

Growing an Older Adult Ministry Leader Guide



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Introduction for the Pastor and Leader

To the Pastor

Thank you for being interested in older adults and older adult ministry. Many churches today are filled with older adults who are frightened for the continuation of their beloved faith community because everyone is getting older. Many feel worn out, and so complain that their faith community needs more young people because they are the future of faith communities. They feel, as to most people, that young people are desperately needed to pick up where they have left off. In their experience, that is the way it always has been: the young replacing the old.

In the year 2000, I became the director of the California Lutheran Homes Center for Spirituality and Aging. In the early days I visited with clusters of pastors to introduce them to the educational offerings of the Center. I remember one pastor saying, “I don’t worry about the elderly much. Its young people who will make a difference in the church.” Well, I beg to differ.



CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY
AND AGING

If a person chooses to be become a part of your faith community at age 65, that person will have a statistical probability that they will be an active, not a frail, person for the next 20 years, filled with special knowledge that can only be gained through years of experience.

If a person chooses to become a part of your faith community at age 65 that person will statistically be a part of your community for over 20 years, and if your faith community has an adequate stewardship program, they will leave a legacy.

A friend of mine left a multi-generational congregation to become chaplain of a retirement community. When asked who she liked engaging as a pastor, the congregation she had left, or the older adults where she was serving now. He response was interesting. “Older Adults ask better questions.” This statement reveals part of this book’s foundation: at the experience of aging causes older adults to ask the very questions that faith communities have answered for years: I have counted on my health, my status, my mental abilities to give my life purpose

and meaning. Now with many of those things slipping through my fingers, who am I? Has my life been worth the living? Is there something on which I can count in the tough times? Where can I find hope when everything around me seems hopeless? Spiritual questions that are beyond cognition and feeling.

It seems strange but everyone wants to live a long time, but many do not want to grow old. There is something vital to learn with the growing of years. I believe that the physical and emotional challenges of being old might evoke a deeper relationship with God that is beyond understanding as one loses the ability to control their lives and trust something that is More. Maybe, if older adults in a faith community really gain such a relationship, what a witness they can make, experiencing that doing is not the end-all of life, but faith, trust, and relationships are. The older adults in your faith community will have an opportunity to consider the good that grows out of a life that so many people wish would not happen. Maybe Maggie Kuhn of the Gray Panthers said it well, “Old age is not a disease, it is a triumph!”

To the Leader

Thank you for being sharing your spiritual gifts by accepting the role of leading the planning of an Older Adult Ministry (OAM) within your faith community. I hope that your work is meaningful to you and your team. At times it will be hard work. But I believe that the journey will not only be worth it, but also engaging and fun.

Below are a few hints that I hope will help.

1. First is to pray for your efforts. You are not alone. The Spirit of God is both surrounding you and within you. You also have my thoughts as a guide. Note that I said guide. The goal is to develop an OAM, not use my stuff. If my stuff is helpful, terrific. If you have a better idea or one that increases your comfort, so be it. No harm, no foul.
2. After prayer, begin the selection of your planning team. Be open to the guidance of the Spirit. You want the team to be reflective of your congregation. While I would suggest that most members are older adults themselves, do not be afraid to ask one or two persons below 60, maybe 55 because they have a burning interest is older adults. During the entire recruitment process, look for those who have a real passion for the spiritual

health of older adults. A person who does not see the need for an OAM as important will not be helpful to be on the team. You do need people who slow or even be a barrier to the Planning Team's journey.

3. Plan to recruit a Team of four to eight persons. In small congregations four is enough to have a 'critical mass' to make effective decision and implement plans. However, over eight members makes the group unwieldy and will increase the needed time to reach a consensus on issues.
4. Since the voyage is long (nine sessions) it is best completed when the planning team meets weekly. The advantage of meeting weekly is that the team members do not forget past conversations since one session builds on another. Meeting weekly also does not make the process so long that some on the planning team might resign for personal reasons. Of course, the decision of how often to meet is yours.
5. The process is best completed if each session is two hours in length, with one break. Many older adults want to meet during the day and avoid being out of their homes at night. I have found a 10 am to Noon time to be effective. For many older adults, mornings are the most creative hours, leaving the afternoon for that blessed nap.
6. Each session will have "homework." Usually, it only required participants to read the next chapter. If the homework is reading, encourage participants to underline or highlight important phrases and sentences. Doing this simple task allows for better discussion since participants can easily find concepts and ideas that they believe are worth the time of the Planning Team.
7. Seek consensus rather than voting. Votes produce winners and losers. Consensus, even if it is hard to reach, builds teamwork. Trusting the dialogue demonstrates that differing opinions will be accepted and respectfully considered.
8. At the beginning of each session with devotions. Make them brief but meaningful. Many of the resources found in the program chapters can be utilized, thus enabling the team to experience some of those program strategies. Obviously, the chapters on "Spiritual Formation" (chapter five) and "Lifelong Learning" (chapter six) might be your best source for devotions. But be creative. If they can be oriented to OAM, use some of your own resources. There are some wonderful resources. I love the booklet

“Autumn Wisdom” but that is me, not you. (Autumn Wisdom: Finding Meaning in Life’s Later Years, by James Miller, from Amazon (\$9.95 as of May 2019)

9. Involve everyone in the discussion. Let the quiet ones remain quiet for a while but then, if needed, ask them for their opinion, insight, or suggestion. They might be people who must think *before* they speak rather than thinking *while* they are speaking. The quiet people often are the ones who can see the whole rather than the parts. Their calm demeanor receives input from the other members of the group and which they often synthesize the insights of all.
10. If your planning team or faith community uses multi-languages, you might consider translating any appropriate forms into that language(s). I found many such companies by searching the web for “Translation Companies.”
11. A simple statement as to the purpose of your OAM might be used to close every meeting of your planning team and perhaps every meeting of your OAM. Such a statement helps define the culture and purpose of your OAM or even your faith community. Thus, I have suggested that a prayer for older adults be used at the completion of each session. The Team might find this ‘tradition’ helpful and even suggest that the prayer ends each OAM event.

Some faith communities use a sending statement at the end of worship. One faith community that I have attended sings the praise song “Emmanuel.” Some AA groups close their meeting with the words “Keep coming back, it works.” Such a statement could arise out of your mission statement. It might be as simple as “God loves older adults” or “God love you.” Allow creativity to rise and then use the statement after the closing prayer of every Planning Team meeting.

