
PRESBYTERY of DES MOINES
Older Adult Ministries (OAM) and Congregational Health Ministry
March 2010, Monthly E-Newsletter

Older Adult Ministries Week is Coming in May!

The PC(USA) church-planning calendar designates the first week in May as *Older Adult Week*. We dedicate this week to older adults because they are the backbone of our church, our nation and the world. The purpose of Older Adult Week is to help congregations recognize aging as a natural part of living, involving life from birth to death and to affirm the worth of persons in all stages of development and at all functional levels.

Each year, a special thesis is chosen around Older Adult Week and POAMN produces a planning guide to help congregations recognize and honor older church members. The **OAM Planning Guide** is available as a free printable Adobe Acrobat profile. Go to www.POAMN.org, click on "Resources". It also can be ordered for \$2 from Ginny Nyhuis at gnyhuis@verizon.com. (Each church in the **Des Moines Presbytery** will receive a free copy in the mail – courtesy of the Presbytery's OAM Task Force Committee.)

Help in Becoming Informed and Engaged with Older Adult Ministries

From *Older Adult Ministry – A Guide for the Session and Congregation* booklet. You can order through PC(USA) Louisville, KY. Each committee of your session has resources on the subject of OAM. Suggestions on their involvement can be found on pages 37-43. These committees of the church can be, and need to be, involved in the ministry with older adults. Twenty Questions to See How You Are Doing: (try discussing these questions at committee meetings.) Pages 44-45.

1. How do we include single-member families as we plan education and fellowship activities?
2. Are older adults serving on all of our committees and boards?
3. Should we have a group that focuses on the concerns of older persons, or should we include concerns of older persons in our existing groups?
4. What are we doing about the need for transportation for some of the older members?
5. In what ways does our budget reflect an honest concern for people who are alone, or for people who are lonely in our church's ministry?
6. How do we, or can we, show concern for people who are alone, or for people who are lonely in our church's ministry?
7. What do the church building and its furnishings tell us about our interest in older adults?
8. What is the balance in our church between ministry with children and youth and ministry with older persons?
9. Are our services and events planned exclusively for the convenience of a particular age group (for example, young families, youth, older persons)?
10. How do we, or might we, secure and maintain a support system for older adults in our congregations?
11. What are some of the unique responsibilities of an Older Adult Ministries Committee in our church structure?

12. During prayer requests and celebration in the service of worship, does the announcement of a retirement bring dignity and respect, or pity? (i.e., How do we approach the issue of a member no longer able to drive their car?)
 13. What symbols are evident in our church or what aspects of our life together communicate our belief in being inclusive of persons of all ages and cultures and circumstances?
 14. In planning worship and study, do we intentionally include older persons and their needs? How?
 15. How do we include older persons, their interests, wisdom, and gifts, in the mission and outreach of the church?
 16. In what ways are the unique gifts, the experiences, and the wisdom of our older members used in our church programs?
 17. How might we help people make the shift from independence to interdependence?
 18. What are some concerns or issues that become intensified in later life? How might the church address them?
 19. List two questions you think should be added for discussion.
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Vacation Bible School for Adults?

Written by Jann Treadwell and appeared in *The Presbyterian Outlook* blog, Sunday, January 24, 2010

Presbyterians are known for emphasizing life-long learning. Though Vacation Bible School can be an opportunity to provide adult learning, most churches do not take advantage of that opportunity.

It is an option worth brainstorming, particularly if you are offering an evening VBS. Look at the bigger picture as you plan. What else is going on at your church in the summer for adults? What kind of offering would round out what you are already doing? Adults have different learning styles just like children and youth, so perhaps a discussion class on faith in films or in music and/or a class that explores the VBS theme (many VBS publishers offer an adult component) would be well received.

If your Christian Education committee and the VBS planning team decide on an adult option and begin organizing early, there should be time to cover all the bases from teachers and leaders for the children/youth classes to early promotion for the adult offering.

Be creative in your planning:

- If VBS is in the daytime, the adult component could be a topic that appeals to retirees.
- Perhaps the first year you could offer a two-session adult class rather than a class that lasts the whole week of VBS, then transition to more sessions the following year.
- Adults who sign up to attend the adult class might also be a part of the children's VBS by taking responsibility for snacks or gathering craft supplies. These can be done ahead of time and not overlap with the adult class.
- If an adult class is scheduled, perhaps all ages could be a part of the opening time each evening and/or could participate in an activity or service project together during the week

- Some smaller communities have an ecumenical VBS with responsibilities rotating among the churches. The rotation might allow an adult class or two.
- If dinner is included, all ages could fellowship together at the table. God just might work in some wonderful ways in your congregation by including an adult component in your Vacation Bible School.

Jann Treadwell is a Certified Christian Educator serving NorthPark Church in Dallas, Texas.

The Presbyterian Women's Web site has free resources and links for older adult women. Go online to: www.pcusa.org/horizons/exclusives.htm. You'll find exclusive Web resources that will help prepare for funerals and when a spouse dies. Here are just two of the resources available:

- **[Funeral Preplanning Form](http://www.pcusa.org/horizons/exclusives/preplanning.pdf) (3 pages)**
www.pcusa.org/horizons/exclusives/preplanning.pdf
- **["What to Do When a Spouse Dies"](http://www.pcusa.org/horizons/exclusives/preplanning.pdf) (1 page)**
www.pcusa.org/horizons/exclusives/preplanning.pdf

Make plans now for C.E. Staff to Attend POAMN Conference in October

The POAMN Conference Oct. 12-15, 2010 in Orlando with a theme *Connecting the Generations* will be a great conference for Christian Education staff to attend. Workshop topics include: Connecting Your Faith to a New Generation: Will You Make a Difference?; Intergenerational Ministry: Can I do this?; Sink or Swim: Communicating for Change; Connecting the Generations; Music, Music, Music: Battle of the Generations or Battle of the Bands?