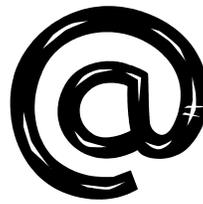


Living Faith



Dear Colleagues,

I will never forget the first time someone asked me to teach a faith formation class. I resisted the urge to flee... This class happened to be at Vacation Bible School. I was a very young mom. I loved kids and doing mom things. I have to admit I had no clue what to do with the teacher's guide they handed me. And then what was I going to do with the class of fifteen 7 year olds that would be coming expecting to learn about God, play prisoners base, and make crafty art projects that their mom would pin on the refrigerator. My head would have exploded if I would have thought about the importance of what I was doing. I was untrained and unprepared..... but I was willing to try....in fact I had always wanted to teach.

One of the other teachers, named Elaine, sensed my apprehension and offered suggestions that were helpful and invaluable. She provided me with information about developmental needs of 7-year-olds, a list of things they like to do, and ideas for things they like to do.

The week finally arrived. I had gathered materials for the craft projects and prepared the lessons. I knew that Elaine was just down the hall if I had more questions.....I did, and she answered all of them. In addition she checked in after the kids had left each day to see how things went.

Everyone who is engaged in the faith formation of others needs an "Elaine" in their lives. We have to get over the notion that we are unworthy, because, well, frankly we are. But God calls and equips teachers through grace. And God sends people like Elaine to support and encourage.

The Home Life Network exists to be in partnerships with congregations and families to offer ideas, suggestions, and support to each other. The network is made up of people who have gone down this road before and they are willing to share the things that work and some things have been meaningful for them. Just like Elaine was for me.

Elayne Werges, Diaconal Minister
Facilitator, Home Life Network

The Home Life Network Of the Northeastern Iowa Synod

The Home Life Network (HLN) is one of the networks of the Northeastern Iowa Synod. We are pleased to be partners in ministry with you, as together we use the gifts that God has given us to spread the Gospel and pass on faith that is alive and growing.

Values

- Facilitating faith formation.
- Growing in faith and passing on the faith
- Encouraging faith development to start at home
- Stewardship of resources
- Creative use of technology
- Communicating creative and innovative ideas to congregations for them to share

Purpose

We work to strengthen faith in families by:

- educating adults through non-copyrighted materials and resources.
- facilitating cross-generational faith formation.
- searching for exemplary education programs that use effective teaching for faith formation.

Projects

- *Living Faith at Home* newsletter in *Star* and on website
- Facebook page
- Expand communication about how and why to use information from this network
- Host continuing education event on faith formation
- Improve modes of communication to reach all people.
- Synod Assembly workshops

Our Mission

The Home Life Network supports congregations in the care of each baptized child of God, both children and adult, who seek to live out their faith in their daily lives.



This information is prepared for you by the
Northwestern Iowa Synod-Home Life Network

for use by families and local congregations.

For more ideas about how you can pass on faith in your homes go to:

http://www.neiasynod.org/synod_resources/YouthFamilyResources.asp

If you have a comment or suggestion for future newsletters or are interested in joining the Home-Life Network please contact the synod office or contact Elayne Werges at elaynewerges@gmail.com

What the Home Life Network Does.....

"Living Faith @ Home" Newsletter....

In 2012 the Home Life Network launched the newsletter called *Living Faith @ Home*. It is designed to be a ready to be used resource for congregations. It is distributed as an insert in the Northeastern Iowa Synod publication "The STAR". The STAR is sent to all rostered leaders of the synod as well as congregational presidents and WELCA leaders. It is also available online at www.neiasynod.org. Past issues of *Living Faith @ Home* have offered a variety of topics including Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Stewardship, Reformation, Back to School, and prayer. There have been ideas for both the congregation and things to do with children and youth at home. Additional, undated issues on topics of interest are being developed and will be available online at the same web address.

Congregations can use the newsletter as an insert to their church newsletter. Attach it to the church website. Copy it to send home with Sunday school students. Or use it as a bulletin insert.

If you have an idea or suggestion for a future issue, please contact the synod office or one of the members of the Network.

Youth and Family Ministry Resources on The Synod Website.....



Need some new ideas for Rally Sunday or a fantastic Advent Family Night? These and more family friendly ideas can be found on the Youth and Family Ministry Resources page.

The Youth and Family Ministry Resource page can be found on the NEIA Synod Web page. (www.neiasynod.org). Follow the links to the "Youth" page, then find the link to "Youth and Family Ministry Resources". Look for the Light Bulb!

Find us on Facebook.....and Pinterest



Have you found a good blog, book, magazine, or journal article lately? Post it on the Home Life group page on Facebook. On a regular basis, members of the HL Network add suggestions of things they have used. The group page is also a place where people have ongoing conversations about questions they have or to bounce around an idea. The group is public and open, so anyone can access and join it. You do not have to be a Facebook account to access the page. The Northeastern Iowa Synod is on Pinterest! There are tons of cool ideas people have found and are sharing.

Learning Events and Support.....

Periodically we sponsor learning events. Past events have included

- ♥ SWAP Meets where interested participants wrote directions for a lesson plan or an idea to share. They copied enough so everyone could have one. . Everyone went home with shared new ideas.
- ♥ Conferences on topics of interest to congregations including Passing on Vibrant Faith
- ♥ Workshops at the Yearly Synod Assembly.
- ♥ Members of the Home Life Network may be available to serve as consultants to your congregation.

Who we Are.....

We are people who volunteer our time to serve on the Home Life Network. We come from a variety of backgrounds and situations. The thing that we share in common is a love of God and a passion for growing faith and loving His people, especially the youngest among us. Contact the Synod office to join.

Current Network:

Sue Olleman-St James-Mason City

Pastor Jenna Couch, Zion, LaPorte City

Pastor Stacey Nalean-Carlson, Glenwood-Decorah

Janelle Gilbertson, Lake Mills

Teresa Baird, Waterloo

Annette Kime, Synod Council Liaison

Elayne Werges, Diaconal Minister, St Paul-Wellsburg/Bethany-Iowa Falls

Lisa Kammerer, AIM-Cresco

Brad McKenzie-St John-Charles City

Deb Bachman, St John-Cedar Falls

Bryanne Hensley, Zion/St John-Sheffield

Pastor Mark Walker, St John-Vilmar-Greene

Kimberly Pont, -Oelwein