

faith+lead
SMALL TOWNS & RURAL

Where the Corn Grows Loud

Growing Faith, Hope, and Love



08/17/2023

Where the Corn Grows Loud: Growing Faith, Hope, and Love

Welcome!

And welcome back if you have used Faith+Lead's resources before! The video "Where the Corn Grows Loud" will plant seeds for rich conversations, learning, and reflection.

Diving into themes of faith formation, growth, and vocations, the video draws us into the profound relationship between a quiet grandfather and his grandson who are venturing together into a cornfield at night to discover the mysteries of God's creation. The following reflections encompass captivating narratives, shared memories, and deep insights, serving as a launchpad for conversations about faith, life's wonders, and our ever-evolving connections with God.

This introduction sets the stage for a transformative exploration of faith, growth, and calling, encouraging us to ponder our own roles in the continuous tapestry of God's creation.



This 5-minute video opens the door for ...

... a powerful image that faith formation instructors or youth & family directors might use to invite youth and adults to talk about key moments in their life of faith and in their family's life.

...grandparents and parents to imagine how to connect with their teenage children or grandchildren to share their faith and how it informs their work lives.

... reflecting on the ways God quietly creates in our lives and world in ways we rarely or barely notice. It could help provoke rich conversations on the theme of God's loving ongoing creation.



View the Video

Before going further, take a moment to watch the video. The video shares the story of a quiet grandfather who takes his grandson on an adventure in the middle of the night to share the mystery of God's loving work growing corn and people. [Watch the video here to learn about Rev. David Zellmer's story.](#)

There are three main themes that the video explores:

Faith Formation

Faith is caught more than taught. Faith is passed on from one person to another. Faith practices are key ways to share and grow deeper in your faith.

Growth

God continues to create growth in our midst and in our lives. Growth is happening not just in the corn fields but all around us.

- While corn grows day and night, did you know you can hear it grow at night? [Even if you don't live near a cornfield, you can listen to what corn sounds like here!](#)
- God continues to shape you, me, and God's world.

Vocations/Our Callings

God calls each of us to serve in distinctive ways through gifts, abilities, and experiences.

You could use this video to invite people to deeper exploration in all three areas.

How to use this e-book:

In the pages to follow, you will find helpful information for various ways to use the video "Where the Corn Grows Loud: Growing Faith, Hope and Love."

Step 1: Reflect personally on applications for your life, with some prompts that turn you towards group conversation.

Step 2: Explore ideas on how to cultivate faith formation for youth and intergenerational faith relationships.

Step 3: Consider vocation - What may God be calling you to do?



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1. Personal Stories: A Video Story to Build On

What provoked David's quiet grandfather to take him on a field trip to the cornfield on a hot, sticky night for an unforgettable experience? What caught your attention in this story about faith, farming, and the surprising sound of corn growing in the silence of the night?

Pastor David's story

- What are your thoughts about how this happened?
- Was this trip in the middle of the night something the quiet grandfather's own grandpa or father did? Was he replicating what he experienced?
- Did something negative happen that inspired him to find a way to share this reminder of the wonder of the mysterious beauty of God's creation? Or did the Holy Spirit just plant this idea for the sport of it?
- Was he not feeling great? Did he know he wanted to talk to his grandson about life, our Creating God, and the joy of farming as a life calling because he was growing older and feared leaving words unsaid?
- What do you wish you could find the right way and the right time to share with your loved ones?

Your story

- What memories of holy, beneficial, and surprising conversations come to mind when you hear this story about lying on the cool soil in the middle of a hot night in a cornfield?
 - Do you have memories of spontaneous or priceless conversations with your children, grandchildren, or youth you may know that come to mind as you watch this video?
 - Do you have any positive and powerful memories in your faith life like this with parents, grandparents, or siblings where you were surprised and blessed by their actions and words?
 - Do you remember a family member, friend, or stranger sharing something with you in a dramatic, patient, persistent way about their faith, life, or values?
- What else might we hear or notice if we slowed down and paid attention to what is happening in the lives around us?

Part of what got my attention as I listened to the story was the deep longing and love that led a quiet grandfather to speak about his life and faith with his grandson. He found a way even though he was not a person of many words. It has never been forgotten, and it blessed others to hear about his actions. I will look for opportunities to share my faith, values, and ways my work allows me to love my neighbors because of this video's beauty and power.

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2. Faith Formation and Practices

For some, faith grows explosively. For most people, our faith grows slowly and steadily. Pastor David's grandparents and parents taught him about their faith and values in many ways. This memory sticks out. What memories do you have of someone outside your family sharing their faith in powerful and memorable ways in your spiritual journey?



Practicing our Faith

- Learning about our faith is incredibly important in our lives as believers, but practicing this faith makes us blossom. Faith+Lead is an indispensable resource for spiritual practices, detailing what they are and how you can use them and share them with others. Look at Faith+Lead's resource page on spiritual practices and learn how to practice faith in your everyday life.
- Our context of faith should be informed by biblical texts and wisdom while being attuned to present-day needs. Practicing Our Faith is a remarkable resource that nurtures such a balanced perspective. It serves as a guiding light, bridging the timeless teachings of ancient scriptures with the practical requirements of our modern lives. Taken from the original book, Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People, this resource empowers us to navigate the complexities of our contemporary world while recovering our awareness of the wonders of life—such as corn popping and growing in the middle of the night.
- The Episcopal Church in the United States also has a resource built around faith practices that you might find helpful, including their podcasts, which you can find on their podcast page.

