



GROWING A HEALTHY **FAITH AVENUE**



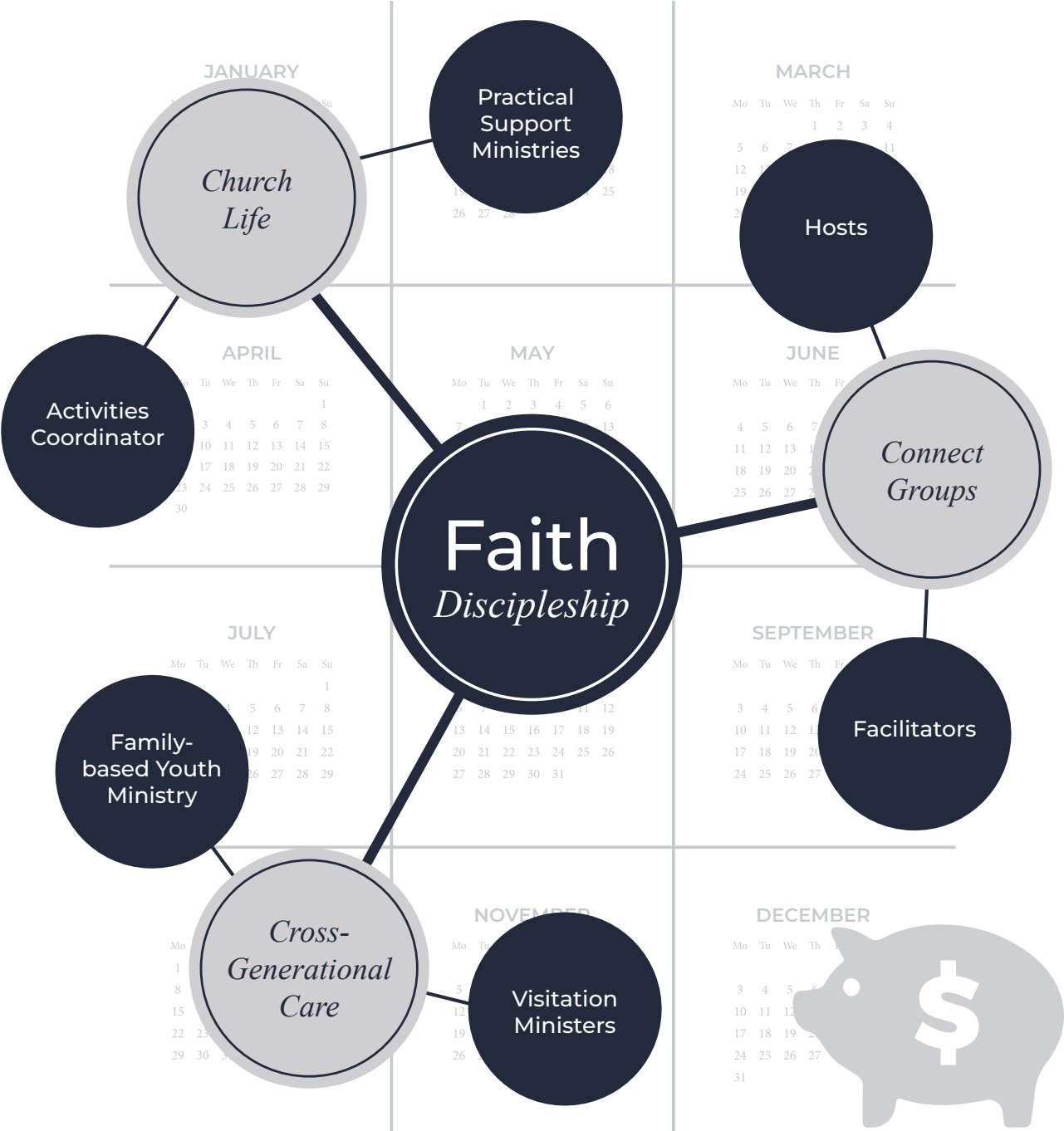
HOW TO USE THIS TOOL:

Each session outlines best practices and reflection questions. Use the reflection questions to contextualize the principles and practices to meet the needs of your congregation and neighborhood.