12. The process in this book leads to the planning and implement of an initial OAM event chosen by the Planning Team (Session 8). After the first event, Session 9 evaluates the initial event and strategizes for the future. This pattern, planning an event, evaluating the event, and evaluation the past and planning for the future will be the continual pattern for OAM program development. This is the goal of the book, what I desire to be accomplished. It is my hope that, in the end, your Planning Team will be empowered for OAM for many years.

13. You have a choice to make regarding Session 1. You might want to have an orientation meeting where you share expectations, perhaps decide on a time and day for each meeting, as well as decide on the frequency of meeting (see hint 4 and 5 above). This could provide a time to distribute the handout booklet. If your congregation is large, the team members may not know each other well, and thus an orientation gathering might be helpful. The disadvantage is that an orientation meeting adds one for session to the nine that are already needed. No matter what your decision regarding an independent orientation session or not, for Session 1 to work, the team will have to read the introduction prior to Session 1.

Brief Plan for an Orientation Session

10 minutes Welcome and brief devotions

Comments by the Pastor/Rabbi/Priest/Minister/Imam

30 Minutes Ice Breaker Game

On a single small piece of paper write one of the following icebreaker questions. Put all questions into container. Ask one participant at a time to choose one question from the container and answer it. Continue to ask participants until all questions have been answered.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given?

When you die, what do you want to be remembered for?

What is your favorite item you have bought this year?

What would be the most surprising scientific discovery imaginable?

What is your absolute dream job?

What would your talent be if you were Miss or Mister World?

What would the title of your autobiography be?

Say you are independently wealthy and do not have to work, what would you do with your time?

If you had to delete all but 3 apps from your smartphone, which ones would you keep?

What is your favorite magical or mythological animal?

What does your favorite shirt look like?

Who is your favorite Disney hero or heroine? Would you trade places with them?

What would your dream house be like?

If you could add anyone to Mount Rushmore who would it be; why?

You are going sail around the world, what is the name of your boat?

What fictional family would you be a member of?

What is your favorite television network?

15 Minutes Expectations of the Team Member

- Relax and have fun.
- Some concepts in *Growing an Older Adult Ministry* might already be familiar to you. But be open minded to new perspectives regarding familiar or even new concepts. Few of us have never been in a community that has had an intentional older adult ministry (OAM).
- The goal of *Growing an Older Adult Ministry* is to enable us to create an engaging and effective initial OAM event. Some of us might say, “Why don’t we simply choose what we wish to do and then do it. How much more experience do we need?” This is where we need to have an open mind. Growing an Older

Adult Ministry is a process, not a book for the reading. The book will step by step lead us toward the goal: creating an initial OAM event for us to evaluate.

- *Optional. After we evaluate our initial event, using the tools found in “Growing” we will decide whether to continue in the development of an Older Adult Ministry or not.*
- Be present at all meetings. Please make your presence a priority since each session is linked both the previous session and the next one as well.
- Between each session we will be reading one chapter in “Growing.” Sometimes you will read a chapter, complete answers on the chapter and then you will share what you have discovered. There might also be times when before the session reading will include completing a short form providing necessary preparation for the next session.

10 Minutes Determine meeting day, time, and frequency of meeting

- Day of Meeting:
- Time of Meeting:
- Frequency of Meeting:

5 Minutes Closing Devotions and Assignment

Assign the Introduction in “Growing an Older Adult Ministry” for our first session.

Close with devotions and/or a prayer. Since each session uses a section of “Autumn Wisdom” you might begin using the book at this time. (See hint #8)

Growing an Older Adult Ministry
Leader Guide
Introduction Session 1

Goal of the Session

Students will be able to:

1. Name three challenges and advantages of growing older.
2. Describe how spirituality is formed within them.
3. Identify six roles that spirituality plans within a congregation.
4. Discovered what their spirituality influences?
5. Can express the distinction between healthy and unhealthy spirituality.

Materials needed:

- 1) Materials for Devotions such as “Autumn Wisdom”
- 2) Email session handouts to each participant
- 3) Post the same handouts on Zoom for display during the meeting.
- 4) Become capable of ‘drawing’ on a Zoom white board so the leader can place participant answers for all to see.
- 5) If the meeting is face-to-face, have a white board or newsprint to list participant answers.

The Action:

5 minutes Welcome the participants using words like: “Welcome to the first meeting of the OAM planning group for (Name of church). During the time we will have together we will develop an Older Adult Ministry (OAM) for our congregation. To be done effectively, this process will take some time, a lot of work, and even more thought and creativity. As a guide, we will use the book “Growing an Older Adult Ministry. You will be asked to read the chapter

for the next session plus complete the ‘homework’ for the previous session. As was stated in your invitation to join this group we will meet (choose one) once a week, twice a month, once per month. While some of you think you know what would be good for an Older Adult Ministry, we will discover together what will be best for our ministry. Each step of our journey of OAM development builds on the previous steps. The goal is to develop a ministry that is 1) focused, intentional, sustainable, and effective.

(If necessary, have individuals introduce themselves with their name and the reason they chose to become a part of this ministry).

10 Minutes Devotions using a devotional ideas found in Chapter five. An excellent choice would be to read one section of the booklet, “Autumn Wisdom” each week, followed by prayer. <https://shop.willowgreen.com/products/autumn-wisdom>

10 Minutes Ice Breaker Question

Turn the group’s attention to “What do you think?” on page 1.

Encourage discussion about the quote from de Chardin. Be sure to intentionally include persons who are reserved and quiet. Give them time to think, ask their opinion and they will probably have one.

Do not seek a consensus. Simply accept all answers as they are. This is only an activity to encourage participation and perhaps some energy.

10 Minutes Introduce “Successful Aging.” You might use words such as: “What is successful aging? Encourage simple answers with no judgement. Let’s go to the bible and ask this question of the older adults whom we find there.

Divide all participants into groups of 3 or 4 persons. If you are on Zoom you can form breakout groups. See the tutorial section for instructions.

Give each group one Bible readings located between pages 2 through 6. Instruct each person in the group to read the text and then answer the questions at the bottom of the page, followed by group discussion. Plan to have one of their number to report their answer to the last question on the page to the total group.

