

# PASSING ON THE FAITH

Floy Rorie and  
David Wisnewski

*One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall  
declare Your mighty acts.* Psalm 145:4 (NKJV)

# Where We Are Going....

## ▶ Week 1:

- ▶ The Vision: The primary goals of the Pass It On lessons and discussions are to stimulate discussion and learning among PACE class members about how we can:
  - ▶ Exchange thoughts and ideas about our Pass It On experiences to help us in our own Christian journey and those close to us
  - ▶ Do some prayerful self-reflection on how each of us can better prepare ourselves to both give and receive in Pass It On efforts and communication
- ▶ Share research and outcomes from various sources
- ▶ What comes next: **Prayerful reflection and discussion** on how we can prepare ourselves to both give and receive in Pass It On efforts and communication

## ▶ Week 2:

- ▶ Overview of Week 1
- ▶ Small Group Discussion and Sharing of Ideas

## ▶ Week 3:

- ▶ Overview of Week 2
- ▶ Questions: Notecards
- ▶ Group Discussion

# The Vision

- ▶ *Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren...*  
Deuteronomy 4:9 (NKJV)

# The Vision

- ▶ How did this lesson come about?
  - ▶ Dave
  - ▶ Floy and UMC
- ▶ What do we hope to accomplish?
  - ▶ Know **YOU** are not alone in questioning how to reach out to others of same and younger generations
  - ▶ Know there is no one way to accomplish **YOUR** witness
  - ▶ Know that results may not be immediate
  - ▶ Know that the results may not look like what **YOU** know or expect
  - ▶ Know that “passing it on” is a two-way street
  - ▶ Know that what we hope to pass on goes beyond our children and our grandchildren, but to those who are close to our hearts and minds and to others with whom we interact.
- ▶ What questions do you have before we begin?

# Religion Runs in the Family

Vern Bengtson, USC Professor Emeritus of Gerontology and Sociology

- ▶ 35 years of research shows a remarkable consistency in the concepts of faith, despite technology and societal changes.
  - ▶ 3,500 grandparents , parents, grandchildren and great-grandchildren
- ▶ Over half of young adult children follow in the religious footsteps of their parents
- ▶ This has not changed appreciably since the 1970s
- ▶ **Bengtson's research is used over and over again by religious leaders and educators to develop ideas for passing on the concepts of faith.**

# Bengtson's Study

- ▶ Four Dimensions of Religiosity:
  - ▶ Intensity of Faith
  - ▶ Frequency of Religious Service Attendance
  - ▶ Agreement with a Literal Interpretation of the Bible
  - ▶ Agreement with the Importance of Religion in Civic Life

# Factors of Parental Success in Passing on Their Faith

- ▶ Consistent Modeling: “Warmly pious” – Rev. Tommy Williams, Senior Pastor of St. Paul’s UMC, Houston
- ▶ Quality of the Relationship Between the Child and Parent
  - ▶ Witness beyond family
  - ▶ Role of community: Quincy’s Quest
- ▶ Flexibility and Tolerance: Allowing Religious Choice
  - ▶ THE DILEMMA: Passing on Christian Values vs. Christian Faith
- ▶ Do Not Underestimate the Religious Influence of Grandparents

# How Do We Minister to Religious Prodigals?

- ▶ LOVE THEM! – Not dependent upon belief
- ▶ Have faith in the course of life.
- ▶ Do not personalize the rejection of religion – The Dilemma.
  - ▶ “Parenting ‘Fail’? Or Not? – John Holbert, Professor Emeritus of Theology, SMU

*Not everyone who cries, 'Lord, Lord,' gets into the realm of God, but those who do the will of my father in heaven.* Matthew 7:21



# Bengtson's Religious Journey

- ▶ Bengtson's father was a pastor in the Evangelical Covenant Church (a family tradition of faith that goes back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century).
- ▶ Considered himself a religious prodigy; only involved in church in a very minor way as an adult
- ▶ After 65 years of searching, Bengtson had a religious awakening....."I was surprised with joy!"

Have Faith in the Faith We Follow...