SESSION 1

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF A HEALTHY FAITH AVENUE?

HEALTHY MINISTRY IS
TEAM BASED



PASTOR LED

HEALTHY

FAITH AVENUE

Church Life — Activities Coordinator

Cross-Generational Care — Visitation Ministry Coordinator

Connect Groups — Connect Group Coordinator



GROWING A HEALTHY FAITH AVENUE



What are the markers of a Healthy Faith Avenue...

- Church Life is happening outside of the Sunday Service
- New disciples are being formed
- Existing disciples are growing in relationship with one another & in following the way of Jesus
- There are multiple Faith Avenue Spaces
 - » Multiple Connect Groups
 - » Relationship building and multi-generational events like barbeques, family camping weekends.
 - » Cross-generational care – youth groups and outings, visitation ministry for the elderly and shut-ins.
 - » Mentoring relationships are being developed.

The Faith Avenue Champion is the best fit for facilitating these discussions, but a pastor could initiate while teams are being fleshed out.

Reflection Questions:

1. What elements of a Healthy Faith Avenue do you have in place?
2. What gaps do you see in your Faith Avenue?
3. What are some shifts that need to take place in your church for a healthier Faith Avenue?



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SESSION 2

THE ANNUAL FLOW OF
YOUR FAITH AVENUE



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HOW TO USE THIS TOOL:

This is a sample cycle of connect groups. Use the reflection questions below to develop a tool that will meet the needs of your neighborhood and congregation.

Faith Avenue Champions keep in mind:

- As relationships deepen, people gravitate to each other. This can lead to becoming a closed group, caution and balance is warranted
 - » How do you gauge when a group is becoming a closed community? How do you bring challenge to this group?
- Work closely with the Pastor as groups begin and end, to discern the types of groups that are needed in the body.
- Develop an intentional process to multiply facilitators, hosts, and groups.
- Create markers that will allow facilitators and hosts to gauge when a group has run its course.

Reflection Questions:

1. What percentage of the congregation will participate in connect groups?
2. Of those who will participate during what months of the year will they be most available?
3. In your local area what is the best time for outdoor and cross generational relational gathering?
4. How do you determine if all age groups are being attended to?

The Life Cycle of the Faith Avenue...

Jan-Feb start group and run through mid-May

- Run 2-3 groups consecutively to give different options with time, location, and interests.
- Split the time into two quarters. Q1 will be the first 6-8 weeks and Q2 will be the second 6-8 weeks.
- Keep the same facilitators, but allow for the focus and members to change out each quarter.

June-mid-August

- Let Connect Groups take a summer break, **but the Faith Avenue is still alive and active.**
- Plan beach days, picnics, a family camping weekend, etc.
- Think of creative ways for Cross-generational relationship building to occur.

Late August-mid-November

- Run 2-3 groups consecutively to give different options with time, location, and interests.
- Split the time into two quarters. Q1 will be the first 6-8 weeks and Q2 will be the second 6-8 weeks.
- Keep the same facilitators, but allow for the focus and members to change out each quarter.



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SESSION 3

BUILDING YOUR
FAITH AVENUE TEAM



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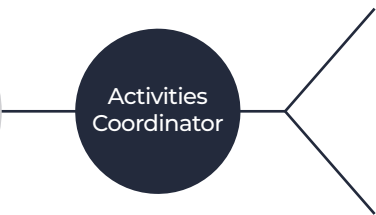



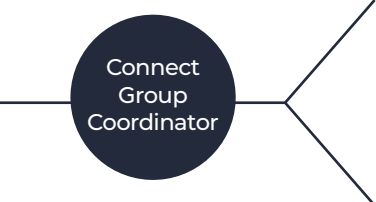


How to Start a Healthy Faith Avenue...