20 Minutes Each breakout group reports the results of their time together. With a word or two, write their answers on the white board. After all have reported ask “What constitutes successful aging in the Bible?”

10 Minutes Break

20 Minutes Spirituality and the Experience of Aging

Have the group turn to page 10 in “Growing an Older Adult Ministry.” Ask what they found enlightening in the section “Challenges and Opportunities of Aging” and in the first paragraph of “Defining the Spiritual.”

Then engage the group in a discussion of the pie chart on page 8 of the handouts. Note the domains of life found in the circle. These domains express the parts of the human

life experience. Note how spirituality is at the center, not one of the domains.

- What does the group think of this perspective?
- Is this the way that they look at the interplay between their spirituality and their everyday life?
- If the chart is accurate, what would be the implication for programming in our OAM?

Have participants note the double-tipped arrows.

- What do the arrows signify? *(The arrows describe that spirituality effects each domain providing essential perspective that guides the development of that domain. At the same time, however, each domain effects spirituality, expanding the insight and the perspective of spiritual vision and belief.)*

20 Minutes Call the groups attention to page 9, the role of the spiritual in daily life.

- What do they think that this chart describes? *(That spirituality effects all these experiences by providing perspective, meaning to each of life's actions. Spirituality tells the person "There is meaning in this event. Pay attention.")*

Take time to share their reactions to the chart on page 9

10 Minutes Drawing conclusions.

Refer to page 1 of the handouts, “A Basic Question”

How would we now answer de Chardin’s statement.

We are not human beings having a spiritual experience.

We are spiritual beings having a human experience.

How do our answers provide insight for the development of our OAM?

5 Minutes Assign everyone to read chapter one in *“Growing an Older Adult Ministry”*

Close the meeting by praying “The Prayer for Older Adults on page 10

Growing an Older Adult Ministry -. *Leader Guide*
Choosing the Location.-.Who are the Older Adults
Session 2 (Chapter 1)

The participants will be able to:

1. Identify the four classifications of older adults
2. Share three characteristics of each classification
3. Participate in identifying the classification of older adults in the congregation.

Materials needed:

For Face-to-Face meetings

- Markers for writing on signs
- Signs on poster board or newsprint
 - ❖ For an older adult ministry to be successful it needs to be:
 - 1) focused
 - 2) intentional
 - 3) sustainable
 - 4) effective

Today we will explore the **focus** of an OAM

- ❖ Activities of Daily Living
 - Bathing and Grooming.
 - Dressing and Undressing.
 - Meal Preparation and Feeding.
 - Functional Transfers (such as ability to get up from a chair)
 - Safe Restroom Use and Maintaining Continence.
 - Ambulation (usually walking from one place to another)
 - Memory Care and Stimulation (Alzheimer's and Dementia)

- ❖ *Four Blank poster board or Newsprint labeled at the top with one of the following*

Active
Frail

Transitional
Caregivers

- Copies of handouts and Appendix A for each participant
- One copy of the most recent congregational directory

For Zoom Meetings

- Signs on 8 ½ X 11 page for screen sharing
 - ❖ For an older adult ministry to be successful it needs to be:
 - 5) focused
 - 6) intentional
 - 7) sustainable
 - 8) effective

Today we will explore the **focus** of an OAM
 - ❖ Activities of Daily Living
 - Bathing and Grooming.
 - Dressing and Undressing.
 - Meal Preparation and Feeding.
 - Functional Transfers (such as ability to get up from a chair)
 - Safe Restroom Use and Maintaining Continence.
 - Ambulation (usually walking from one place to another)
 - Memory Care and Stimulation (Alzheimer's and Dementia)
 - ❖ Be prepared to use shares screen function to list characteristics of each of the Four Classes of Older Adults. Design four “posters,” title each with one of the categories noted below. Review Chapter One in “Growing an OAM” and place characteristics on the appropriate “poster”. Then, before the session begins, upload the posters to Zoom so that you can screenshare them at the appropriate time.
 - Active
 - Frail
 - Transitional
 - Caregivers.
- Email the Handout Booklet to all participants
- Before meeting post each handout on Zoom for screensharing.

The Action

10 Minutes Welcome and introduce the task for the meeting

Devotions: Segment of “Autumn Wisdom” or some other option found in Chapter Five, “Spiritual Formation and Growing”

Show the posterboard placard or the screenshare poster of the needs of an older adult ministry like the example below:

For an older adult ministry to be successful that it needs to be:

- 1) focused*
- 2) intentional*
- 3) sustainable*
- 4) effective*

*Today we will explore the **focus** of an OAM.*

10 Minutes Warm up “What is Aging”

Turn to page 1 of the handout booklet. Direct them to individually write their answers the following questions in four minutes. Short answers are required. One or two words are best. Time the group.

When time is up, gather and discuss answers to each question. Have fun. There are not right or wrong answers. Remember, this exercise is only a warm-up to allow everyone to get to know each other better and to focus their minds, not on the events of their day, but on planning an OAM. Do not get bogged down doing this exercise.

5 Minutes Introducing ADLs

Turn to Page 2 and review the concept what is encompassed by the shorthand ADL.

If face to face, display the poster of the seven ADLs.

If Zoom, screen share the list of ADLs using the prepared poster.

Some comments that might be shared.

1. ADL stands for Activities of Daily Living. They are used to assess the needs for older adults within retirement communities and skilled care centers.
2. Professional use six, Koepke uses Seven, adding Memory Care and Stimulation (dementia).
3. Ask for questions. Try not to become the person who answers all questions. It is best if you do not answer any of the questions. Allow the group to share their own knowledge, thus forming community and creating confidence in one another.

20 minutes Identify characteristics of each of the four categories of older adults.

If face to face, post the four posterboards or newsprint that are headed with one of the four older adult categories. Give the participants markers (or even crayons) and ask them to list as many characteristics of each category as possible.

If a Zoom meeting, ask the group to verbally share characteristics. You might write answers on the screen share white board, or simply receive them. After all have shared their thoughts, screen share your completed lists of characteristics.

When complete, ask the group

- What is your initial impression of our work?
- Do you know people who are in one of the categories?
- How does this task help us bring focus our future OAM?

