


# United Methodist Wesley Formation Map

Faith Development		Core Wesleyan Theological Concepts						
Social Faith Development		<b>Our Place in Creation</b> “God created me and everything” Sermon 95:14	<b>Three Simple Rules</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do No Harm</li> <li>• Do Good</li> <li>• Love God</li> </ul>	<b>Connectional Church</b> We understand ourselves to be part of a connectional church and Christ’s universal church when by adoration, proclamation, and service we become conformed to Christ.		<b>Mission/Service</b> “ I look upon all the world as my parish... This is the work I know God has called me to.”	<b>Nurturing the Mission of the Church</b> “For Wesley there is no religion but social religion, no holiness but social holiness. The communal forms of faith in the Wesleyan tradition not only promote personal growth; they also equip and mobilize us for mission and service to the world.”	<b>Goal of Faith Development</b> Principled Disciple Wesley’s “Altogether Christian” <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Love God “Fully”</li> <li>2. Love Neighbor (Everyone)</li> <li>3. Live Righteous, Peaceful, Joyful lives</li> </ol> Sermon 2 “The Almost Christian” Matthew 22:36-40: <i>Love God and Love Neighbor as yourself</i> & Sermon 7 “The Way to the Kingdom” Romans 14:7: <i>Righteousness, Peace, Joy in the Holy Spirit</i>
Individual Faith Development	Learning / Experiencing God's Love 		<b>Prevenient Grace</b> God Loves You and always has God wants a relationship with you.	<b>Justifying Grace</b> There is a response to God’s love.	<b>Sanctifying Grace</b> Deepening of personal belief system and a striving to know more.	<b>Personal Narrative</b> Exploration of calling, personal faith narrative begins to take full shape.		
James Fowler Stages of Faith Development **	<b>Stage One:</b> Intuitive Projective Faith Children Start recognizing there is significance in words like “God” “Jesus” or “Church” Parents model feelings toward these faith objects	<b>Stage Two:</b> Mythic-Literal Faith This is where children learn meaning-making stories of parent’s faith-belief system. (Bible stories, morality stories, saint stories, etc.) Here children tend to believe these stores are literally true. Child begins to feel a sense of belonging and suspicion of people who are different	<b>Stage Three:</b> Synthetic-Conventional Faith Faith journey is expressed in search of a supportive community of people who can make that person feel welcomed and affirmed. Moving through this group tends to require a welcoming social group that supports beliefs and practices of the particular faith group. If the persons group is hostile the person may encounter serious crisis, they may abandon their faith or refuse question further.			<b>Stage Four:</b> Individuative-Reflective Faith This person has a desire to ask hard questions about why things are true and in what context they are true. This stage is susceptible to a kind-of syncretistic faith where everything is true and the only thing that matters is whatever you believe brings you meaning in life. Many people stay at this stage for life, becoming perpetual question/seekers. Others who have a more successful experience move on to a new level of maturity and understanding about different levels of faith.		<b>Stage Five:</b> Conjunctive Faith Characterized by three things. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Certainty about one’s faith</li> <li>2. Willingness to experience a “willed naivety” about certain beliefs or practices that they used to reject</li> <li>3. Willingness to be generous towards others with differing or contradictory beliefs.</li> </ol>
	<b>Stage Six: Universalizing Faith:</b> If Conjunctive faith is mature faith, Universalizing Faith is saintly faith. At this point the person is seen as an exemplar of their faith. This stage is characterized by certainty of one’s beliefs, generous openness to the journey that others are on, a sincere compassion for others, kindness, and the ability to make people feel a sense of significance and sacredness just by being in their company. (This stage is viewed as VERY rare) **Developed from “What Stage is your Faith” By Dr. Gregory Popcak ( <a href="http://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithonthecouch/2014/05/what-stage-is-your-faith/">www.patheos.com/blogs/faithonthecouch/2014/05/what-stage-is-your-faith/</a> )							