- Identify 3-5 households/families whose adult members would be gifted and willing to host and facilitate a group.
- Ask these families to join you for a 6-8 week small group.
- During the group model relationship building and good discussion facilitation techniques.
- After the group runs the course, identify best fits for facilitators and hosts to multiply out into new Connect Groups.
- The apprentice square on our toolkit becomes a very useful tool to develop facilitators and hosts. (This will be ongoing and is a key Function of the Faith Avenue Champion.)
- Be sure to start Connect Groups with a multiplying DNA. The Faith Avenue Champions need to lead and model, and the pastor continues to promote Connect Groups.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL:

Consider the best practices above. Who on your leadership team or in your congregation would be a good fit for the Faith Avenue? Use the sheet below to prayerfully consider & brainstorm the roles and individuals who would be a best fit for your Faith Avenue.

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SESSION 4

PREPARING TO LAUNCH
YOUR FAITH AVENUE



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Connect Group Starter...

Review the Cycle of the Faith Avenue and meet with the members of your Faith Avenue Team. Use the worksheet below to develop the annual rhythm that works for the Faith Avenue in your context.

Date: _____ - _____

Connect Group #1	Topic _____	Facilitator _____	Host _____
Connect Group #2	Topic _____	Facilitator _____	Host _____
Connect Group #3	Topic _____	Facilitator _____	Host _____

Activity _____	Dates _____
Activity _____	Dates _____
Activity _____	Dates _____

Date: _____ - _____

Connect Group #1	Topic _____	Facilitator _____	Host _____
Connect Group #1	Topic _____	Facilitator _____	Host _____
Connect Group #1	Topic _____	Facilitator _____	Host _____



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An additional resource to prepare your membership.

Work with your Faith Avenue Team to launch your first cycle of connect groups to your membership. Share the resource below to prepare members for what to expect at a connect group.

What are my expectations in a Connect Group...

- **What happens at a connect group?**
 - » A connect group looks like friends sharing a meal, or people discussing a topic or book. Basically, a connect group is a small gathering of people deepening their relationships within the group and with God.
 - » Members are open to sharing their experiences, thoughts, and feelings.
 - » Discussion flows around how they see God working in their lives and learning about God's character.
 - » More mature believers are intentional in engaging new believers in their faith journey. We grow together and discipleship is the goal. A disciple of Christ not only speaks to the ways of Christ but also demonstrates it in the way he or she lives their life.



A connect group is a small gathering of people deepening their relationships within the group and with God.

- **How often does a connect group gather?**
 - » Most groups meet weekly in homes, coffee shops, or other shared spaces. Most groups agree to meet for periods lasting six to eight weeks.
 - » Healthy churches develop a seasonal rhythm to when they offer Connect Groups.





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SESSION 5

FOLLOW UP SESSION:
REFLECTING ON YOUR FIRST
CYCLE OF SMALL GROUPS.



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Follow Up Session: Reflecting on your first cycle of small groups.

Take time as a team to discuss the first cycle:

1. What wins are you celebrating?
2. How can you make shifts to refine the process and improve the experience?
 - a. Is there something you need to stop doing?
 - a. Is there a new practice that can be implemented?
3. To be a Healthy Church no Avenue can work in isolation. In reworking your next cycle for your Faith Avenue think about the connection points below:

What are the markers of a Healthy Faith Avenue...

- There are connection points with the other Avenues
 - » A connect group can become a missional community (love avenue). An intentional group of Christian brothers and sisters willing to journey together not just with each other but with others who are invited to be a part of the community. The group can become a missional space to connect new believers.
 - » A connect group can become a connecting point for Sunday guests (hope avenue). As new people connect to our church expressions on Sunday morning, it is key to bridge them into smaller gatherings where life happens. Connect groups can become that space for deeper relationships.
 - » A connect group can become the entry way to the greater body (hope avenue). As new people engage a small group, they are eventually invited to participate in the greater body finding their best fit within the Faith, Hope and Love Avenues.