60 minutes Identify the category of each older adult in the congregation

Introduce the task by saying words such as

“We are now going to participate in a task that the details of which are not to leave this room. Rightfully, people do not want to be put into a category. They want to be treated as persons, not a group. To do so

could be very upsetting. In fact, some of us may be uncomfortable. Yet, to help us in planning, we need to know the people whom we are serving. We could send out a survey, but many surveys are not returned thus thwarting our planning efforts.

“And so Koepke has suggests this task. Each of us has the latest directory of our congregation. Perhaps no one in this group knows every older adult in our faith community. But together we know most of them well enough to guess what category of older adult they might be in. We might be wrong, but we will try our best to carefully and respectfully assign each person based upon our knowledge of each person.

Step one, we will, together, go through the directory simply identifying each person who might be an older adult, age 55 years and above. Age is not to be a factor. We simply want everyone to age as who is “older” and who is not.

Step two each of will again review the directory marking an A for active, F for frail, T for transitional, and C for caregiver. A caregiver might have two designations, one as a caregiver and a second as an older adult themselves. Use the seven ADLs as your guide.

20 Minutes Seek Consensus of Step Two.

When Step two is complete compare the categorization of answers, seeking consensus on each person assignment. Finally fill out Appendix A and retain it for future reference.

5 Minutes Assignment for the next session.

Read Chapter Two: What do we want our OAM to accomplish.

Close with the Prayer for Older Adults or something else from Chapter Five.

Growing an Older Adult Ministry – *Leader Guide*
Planning the Garden – What is to be Accomplished
Session 3 (Chapter 2)

The participants will be able to:

1. Identify what makes for a good mission statement
2. Discover three purposes of a good mission statement
3. Produce a good mission statement

Materials Needed

- Email handouts to all participants
- Newsprint or screenshare white board to record participant answers
- Goal of the Day Poster or Zoom post

For an older adult ministry to be successful it needs to be:

- 9) focused
- 10) intentional
- 11) sustainable
- 12) effective

Today we will explore the importance of an intentional OAM.

The Action

10 Minutes Welcome and devotions.

For devotions, use a chapter in Autumn Wisdom or another resource in the appendix.

4 Minutes Warm up

Call attention to the goal of the day poster/screenshare

Have fun gathering comments on the cartoon on page one of the handouts.

20 Minutes The Purpose of a Mission Statement

Give the group 4 minutes to answer the two questions on page one.

After the group has completed the task, write the answers to question one on newsprint or screenshare white board. Seek consensus on the answer.

Sought answer

To describe what is to be accomplished by our OAM.

Ask the group for their answers to question two, again writing them on newsprint or the screenshare white board. Again seek consensus.

Sought answers

- 1. Ensuring that the planning committee is on the same page.*
- 2. To give guidance for planning of events.*
- 3. To provide guidance for the evaluation of events just completed.*

30 Minutes Individually Writing a Mission Statement

Explain the form on page two of the handouts

The leader will be the timer for the first step

Each person is to do the other steps alone. We will share them later.

10 Minutes Break

30 Minutes Creating a Mission Statement for Your OAM

Have each person report their answers for Step 4 of page two of the handout. Leader records their answers on newsprint or screenshare.

IMPORTANT. Continue until there is a consensus. A good mission statement is never voted upon allowing winners and losers. For a mission statement to fulfill its purpose, consensus is critical.

If a consensus cannot be reached, conclude the session, and visit the issue again in session 4 or 5. It is important that there is a consensus regarding the mission statement by the end of session 5.

20 Minutes If there is time

The form “Assessing Existing OAM” (handout, pages 3-7) explores the older adult ministries that are already existing within your congregation. No congregation provides zero ministries with and to older adults. Many ministries are common, often found in every faith community.

Working together as a group, begin completing “Assessing Existing OAM”

Go through the form line by line with everyone contributing the information that is requested.

If your congregation is relatively large, one person might not know about every part of the existing ministries to and with older adults. But together, as a group, you will.

Continue until it is time to close the session. Ask everyone read chapter three in “Growing” and finish the form at home as “homework.” NOTE: it is important to assign the completion of “Assessing Existing OAM” at home because Session 4 has a lot to cover. Completing the homework will provide time to complete the second step expressed in chapter 3.

The form will be a part of the next session.

5 Minutes Closing Devotions

Close the meeting with what is appropriate within your faith group. You might use The Prayer of Older Adults (page 8 in handout).

Growing an Older Adult Ministry *Leader Guide*
Plowing the Soil – Infrastructure
Session 4 (Chapter 3)

Participants will be able to:

- Identify 4 reasons why a congregation might not have an OAM
- Explore 14 characteristics of a successful OAM, noting how your OAM has fulfilled each characteristic.
- Assign participants to begin completing three of the most pressing characteristics.

Materials Needed

- Newsprint or Screenshare White Board
- Poster of the session task

For an older adult ministry to be successful it needs to be:

- 13) focused
- 14) intentional
- 15) sustainable
- 16) effective

Today we will explore how to be a **sustainable** OAM

The Action

10 Minutes Welcome and Devotions

For devotions use a section from Autumn Wisdom or a passage from “Suffering and Transformation” found on Page 86.

Distribute handouts.

Orient the group to the task for this meeting by posting:

For an older adult ministry to be successful it needs to be

- 1. focused
- 2. intentional
- 3. sustainable
- 4. effective

Today we will explore how to be a **sustainable** OAM

10 Minutes Discussion.

Why do most faith communities do not have a focused, intentional, sustainable, effective OAM?

Note the answers below can be found in “Growing” pages 36 and 37.

- Congregational focus should be on young families with children, which is logical since “we all know that the future of the church is with the young.”
- We have never had an OAM before. Why start one now?
- Old people, many of whom have been long-term members of the congregation, are the backbone of the congregation already. There are already many ministries focused upon all the adults within the congregation. They do not need a specialized ministry.
- Older adults do not want an OAM because they do not want to be labeled as being older, and thus, by cultural definition, less capable and less worthy of time and consideration

20 Minutes Assessing Existing Ministries

No faith group is devoid of all older adult ministries. Every faith community has a ministry to older adults though it might be called by another name or names. You have completed the form “Assessing Existing OAM” as homework. Let us hear what your opinions.