Subject	Infants / Toddlers 0-3	Young Children 4-7	Older Children 8-12	Early Teens 13-14	Middle Teens 15-17	Late Teens 18-19	Young Adults 20-34	Midlife Adults 35-64	Older Adults 65 and up
Examples of Church Events and Activities	Infant Baptism: Proclaims that God and God's grace is present and that a journey of faith formation has begun.	Events like <b>VBS, Sunday School, Children's Choir</b> , etc. provide a place for children to encounter the love of God and learn how to make friends and love their neighbor. They learn who Jesus is and how to be like him.	<b>Confirmation :</b> Invites young people into a deeper faith and life in Christ. They can respond to God's love and claim it for themselves.	Events like <b>Youth Group, Mission Trips, Church Camp, Youth Choir</b> , etc. nurture faith and offer opportunities for young people express their faith in the social world. Faith also strengthens values, intrinsic worth and purpose. Adult mentors help develop youth Christian leadership skills and model their personal faith journey.	<b>Wesley Foundations, Small groups, Covenant groups</b> etc. are places where young adults can seek to deepen personal belief systems and strive to know more about God. These places offer Spiritual experiences and a platform to explore complicated faith question.		Continuing to connect through faith groups, <b>Sunday School Classes, Small groups, Choir, service groups, worship and covenant groups</b> etc. adult Christians engage in a life of grace and accountability. These relationships nurture an expression of mature and integrated faith which leads justice, wholeness and service to the world.		

The Role of the Family

It has been well documented that the family plays the most important role in the faith development of children and youth. In many cases this carries over into their adult years.

“we believe that the evidence clearly shows that the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents. Grandparents and other relatives, mentors, and youth workers can be very influential as well, but normally, parents are most important in forming their children’s religious and spiritual lives. . .” - (Denton and Smith 261)

The family sets the tone for how their children think and feel about church. However, it is not simply enough for churches to understand faith development and their role, they must also be willing to work with parents in order to be effective in that work. The family takes on increased emphasis in difficult times and thus this need for collaboration between churches and families has only grown in recent months.

“The home is vitally important to the early years of faith development. Not only do children and teens spend more time at home than anywhere else, but the influence of parents on early faith development is hard to overemphasize. Churches should support parents in helping their children learn about God and ho God works in their lives.” (Keely)

It is important for Parents to continue to grow in their own faith even while helping to develop the faith of their children. This is an area where the church can help support parents. One study showed that children that raise children and youth with a mature faith “reported that they belonged to at least one church group in which others will prayer with them and for them as needed; in at least one church group in which they can talk about spiritual issues; and in at least one church group in which it is possible to talk about personal problems.”(Roberto)

The Role of the Church Community

The role of the church first and foremost is making disciples of all people: teaching them to love God and their neighbor through communal learning, worship and service. The Church Community for much of a child’s early life embodies faith and the grace of God.

“ Making church a place where the warmth of the family of God is felt by young children and where children can learn to trust that they will be well cared for and loved is one of the most important things we can do for the young children and their parents” (Keeley)

In addition to being a loving and caring place the role of the church is also to offer opportunities for young people to learn with their peers and get experience serving and leading. One main function of this community is to provide opportunities to practice social holiness. Being a part of a connectional church helps to reinforce the ideas that our faith is more than an individual journey toward salvation but a communal journey.

The church is also the place where young people have the opportunity to develop mentoring relationships with adults who are not their parents. This is a key part of the developmental process as young people are given the opportunity to connect to adults with different sets of life experiences and faith journeys. This discipleship is critical to a young person’s faith development.

Through the adult years the role of the church remains the place for people to be accompanied as they search for answers to questions of faith and life. The church is a place where justice and mercy are expressed in the world, community and friendship provide deep care, and God is placed at the center of our lives.

The church is constantly equipping disciples in the community to spiritually answer the question “how will we be led by Christ to live in our homes, neighborhoods, and in God’s created world?”

The Role of the Connectional Church

The Connectional Church plays a distinct role in our ministry together. The Annual Conference and the General Church coordinate mission and ministries and deploy resources locally and globally. The Annual Conference qualifies and deploys pastors, trains and equips lay leadership, and offer vision for our mission together. The Annual Conference provides leadership development, church development, mission and outreach, and administrative services for our corporate work together. All this is provided to support the ministry in our mission field and in the local church. Because of our “connection” we belong to something larger than a single church community. We live as “the Body of Christ”

¶ 125. United Methodists throughout the world are bound together in a connectional covenant in which we support and hold each other accountable for faithful discipleship and mission. Integrally holding connectional unity and local freedom, we seek to proclaim and embody the gospel in ways responsible to our specific cultural and social context while maintaining “a vital web of interactive relationships”

The Connectional Church resources and empowers the ministries of the Annual Conference. Faith formation trainings, events, and ministries are made possible through, camping and retreat centers, and campus ministry locations. Connectional resources empower the ministry of the local church with children, youth and adults. Clergy and lay people are empowered for mission, and service in their local contexts.

