



We will not hide them from [the] children;
we will tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might,
and the wonders that he has done...
which he commanded our ancestors
to teach to their children;
that the next generation might know them,
the children yet unborn,
and rise up and tell them to their children,
so that they should set their hope in God,
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments

Psalm 78:4-7

Reading this psalm, don't you envision the generations rolling toward you, imbued by the previous generation with God's story and God's love? You are part of this flow of faith, a recipient of the faith of older generations, who have imparted it to you; now, a transmitter of faith to younger generations.

It's been God's plan all along that the generations should gather, connect, and share their stories of faith. Why? So that the Holy Spirit, working through these personal, trusted relationships, will stir up faith in all of the generations. They will know this living God in Jesus Christ, follow Him, and go, make disciples.

This is the way children and youth have always learned God's stories by heart. Whose heart? The hearts of the adults they love. This was never meant to be the sole domain of Sunday school and Bible study and youth ministry. This was to be what God's people talked about when they gathered, whenever and wherever, formally and informally, daily in their homes and weekly in their houses of worship. It is what the writer meant in Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.

Luther's intention in writing the Small Catechism was to provide a conversation starter for the home, anchored in the basics of the Christian faith.

Think for a moment about those who've been your faith formers. As a child, who taught you Bible stories, taught you to pray, worshiped with you, answered your God questions? For many of us, it was a parent or grandparent, the parent of a close friend,

a Sunday school teacher, a neighbor, a godparent, a camp counselor, or a pastor. This was our introduction to the faith and it happened cross+generationally.

As a youth, who shaped you in the faith, leaving Jesus' fingerprints all over you? Yes, it may have been some of the people you named as childhood faith formers, but you may have added a confirmation mentor or guide, a youth director, a supporting adult on a Sunday night or mission trip or youth gathering, an employer or supervisor, a coach. It also might have been a peer, who joined you in wrestling with your God questions. This was cross+generational ministry, indeed.

And today, who is your mentor, your spiritual friend, your rock of faith when the waters of your life roil? I thank God for my teachers and my students, who have all been my teachers, sometimes by telling the stories of God intersecting with their lives, sometimes by the questions they ask. I thank God for my friends, who listen to me, give me space to wrestle with God, pray for me when I cannot find the words, and invite me to fall into those everlasting arms.

Pause to thank God for all of these people of faith, who have journeyed with you faithfully through your life. And know that now it is our turn to pass on faith by telling God's stories, by listening to the stories and questions of God's children and youth, by telling our stories, and finding God in the midst.

It is also our turn to provide intentional cross+generational opportunities for our adults and elders to be present with our children and youth, to do what adults and elders did for and with us when we were children and youth.

It is our turn to equip parents (and all Christian adults, called by God to be faith parents) to know God's story and share it with children and youth they love; to be able to listen to the real questions of faith; to serve together, in Jesus' name; and to celebrate a shared life in Christ.

Why? So that the next generation might know!