[Start with #1 on the handout that was completed as homework and the end of session 3. After securing a quick consensus and quickly move on the #2 and so forth. The leader records the opinion of the group on her/his own worksheet “Assessing Existing OAM” which was distributed in Session 3.]

When completed, ask for reactions regarding existing OAM in our faith community.

Keep moving the discussion along so there is time to complete the process regarding the “14 Characteristics of a Sustainable OAM.”

30 Minutes Rate your faith community’s ability to sustain an OAM

Ask the group to turn to page 1 of the handout: The 14 Characteristics of a Sustainable Older Adult Ministry. At the same time, have them open their copy of “Growing” to page 38 and following to use as a reference as the group rates the ability of your faith community to sponsor an OAM.

- Begin with characteristic #1 on page 38 of “Growing” and ask for a brief discussion regarding this characteristic.
- Turn to the handout and rate your faith community’s ability to fulfill this characteristic
- Answer: Why this rating?
- Answer: What can be done?
- Remember, . Remember, a faith community is never all 1’s or 7’s. That is too easy. Honestly address each characteristic without emotion.
- Continue with characteristic #2, and so forth.

10 Minutes Break

20 Minutes Continue the process of rating infrastructure.

20 Minutes Determine the Importance of Each Characteristic

NOTE: If time runs out, close the meeting and complete this step in Session 5

As a group, using their own copy of the 14 characteristics, have the participants decide whether each characteristic is a high, medium, low, done priority using the letters “H” “M” “L” or “D”. Allow only 3 highs “H”, and 3 mediums “M”.

Assign one or two participants to fulfill each “H” (high). Determine when that characteristic should be completed.

5 Minutes Close the session

Close the session with The Prayer for Older Adults (Handout p. 5) or a prayer of your choice.

Growing an Older Adult Ministry – *Leader Guide*
Plowing the Soil.- Infrastructure
Session 5 (Chapter 4)

Materials needed:

- Session Handouts
- *If needed, Session 4 Handout*
- Copy of “Autumn Wisdom” or sayings of Martin Luther found on page 81 of “Growing.”
- Copy of Session 2 Handout, Page 4, “Who are the Older Adults”
- Copy of Session 3 Handout, Page 2, “Developing a Mission Statement”
- A copy of Koepke’s figure describing spirituality found on “Growing,” Introduction, Figure 1, page 11.

The Action

10 Minutes Welcome and Devotions

Devotions using a selection from “Autumn Wisdom” or quietly meditate on one or more of the sayings of Martin Luther which can be found on page 81 of “Growing.”

Distribute handouts.

Orient the group to the task for the meeting by referring them to the statement below found on page 1 of the handout

For an older adult ministry to be successful it needs to be

5. focused
6. intentional
7. sustainable
8. effective

Today we will explore how to be an **effective** OAM

20 Minutes *If needed, complete Session 4*

As a group, using their own copy of the 14 characteristics, have the participants decide whether each characteristic is a high, medium, low, done priority using the letters “H” “M” “L” or “D”. Allow only 3 highs “H”, and 3 mediums “M”.

Assign one or two participants to fulfill each “H” (high). Determine when that characteristic should be completed.

15 Minutes Discussion

What are the distinctions of Older Adult Ministry and Youth Ministry? [page 51 last paragraph into page 52]

What did Viktor Frankl mean by the phrase “the rich granaries of the past?” [page 52 paragraph 1]

Can an OAM be a “one size fits all” program? Explain answers. [page 52 paragraph 2]

What might be some of the barriers to OAM programming [page 52 paragraph 3]

10 Minutes Review of “Who are the Older Adults” Chapter 1 (Session 2)

Remind participants of the importance of understanding who the older adults are within your faith community. Review the results of the categorization of older adults found in Session 2 Handout, Page 4.

10 Minutes Review your OAM mission statement

Remind participants of the importance of a mission statement. Refer them to the mission statement that they developed in Session 3 Handout, Page 2.

10 Minutes Break

30 Minutes Discuss the figure on the handout, page 1.

1. Define and discuss Transcend Loss, Find Final Meanings, Find Hope, Find intimacy with God and/or others. Allow time for all to express:
 - What does each description mean?
 - How has each description effected your life?
 - Should each description be a part of the definition of “Spirituality?”
2. In the center of the figure, MacKinlay places “Response to Ultimate Meaning or Ultimate Meaning in Life.” This is her understanding of spirituality. Koepke’s definition of spirituality is different than MacKinlay’s. (Show figure 1, Introduction, Page 11.) How would you compare the two?

My answer view of spirituality is not in conflict with MacKinlay. They are both an expansion of the other, looking at a person’s spirituality from a distinctive perspective with a different intent. My view seeks to picture what forms a person’s spirituality. MacKinlay’s view pictures the content and the interactions within a person as the four parts of spirituality (discuss Transcend Loss, Find Final Meanings, Find Hope, Find intimacy with God and/or Others) continually sculpt each person’s spirituality, their Ultimate Meaning.

3. How might MacKinlay’s definition effect our OAM planning?

30 Minutes Discuss the figure found on the handout, page 2

This figure is the most complicated in the book, but it is worth any effort to understand it. The figure connect the six program areas which engages the four parts of spirituality via MacKinlay, leading to a strong spiritual self, which results in a connection with God which is, at the same time, the experience of abundant living and personal authenticity that we all seek in life. (NOTE: the six program areas are addressed in Chapters 5-10, which we will begin to study next session).

- In your own words, how would you describe the interplay between program areas and spiritual needs?
Each program area can address each of a person's spiritual needs.
- What is the goal of this interplay between program areas and spiritual needs?
The goal is the growth of the spiritual self, the experience and integration of a person's Ultimate Meaning that is found in a healthy experience of intimacy with God/Others, Transcending Loss and Disability, Finding Hope, and Discovering Meaning.
- What does this chart tell us about the effect that spirituality has on a person?
A healthy spirituality results not only in a closer connection with God, a deeper faith in God, but it also results in abundant living and personal authenticity. God and God's grace is not to become something different than what we want to be as a person. God grace moves us to a place where we have always wanted to be: a place where we would have abundant living no matter what our circumstances, and an experience of being an authentic person, who is comfortable in their own skin.
- How will this chart aid us in planning our OAM?
The chart expresses the flow and the goal of an OAM. Moving from program areas (options) an OAM encourages awareness and growth in the four spiritual needs, the interplay between these spiritual needs results in the Spiritual Self. The result on an OAM is spiritual formation and growth. Providing effective programs that address all four of one's spiritual needs which leads to the spiritual self and abundant living and personal authenticity, is the only purpose for an OAM within your faith community. The chart helps us keep our eyes on how we address our OAM purpose.