## Multi-Faith “Worry”: We are not alone...

- ▶ Research shows that Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims and Hindus are all concerned about their children’s carrying on their religious traditions and beliefs.
- ▶ Rabbi Brad Hirschfield’s advice when asked how to make sure their kids believed in God...
- ▶ *Better that you should make sure they know that God believes in them!*

# Again...Know That They Are Loved

- ▶ Hirschfield reiterates Bengtson's research: Genuine faith is far more profound than verbal assent..
- ▶ It arises out of life experience that confirms that *the young are loved*, that *their aspirations are sacred*, and that *they are believed...*
- ▶ Faith in God is not a goal...but a by-product of loving and trusting experiences created by those who already possess deep faith.

Have Faith in the Faith We Follow...

DAVE

AT THIS POINT...  
QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

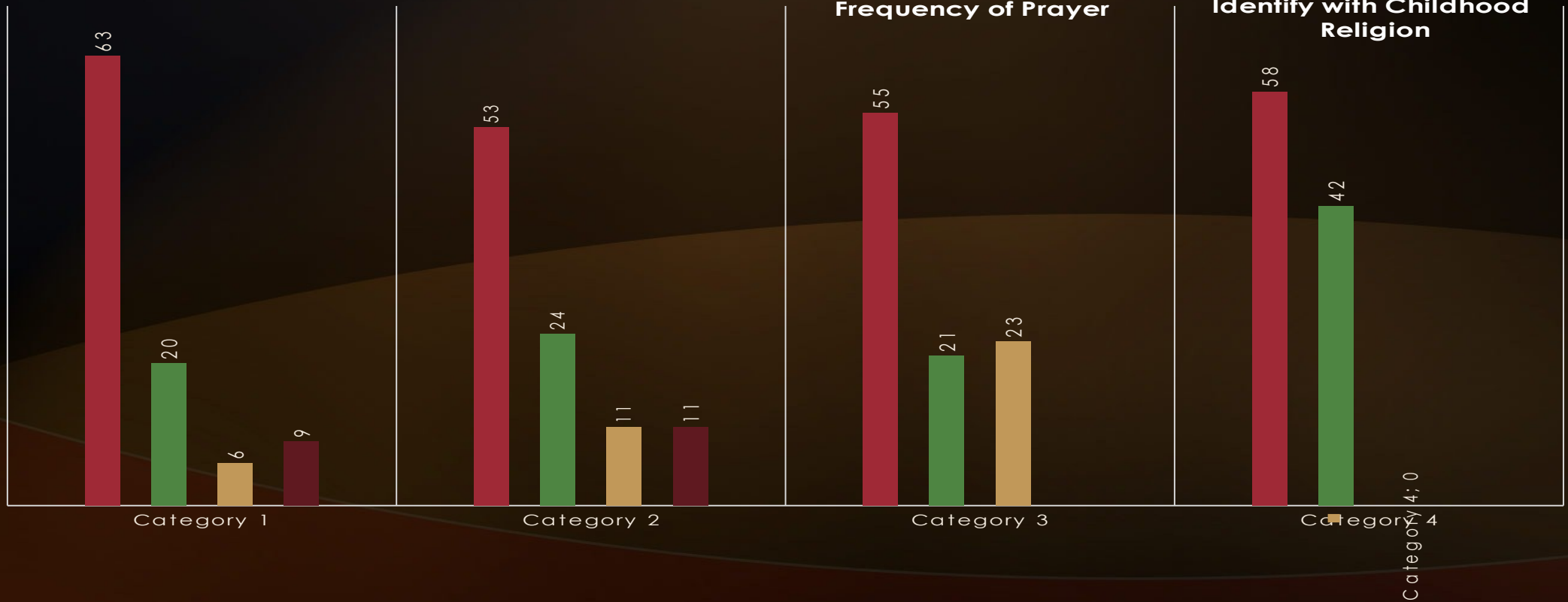
# Pew Research: Religious Perceptions Held by U.S. Adults (2014) Sandstrom and Alper

**Absolutely Certain of their Belief in God**

**Religion is Important**

**Frequency of Prayer**

**Identify with Childhood Religion**



# Millennials are less religious, but just as spiritual

(2015) Becka A. Alper

	Feel a sense of spiritual peace and well-being	Feel a sense of wonder about the universe	Feel a sense of gratitude or thankfulness	Think about the meaning and purpose of life
Greatest Generation (born 1901 and served in WWII)	70	44	77	54
Baby Boomers (mid-1940s to 1964)	62	48	79	57
<b>Millennials (1981-1997)</b>	51	46	76	<b>55</b>

