Dorothy Day, Archbishop Oscar Romero, etc.

Assignment

James Fowler and others remind us that growth in our faith journey is a pilgrimage of self-awareness in our relationship with God. In a three-page paper, reflect on your own faith journey in response to the following questions.

1. How would you describe your own faith journey using the stages of faith format?
2. Which stage of faith do you recognize as most active in your life right now? What are some clues that suggest this is the stage expressed in your life right now?
3. As you begin the Ministry Formation Program, how does the article, class material and discussion help you understand the importance of recognizing how faith develops in yourself and the people you will be ministering to and with?