10 Minutes Close with their assignment for the next session and Prayer

Thank the group for their hard work. This session completes the creation infrastructure that is needed to plan a successful OAM.

In the next two sessions the team will finally explore programming options. To efficiently explore all six program areas each member will be assigned to describe a program chapter to the entire team, thereby giving everyone a quick overview of programming options without having to read all six chapters.

(Note to the leader: if you only have four members to your team you will have to assign some members two chapters to review). If Covid 19 will be an important factor for planning your first OAM event you may wish to add a seventh program area, "OAM and Covid 19" (Chapter 13).

Assign one member one chapter(s) to be reviewed. Chapters 5 – 8 will report in the next session (session 6) with chapters 9 and 10 (and if desired chapter 13), the following session (session 7). They are to read the chapter and any strategy related to that chapter in the appendix, using the form found on *handout page 3*. Hopefully, their report can be completed on this single page. Brevity might be hard because hard choices of what would be included can be difficult. But brevity is good for those to whom they will be presenting. But if needed, they may use additional pages.

After answering all questions regarding the homework, close with The Prayer for Older Adults, *handout page 4*, or another prayer of your choice.

Growing an Older Adult Ministry *Leader Guide*
Nurturing the Seed: Programing Areas 1
Session 6 (Chapters 5 - 8)

The Participants will be able to:

1. Report on the program chapter assigned to them
2. Articulate a summary of their chapter using the handout in session 5
3. Take notes, noting the items of importance for an OAM in each other's presentations

Materials needed:

- Six copies of the homework form found in Session 5, Page 3 for each member to take notes as members report on the program chapter which they have been assigned
-
- Newsprint or screenshare sign #1

Our older adults can be classified as:

Active

Frail

Transitional

Caregivers

- Newsprint or screenshare sign #2
(Print Your OAM Mission Statement)

- Newsprint or screenshare sign #3

Identifying Existing OAM

14 Characteristics of a Successful OAM

- Newsprint or screenshare sign #4

Program options:

Spiritual Development

Learning Opportunities

Opportunities to Serve

Opportunities to be Served

Community Building

Stewardship and Finance

- Newsprint or screenshare sign #5
Effects:
Intimacy with God/others
Transcend Loss and Disability
Find Hope
Discover Meaning
- Newsprint or screenshare sign #6
Encourages
Spiritual Formation and Growth
- Newsprint or screenshare sign #7
Results in:
connection to God/others as well
abundant living
personal authenticity

The Action:

10 Minutes Welcome and Devotions

Devotions using a selection from “Autumn Wisdom,” “Soul Shepherding” found on page 173 in “Growing,” or a reading of your choice.

Distribute six handouts for all team members

10 Minutes Introduce task for the day

We now decided on who the older adults are within our congregation and have identified basic needs [sign #1].

We have determined what we want our OAM to accomplish by creating a mission statement [sign #2].

We have listed the existing older adult ministries in our congregation and described the characteristics of a successful OAM [sign #3].

We have explored how six program areas [sign #4] effect four spiritual [sign #5] needs to encourage spiritual formation and growth [sign #6] that results in a close connection to God and others as well

as the experience of abundant living and personal authenticity. [sign #7]

Today we begin a study of the six program areas of an OAM.

Each of you have read and gathered information regarding one of those program areas.

Each of you, in turn, will have 25 minutes to report to all of us. We all are to take notes of the presentation.

The audience will use blank handouts to take notes.

Four will present today and two at our next session. We begin with the first area: Spiritual Formation and Growth.

1 H 40 Min Presentations (25 minutes each)

Spiritual Formation and Growth

Life-Long Learning

Opportunities to Serve

Opportunities to be Served

5 Minutes Close

The Prayer for Older Adults or a prayer of your choice.

Growing an Older Adult Ministry *Leader Guide*
Nurturing the Seed: Programing Areas 2
Session 7 (Chapters 9-10)

The Participants will be able to:

4. Report on the program chapter assigned to them
5. Articulate a summary of their chapter using the handout in session 5
6. Take notes, noting the items of importance for an OAM in each other's presentations

Materials needed:

- Six copies of the homework form found in Session 5, Page 3 for each member to take notes as members report on the program chapter which they have been assigned
-
- Newsprint or screenshare sign #1

Our older adults can be classified as:

Active

Frail

Transitional

Caregivers

- Newsprint or screenshare sign #2
(Print Your OAM Mission Statement)

- Newsprint or screenshare sign #3

Identifying Existing OAM

14 Characteristics of a Successful OAM

- Newsprint or screenshare sign #4

Program options:

Spiritual Development

Learning Opportunities

Opportunities to Serve

Opportunities to be Served

Community Building

Stewardship and Finance

- Newsprint or screenshare sign #5
Effects:
Intimacy with God/others
Transcend Loss and Disability
Find Hope
Discover Meaning
- Newsprint or screenshare sign #6
Encourages
Spiritual Formation and Growth
- Newsprint or screenshare sign #7
Results in:
connection to God/others as well
abundant living
personal authenticity

The Action:

10 Minutes Welcome and Devotions

Devotions using a selection from “Autumn Wisdom,” “Soul Shepherding” found on page 173 in “Growing,” or a reading of your choice.

Distribute six handouts for all team members

10 Minutes Introduce task for the day

We now decided on who the older adults are within our congregation and have identified basic needs [sign #1].

We have determined what we want our OAM to accomplish by creating a mission statement [sign #2].

We have listed the existing older adult ministries in our congregation and described the characteristics of a successful OAM [sign #3].

We have explored how six program areas [sign #4] effect four spiritual [sign #5] needs to encourage spiritual formation and growth [sign #6] that results in a close connection to God and others as well

as the experience of abundant living and personal authenticity. [sign #7]

Today we begin a study of the six program areas of an OAM.

Each of you have read and gathered information regarding one of those program areas.

Each of you, in turn, will have 25 minutes to report to all of us. We all are to take notes of the presentation.