- ▶ Afterlife: 2/3 of Millennials believe in Heaven, compared with roughly 3/4 of Baby Boomers
- ▶ Belief in the concept of Hell: 56% of Millennials believe in the concept of Hell, similar to older age cohorts

# Rev. Williams' Best Chance to Fruitfully Passing Faith

- ▶ Focus on the quality of your own relationships
- ▶ Belong to a faith community
- ▶ Churches should focus on the family unit: No matter the shape or size....
- ▶ Take a long range view: “humbly and warmly” model your faith

Remain “surprised by joy” as joy points the way through the “woods.”

# A Time for Reflection....

- ▶ Over the next few days....
  - ▶ We ask you to prayerfully reflect over the information and sharing we have had today...
  - ▶ Prayerfully prepare yourself to share experiences and ideas next week in small groups
  - ▶ We ask you to remember...





COMMUNICATIONS  
The Social Witness of Christ

love

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnX6S\\_gSWkM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnX6S_gSWkM)

hate

# Prayer for Guidance

FLOY

As we go forth through the days of our lives let us remember the words of the Psalmist:

*"Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in my words and actions so that your ways will pass beyond me into the hearts and minds of those I love. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. " Amen.*

Dave: WRAP- UP

# Resources

- ▶ Alper, Becka A. Millennials are less religious than older Americans, but just as spiritual, 23 Nov 2015. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/23/millennials-are-less-religious-than-older-americans-but-just-as-spiritual/>
- ▶ Brooks, David. *Building Spiritual Capital*, 22 May 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/22/opinion/david-brooks-building-spiritual-capital.html?mcubz=0>
- ▶ Hirschfield, Brad, Rabbi. *You Shall Teach Them to Your Children: We build the brightest future, not by worrying about the future, but by living our faith in the present*, 31 Jul 2013. <http://www.patheos.com/topics/passing-on-the-faith/teach-them-children-rabbi-brad-hirschfield-08-01-2013>
- ▶ Holbert, John. Parenting "Fail"? Or Not?, 31 Jul 2013. <HTTP://WWW.PATHEOS.COM/ABOUT-PATHEOS/JOHN-C-HOLBERT>.
- ▶ Keehn, Dave. *Passing on Our Faith – One Generation to Another*, 10 Sept 2014. <http://www.thegoodbookblog.com/2014/sep/10/passing-on-our-faith-one-generation-to-another/>
- ▶ Miller, Lisa. *How to raise a spiritual child: 3 exercises to try with your family*, 30 Mar 2015. <https://www.today.com/parents/how-raise-spiritual-child-3-exercises-dr-lisa-miller-t11736>
- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_. *One Of The Most Important Things Kids Need Is Something They Are Actually Born With*, 05 May 2015. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/05/spiritual-child-excerpt\\_n\\_7181598.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/05/spiritual-child-excerpt_n_7181598.html)
- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_. *Why Kids Need Spirituality*, 16 Ap 2015. <http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2015/04/why-kids-need-spirituality.html>
- ▶ Patheos : Passing On the Faith. <http://www.patheos.com/topics/passing-on-the-faith>
- ▶ Sandstrom, Aleksandra and Becka A. Alper. *If the U.S. had 100 people: Charting Americans' religious beliefs and practices*, 1 Dec 2016. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/12/01/if-the-u-s-had-100-people-charting-americans-religious-beliefs-and-practices/>
- ▶ UMC: Communicating the Faith. <https://www.umctraining.org/product?catalog=Communicating-Faith-in-the-21st-Century>
- ▶ Underwood, Don. *Rethinking Faith*. Don Underwood's Weekly Column, 14 Sept 2017. <http://www.cumc.online/single-post/2017/09/14/Rethinking-Faith>
- ▶ Williams, Tommy, Rev. *4 Ways to Pass Down Your Faith to Future Generations*, 5 Sept 2014. <http://www.seedbed.com/pass-faith-future-generations/>
- ▶ Zietlow, Amy. Interview. *Religion Runs in the Family: Vern Bengtson's research shows the surprising resiliency of faith as it passes from parents to children*, 20 Sept 2013. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/august-web-only/religion-runs-in-family.html>