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Intergenerational - For Grandparents - Sharing Your Legacy

When have you found to be moments ripe for holy conversations with children? Bedtime can be a priceless moment to share stories, impart wisdom, and listen to their thoughts.

- Bible Story - Find an age-appropriate Bible and read the stories as part of your bedtime routine. Listen to their questions. Sometimes, they are the ones God uses to grow and encourage faith. [Here you can find Bible storybooks for a variety of ages.](#)
- Bedtime Prayers - Highs & Lows Prayer Concerns - When your grandchildren or children stay at your house, taking time to hear the highs and lows of their day is powerful. You often learn important things. Their thoughts help you remember the extraordinary minds and hearts of children. Share a simple Bible verse. It also is a great time to pray for their concerns in informal ways. Adding a formal prayer that you use can be meaningful as well.
- Going to worship - As more households do not regularly participate in worship, being aware of the questions children may have is helpful. As grandparents, friends, or neighbors, you can be ready to respond to questions children will ask if they are with you. Remember the importance of simple answers that answer the question of the child.

If you aren't ready for a question, you can always say, "Let me find out and get back to you about that." Help them know questions are a good thing, not a problem.

Parents - The Household is the First Church

Martin Luther and many other teachers have emphasized the crucial role of parents as the first and primary teachers of the faith to their children. Children learn by what they see and what they do.

Who taught you the faith? What were crucial moments that you remember?

You may find this particularly resource and community valuable. They are founded on the concept of milestones and is known as "[Milestones Ministry.](#)" Its primary focus is marking key transitions within believers' lives that hold deep meaning and significance. Through a thoughtful approach, this resource acknowledges and supports believers as they navigate these pivotal moments, offering guidance, understanding, and a sense of shared community during times of change and growth.

Youth and Family Ministry

Would this video help shape conversation in a youth and family ministry setting where youth and adults are building relationships?

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3. Vocation - Our Callings

Each person has distinctive gifts, experiences, and callings. What are yours?

The life of faith is about more than just churchification. God calls us and sends us in faith to love God's world and share the Good News we know through Jesus, the cross, and resurrection. This is what the Life of Faith Initiative focuses on. They seek to direct believers to serve neighbors through family, jobs, school, local community, and the world.

How do you see God guiding you as you live your everyday life? If you have not thought of yourself as a minister in daily life, you should, because you are.

An Episcopalian author and teacher trying to explain God's callings in our life described it as "Vocation."



It comes from the Latin "vocare," to call, and means the work of people is called to by God.

There are all different kinds of voices calling you to all different kinds of work, and the problem is to find out which is the voice of God rather than of Society, say, or the Super-ego, or Self-Interest.

By and large, a good rule for finding out is this. The kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done. If you get a kick out of your work, you've presumably met requirement (a), but if your work is writing TV deodorant commercials, the chances are you've missed requirement (b). On the other hand, if your work is being a doctor in a leper colony, you have probably met requirement (b), but if most of the time you're bored and depressed by it, the chances are you have not only bypassed (a) but probably aren't helping your patients much either.

Neither the hair shirt nor the soft berth will do. The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.

– Originally published in Wishful Thinking.

[You can sign up for daily quotes from Frederick Buechner here.](#)

Not Only Corn is Growing - God's Ongoing Creation is, too.

God takes joy in growing people. When discussing God's creation, we often think about something that happened back in time. This story is a reminder that God continues to create in nature. God is slowly and steadily growing us day after day. Just as corn grows taller through God's work, so does God grow us deeper in faith, hope, and love. We are part of God's ongoing creative work. God keeps creating in our lives, and God also keeps creating in God's world.

Norman Wirzba argues in his book, *Agrarian Spirit*, that getting more people to garden would change their lives and our world. When we garden, even in a small plot alongside our house, we are reminded of the miracle and mystery of life and creation. As the plants sprout, bloom, struggle with weeds or pests, and create beautiful blossoms or fruit, we are reminded of God's ongoing creating work.

Too often, we think about everything in machine-like terms. Yet the simple act of tending a garden or going out after a hot summer day into the quiet of night to hear corn grow leads to awareness of the ongoing miracle of God's creating presence and power.

Who are some people God has used to grow you in your life of faith? How did they connect with you to deepen your understanding, produce the fruit of love, grow deeper roots of faith, and encourage hope? What did they do right? Create a list of a few of these characteristics that were fruitful and empowering to you.

As a closing thought, consider this treasured psalm, one that celebrates God's creation, handiwork, and sovereignty over our world: Psalm 8

To the leader: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David.

1. O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.
2. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.
3. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;
4. What are humans that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?
5. Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor.
6. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,
7. All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
8. O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Other Courses

If you found this resource fruitful and valuable, you should check out some other Faith+Lead courses like the ones listed below!

[Rediscovering Hope: Encouragement for Rural Ministry](#)

Rural communities can be places of vibrant hope, relationship, and discipleship — especially when equipped with a leadership approach designed explicitly with rural contexts in mind. This course is excellent for believers in smaller churches, whether in the city or the countryside.

[Storied Faith: Listening to God Through Story](#)

This unique course seeks to foster cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and the transformative power of storytelling for ministry entrepreneurs to engage with various audiences.

[Faithfully Gifted: Women in Church History](#)

You'll dive into the lives of eight remarkable women in church history who answered God's call by utilizing their unique gifts to advance God's Kingdom.



God's peace and strength,
Pastor Jon Anderson

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