The audience will use blank handouts to take notes.

Four will present today and two at our next session. We begin with the first area: Spiritual Formation and Growth.

1 H 40 Min Presentations (25 minutes each)

Spiritual Formation and Growth

Life-Long Learning

Opportunities to Serve

Opportunities to be Served

5 Minutes Close

The Prayer for Older Adults or a prayer of your choice.

TO THE LEADER: If needed, I have adjusted the lesson plan below to make room for the consideration of Chapter 13, “Covid 19 and OAM”.

The Participants will be able to:

Materials Needed:

- Signs in session 6 posted in room or available on screenshare.

The Action

10 Minutes Welcome and Devotions

Devotions using a selection from “Autumn Wisdom,” or “Soul Shepherding” found in Appendix F in “Growing.” You

may wish to use a reading of your own choice.

Distribute handouts for all team members

10 Minutes Introduce the task for the day

Call attention to the signs, either posted around the room or on screenshare, from session six to remind the team of the foundation for effective programming within their OAM.

Today the first hour we will complete reports on the six program chapters found in “Growing.”

25 Minutes Presentations: Community Building

10 Minutes Break

25 Minutes Presentation: Stewardship and Finance

IF COVID 15 IS NOT A FACTOR FOR OAM PLANNING CONTINUE WITH PAGE 2.

If COVID 19 IS A FACTOR FOR PLANNING, GO TO PAGE 3.

35 Minutes Discussion

What are your feelings about the number of program possibilities for our OAM?

What other programs, not in “Growing,” that you would like to add?

Is there a program area that particularly strikes you as being important for our OAM?

If there are so many programs and program areas that are important, how do we decide which ones we should use?

Do you feel capable to make program choices for our OAM?

Making initial plans for the first meeting of our OAM

Knowing that all older adults in our community will be invited, what group of older adults should we focus on?

What would we want to accomplish at this first event?

What infrastructure is needed for this event to be successful?

What spiritual need(s) do we wish this event to fulfill?

What program area(s) would we want to use?

What specific strategies within that program area might we offer at this event?

5 Minutes Closing

Next session we will begin planning our first event. We will use many of the answers to the questions above in our planning.

Assign the reading of Chapter 11

Close with The Prayer for Older Adults on page 3 of the handout or a prayer of your choice.

*IF COVID 19 IS A FACTOR FOR OAM PLANNING (CHAPTER 11 SESSION 8)
CONTINUE BELOW.*

25 Minutes *Presentation: OAM and Covid 19*

10 Minutes *Discussion:*

What have we learned since we have begun to explore creating an OAM within our faith community?

What has been helpful that thus should be considered as next time we begin planning our first event?

What insights have you gained about older adults and older adult ministry?

5 Minutes Closing

Next session we will begin planning our first event. We will use many of the answers to the questions above in our planning.

Assign the reading of Chapter 12 as homework

Close with The Prayer for Older Adults on page 3 of the handout or a prayer of your choice.

Growing an Older Adult Ministry *Leader Guide*

Gathering the Harvest - Putting it All Together

Session 8 (Chapter 11, Part 1)

The participants will be able to:

- 1. Complete first event plan**
- 2. Complete task assignments for first event**

Materials needed:

- Session 8 handouts
- Newsprint and markers

The Action

Note to the leader: This is the first session that will use the information found in Chapter 11, “Gathering the Harvest – Putting it All Together.” This session will focus on creating the first OAM event, completing the Event Assignment Form, and information on securing participant evaluation of the event.

Since training session 9 looks to using what is learned from your first OAM event to look to the future, you may choose to explore session 9 after your first OAM event.

10 Minutes Devotions and Introduction

Use a section of Autumn Wisdom or ‘Tending the Garden That is Our Life’ found in Appendix G.

Today we are going to plan our first OAM event. The handouts are the forms that we will be using for this task. This effort might require several sessions since we might not have the time today to complete effective plans. But we will be flexible. You have completed a lot of work, learned a lot about OAM. Now the tire meets the road.

Distribute Session 8 Handouts (*leader note: to save time, you may wish to have already added the mission statement for your OAM to the Event Planner found on Handout Page 1.*)

60 Minutes Choosing the first OAM event (Handout Page 1)

Review your mission statement. Remember that the mission statement was designed to express what we wish to accomplish in our OAM as a whole, so this first event should meet that standard.

Discussion Questions. *The team may wish to use the Event Planner on Handout Page 1 to record decisions.*

- Have the team write today's date in the top right hand corner of the Event Planner.
- Knowing that all older adults in our community will be invited, what group of older adults should we focus on? (Chapter 1)
Note answer it "Target Audience" on the Planner
- What would we want to accomplish at this first event?
Make sure that the goals that are chosen are consistent your mission statement.
- What spiritual need(s) do we wish this event to fulfill?
The four spiritual needs are hope, transcendence, meaning, and intimacy (chapter 4)
- What type of event would fulfill the answers to the previous questions?
Write the event title on the left side of the top line of the planner.
- What are some possible strategies that would address the chosen group of older adults (The program chapters (5 -10 might spark thinking)
You may wish to list of the thoughts of team members on a newsprint, transferring them to the Planner only after decisions are made by the team.
- What program area(s) would we want to use?
You may have the group consider the purpose of each program chapter as discussed in the text of chapters 5 – 10. Perhaps the presenter of that chapter (sessions 6 and 7) could be of assistance)
- What specific strategies within that program area might we offer at this event?
Once the program area is chosen, consider the program resources found in the text of the chapter or the appendices noted in the specific chapter.

- In what order should these strategies take place?
If you do not have the strategies in order, number each strategy in column one of the Planner.
- How much time would each strategy take to complete?
Place the time for each strategy in column one of the planner.
- What is the best date, time of day, and location for this first event?
Write decisions in the proper location along the timeline on the planner.
- What infrastructure is needed for this event to be successful.
List answers in the line just below the mission statement on the planner?
- Is there anything that we have missed?
- How do you feel about the plan for our first OAM event?

10 Minutes Break

25 Minutes **Make event assignments** (handout page 2)

- Complete the information requested at the top of the event assignment form
- Have the team brainstorm the tasks that need to be done to make the first event successful. List the tasks in the first column, “Tasks to Complete”
- Choose a date, the person who will be responsible for the task and the date to be completed for each task. Remember, all tasks do not need to be accomplished by team members. In fact, it can be an advantage to ask others to join with team members thus sharing the privilege of being a service to others and the affirmation that persons outside the team are.