This connection allows churches within the institution to have a shared sense of purpose and direction while allowing churches to minister in their local communities.

# Development Through the Lifespan

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<b>Values and Ethics</b>	Does what adults say is right and wrong. Size determines importance, not intention.	Obeys to avoid punishment. Understands the significance of intention. Begins to see consequences of actions.	Reciprocal sense of justice. Strong belief in “the rules.” Sees consequences of actions and understands the significance of intent.	Desire to save the world and great empathy for those who suffer. Can’t distinguish group values from personal values.	Affective responses toward ideas and social realities. Concern for democratic process and human rights.	Willing to act based on values. Beginning to differentiate personal values from those of the group.	May begin to critically reflect on previously unexamined values and act on newly committed to values.	Personal ethics and values are important, but may begin to see nuances as opposed to clear right and wrong.	Ethics and values shape understanding of ones life and are reflected in use of time and resources.
<b>Sexuality</b>	Body awareness	Curiosity about their body. Gender awareness.	Curiosity about sex. Exploration of what it means to be a boy or a girl. Sometimes sexual exploration begins.	Experiencing physical changes related to maturation. Questioning whether one is “normal.” Same sex friends.	Deepening understanding of a sexual self, opposite sex friends, sexual encounters.	Exploration, recognizing relationship between emotional and physical, tied to relationships, commitment, and intimacy	Responsible sexual behavior and celibacy. Forming beliefs related to sexuality and relationships. Issues and concerns related to STD’s, infertility, contraception, genetics.	Responsible choices and behavior. Communication of sexual past and implications. Shifting view of self and sexuality. Sexuality and long-term relationships. Body and reproductive changes	Aging and sexual expression. Illness and loss of life partners. Physical changes. Expanding understanding of intimacy. Awareness of sexuality needs in adult living situations.
<b>Family</b>	Infants do not see parents as separate from themselves.	Love me, love my family. While seeing self as separate, family is intertwined into self understanding.	Awareness of family differences between self and friends. Beginning of separation from family.	Love/hate relationship. Still dependent on family. Parents often perceived as dumb.	Some rebellion, disillusionment, and struggle for independence.	Rebellion less intense, wants to be treated like an adult.	Leaves family of origin. Establishes core circle of friends and a new family.	Responsibilities for nurturing and guiding others. Care giving. Parenting. Likely to experience the loss of a parent.	Emotional and sometimes financial support for families. Loss of family members. Developing new relationships.
<b>Needs of Age</b>	Timely responses to needs in order to develop.	Safe environment. Freedom with boundaries.	Expanded boundaries. Support for decision making. Conflict resolution.	Egocentrism	Feeling of immunity to personal injury or hurt, stretching limits.	Assuming adult privileges, yet still not an adult. Desire to be totally dependent.	To be treated and respected as adults and peers. Arenas for fellowship, service, ministry to others.	Opportunities to reflect on the meaning of life. Finding balance in life.	Opportunities for continued growth. Daytime activities and accessible surroundings. Good lighting and acoustics.
<b>Gifts to Share</b>	Hope	Awe. Wonder, Joy. Unconditional love and trust.	Enthusiasm, questions, energy, passion.	Energy, passion, enthusiasm.	Idealism	Increased knowledge, leadership skills, willingness to take risks.	Expanding knowledge, creativity, intimacy, willingness to take risks.	Dependability, steadiness, concern for the future, financial resources.	Wisdom, time, endurance, objectivity, life experiences, hope, acceptance of death.
<b>Vocation</b>	To grow and explore their world.	Play is work. Roleplaying various occupations and adult behaviors.	School is work. Fine tuning of abilities. Learning to be a team member.	School is work. Trying out new skills.	School is work. May have first for pay job. Developing work skills and habits.	Exploring possible careers and obtaining appropriate training or education.	Seeking fulfilling work. On the job training. Continued schooling.	Questioning, reaping, career changes, mentoring.	Retirement from primary career. May reenter or reinvent work.
<b>Expectations of the Church</b>	Safe, loving place.	Place where I belong and am welcomed.	A place to see my friends, to contribute, and to lead.	A safe place, a place to serve and lead.	Relationships with respected adults who are also on a faith journey.	Utilizing their gifts in service and leadership.	Accompaniment as they search for answers.	Help in finding balance and making meaning of life.	Place for friendships. Help in dealing with losses.