15 Minutes **Review Participant Evaluation**

Call attention to the participant evaluation form (Appendix X or handout page 3). Review it and make any changes appropriate to what the team wishes to know from the participants after the first OAM event. You also might consider editing the form’s language to make it suitable for your context.

10 Minutes **Wrap-up and closing**

Announce the date for the next meeting of the Planning Team.
Complement them all on a job well done.

Close with the “Prayer for Older Adults” (handout page 4) or something of your choice.

Growing an Older Adult Ministry *Leader Guide*
Gathering the Harvest - Putting it All Together
Session 9 (Chapter 11, Part 2)

The participants will be able to:

1. Evaluate the first OAM event in specific terms
2. Determine to continue or not to continue planning an OAM
3. Begin making an overview of a strategy of their OAM
4. Decide the order of implementation of their OAM strategy

Materials needed:

- Handouts for Session 9 with the mission statement written on the “Strategy for the Future” form (handout page 2).
- Make extra copies of page 2 of the handout for those team members who might need them.

The Action

To the Leader: This session is designed to evaluate your first OAM event and as well as begin looking into the future of your OAM. This is the final tasks of “Growing an Older Adult Ministry” and this leader’s guide. The rest is up to you and your planning team. Remember that God is always present, blessing your efforts to address the spiritual needs of older adults. God wants you and your Team to provide a means whereby your OAM participants might embrace God’s action in their lives and make them aware of what has already been done for them and within them. God has always been, is still, and always will lead them to live authentic lives, based and focused upon a spiritual connection with their God. This is what God wants and what your participants want. We all desire to not regret the past nor wish to close the door on it. We yearn to discover a sense of peace and being comfortable within their own skin. So does God.

This session is open ended. It does not matter if the Team completes session 9 in the two hours allotted. The reason is that planning for the future is what your Planning Team will be doing hopefully for many years. The Team may have new members, but the task is the same.

Once a long-range plan is made, and new events are selected and times are identified, the team will return to Session 8, then 9 for as many times as needed.

10 Minutes Devotions and Introduction

Open with devotions based on a segment of “Autumn Wisdom” or some devotional of your choice. Perhaps using some short devotion from what your faith community uses for worship.

Distribute Handouts

30 Minutes Evaluate the First OAM Event

Individually complete the Planning Team Event Evaluation (handout page 1).

As a group, share personal evaluations, seeking a consensus of the evaluation. A member of the team takes notes for your record keeping so that you have accurate and helpful information about previous events as you plan future events. (Chapter 3, *14 Characteristics of Effective OAMs, characteristic 5*).

15 Minutes The Future of Your OAM

“Based upon what is known now, should our OAM continue?”

It is time to fish or cut bait. You have explored the elements of planning that are required for the creation of a new ministry. These principles are of value and can be used with any group, both inside and outside your faith community. You are a trained program developer. The question now is, “With the knowledge gained in this study plus the experience gained at the first OAM event, should an OAM be developed within this faith community. It sounds simple but it is important now to poll each person on the planning team to express their opinion. It is important that members not only share a yes or no, but also reveal why they hold that opinion. It has taken a lot of time, energy, and commitment to get to the place where we are. We know that continuing to develop an effective OAM that will address the spiritual needs of older adults is not easy. But is it needed? Is it possible? Is it worth the effort? This is the time for a make or break

decision. You have given your initial OAM event its best shot. Now what. It is the planning group's decision.

10 Minutes Break

Note to the Leader: If the decision is not to continue, proceed with the final step in this session. Be sure to deeply thank them for sharing their God-given spiritual gifts with the group.

5 Minutes Introduce Strategizing for the Future

The leader might introduce the task using terms like these:

Turn to page 2 of the handout. The chart looks familiar, but its purpose is different. The goal is not to plan the next OAM event, but to plan several events, some of which would not be implemented for weeks, if not months. The chart has been designed to aid the planning team to plan efficiently and effectively.

Note the presence of the mission statement. That is our guide. The mission statement declares what we hope the events that are planned will accomplish. To achieve these hopes might take several events each addressing another facet of the mission statement. To follow the mission statement might require using several program categories and several different types of groups. That is why long-range planning is done. It keeps the planning team's eye on the ball, focused on what is the end goal of your OAM.

For example, to effectively begin to address spiritual formation, we might want to use a strategy in the "Spiritual Formation" category, begin a Bible study on a related passage of Scripture, develop a group to study a book by Henri Nouwen that is broadcast on Zoom as well as face-to-face, organize OAM participants to hold group worship experiences for home-centered persons, and encourage everyone to share in a group donation to a local women's shelter, a food bank, or a world human assistance organization. All these events could be listed on the chart but implemented at different times by different people.

15 Minutes Individual Creation of a Strategy for the Future.

The process of using the chart might be like this:

As a team, choose a target group and a spiritual need of that target group.

Once the target group and a spiritual need are identified we will take 15 minutes to make a strategic plan. We will share our personal plans later. If you wish, you may use the following procedure.

1. Select a program option using the options suggested in the program chapters (Chapters 5-10) and place them in the appropriate box.
2. Within the same program box, note the best program type for the chosen program option. Program types might be:
 - a. A one-time event where all OAM participants are invited.
 - b. A series of events where all OAM participants are invited.
 - c. A small group experience such as a Bible study or book group (short term or long term).
 - d. Something that can be accomplished by an individual, like reading a book suggested by an OAM participant who has read a good book addressing the identified spiritual need.
 - e. E-blasting suggestions of YouTube videos for OAM participants to view in their own home based on the spiritual need.
 - f. Other?

25 Minutes Sharing of Individual Strategies for the Future

Ask each person to share their strategy for OAM in the future. If your team is small (4 or 5 members) you might give each person 5 minutes to share thus allowing time for the team to begin making a Team strategy. Obviously, the process will require additional meetings, but that is OK because the Team will be meeting more anyway. 😊

10 Minutes Closing

Decide on a date and time of the next meeting.

Close using “The Prayer for Older Adults” (Handout Page 3) or a prayer of your choice