

Children & Worship:

Helping Them to Experience God

A CRCNA webinar presented by Olivia Stewart

October 28, 2015

Webinar Overview

How did Children and Worship get started?

New Research on spiritual formation in children

Reframing Children & Worship - how does C&W meet current needs for faith formation in the church?

What new resources are available for C&W?

Stories - of children, families, church plants, Hispanic

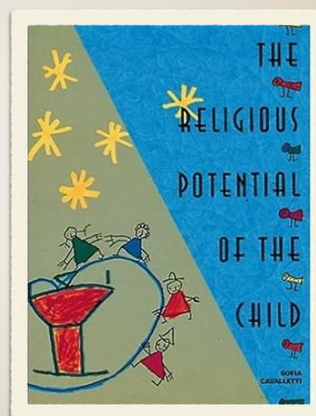
Where can you learn more?

Sophia Cavalletti

The vision for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd formation began in 1954 with Dr. Sofia Cavalletti, a Hebrew and Scripture scholar and member of the Vatican Commission for Jewish – Christian Relations, and her colleague, Professor Gianna Gobbi, a Montessori trained educator.

Sophia Cavaletti

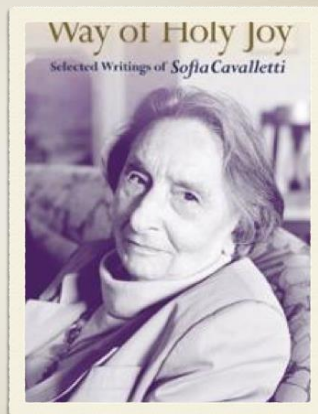
Sofia was asked by a mother to give her son some religious instruction. At first she refused not having much to do with children in her academic world, but eventually she consented. This experience with the 7-year-old boy changed her whole life and began what we now know as the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Dr Cavalletti saw in that child, and in numerous other children since, a way of being in the presence of God that is unique to the child and a gift to the adult who stops long enough to notice.



Sophia Cavaletti

"Help me come closer to God,
by myself."

"If we want to help the child grow near to God, we should, with patience and courage...seek to go always closer to the vital nucleus of things. This requires study and prayer. The child himself will be our teacher if we know how to observe him." Sofia Cavalletti



<http://www.tower.com/way-holy-joy-selected-writings-sofia-cavalletti-paperback/wapl/122397314>

Maria Montessori

Cavalletti was influenced by Maria Montessori
First woman physician. Christian. Believed in multi-aged classrooms

This system of education is both a philosophy of child development and a rationale for guiding such growth. It is based on two important developmental needs of children:

- 1 The need for freedom within limits
- 2 A carefully prepared environment which

guarantees exposure to materials and experiences.

Through these developmental needs, the child develops intelligence as well as physical and psychological abilities.

The Montessori method of education is designed to take full advantage of the children's desire to learn and their unique ability to develop their own capabilities. Children need adults to expose them to the possibilities of their lives, but the children must determine their response to all the possibilities.

<http://montessoriconnections.com/about-montessori-education/what-is-the-montessori-method/>



Photo Courtesy of Wikipedia

Jerome Berryman

Co-author of Young
Children & Worship book
Creator of Godly Play
Focuses on liturgical
language
Used during Sunday
School



Jerome telling a desert box story.

Sonja Stewart

Emphasizes that Cavaletti's approach to the spiritual formation of Children can be translated into a worship setting not just Catechetical setting.

Sonja was the founder of Children and Worship and authored two books "Young Children and Worship" and "Following Jesus".

Worked at Western Theological Seminary as a professor of Christian education and the Director of the Master of Religion Education Program.

Sonja passed away on April 21, 2006. She was a long time member of Westminster Presbyterian Church where she served as an Elder and a Deacon. She was a devoted mother and grandmother, and a gifted teacher who enjoyed walking on the beach, watching sunsets, spending summers on Lime Lake, gardening, fishing and traveling the world.



Olivia Stewart

Olivia Stewart is the granddaughter of Sonja Stewart, co-creator of *Young Children and Worship*. Olivia was in the very first *Young Children and Worship* center in 1985 and has developed a great love for YCW over the last 28 years. She began to lead trainings with her grandmother in 2000 and has conducted workshops throughout the country. She graduated from Hope College in 2003 with a Bachelor's degree in elementary education, and from Princeton Theological Seminary in 2008 where she received her Masters in Divinity. Olivia presently works in the national office of the Disciples of Christ Church as a Minister of Family and Children's Ministries.



Why this Way of being with Children? What does it look like?


- ✕ Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Applications By Daniel Ratcliff
- ✕ Nurturing Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices
- ✕ Walter Wangerin commented that as a story gets told over and over, it draws children into the cosmos of the story. If the story cosmos accords with the child's experience of life to some extent, then when the child leaves the story it becomes a framework by which the child interprets the rest of the world.



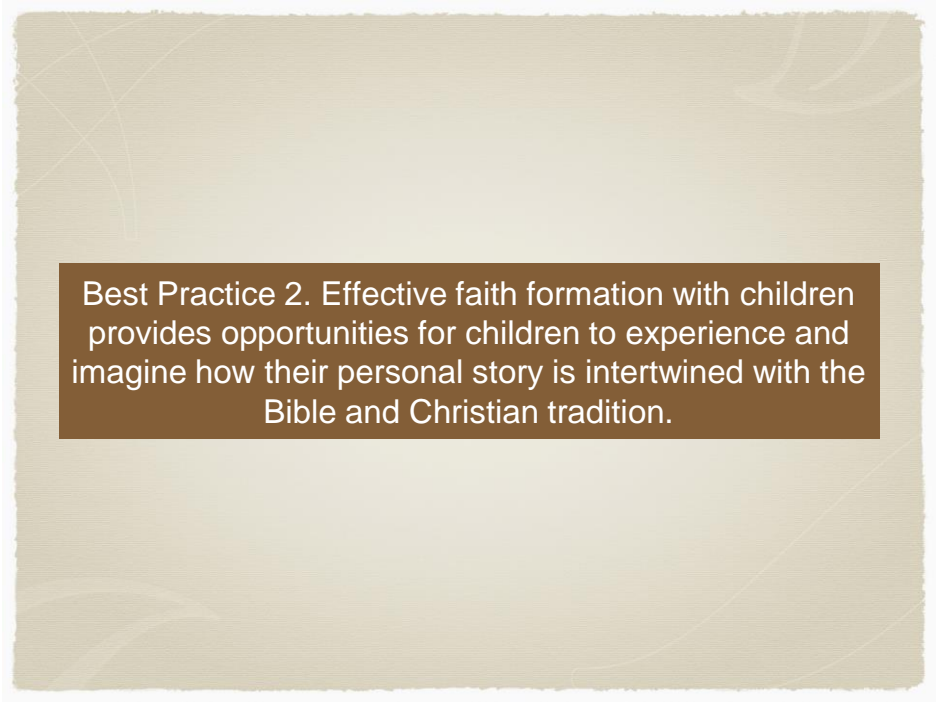
- ✕ Children's faith formation is fundamentally about nurturing their relationships with God, and in all aspects of children's faith formation, we would do well to let children meet God face to face. Karen Marie Yust writes, "Adults cannot presume to mediate children's spiritual experiences by inserting themselves between God and children as informers, but must wonder with children about the relationship between children's personal spiritual experiences and the tradition's understanding of who God is and how God is present to us in all aspects of our lives" (Yust 2002, 15).

Reframing Children & Worship- how does C&W meet current needs for faith formation in the church?

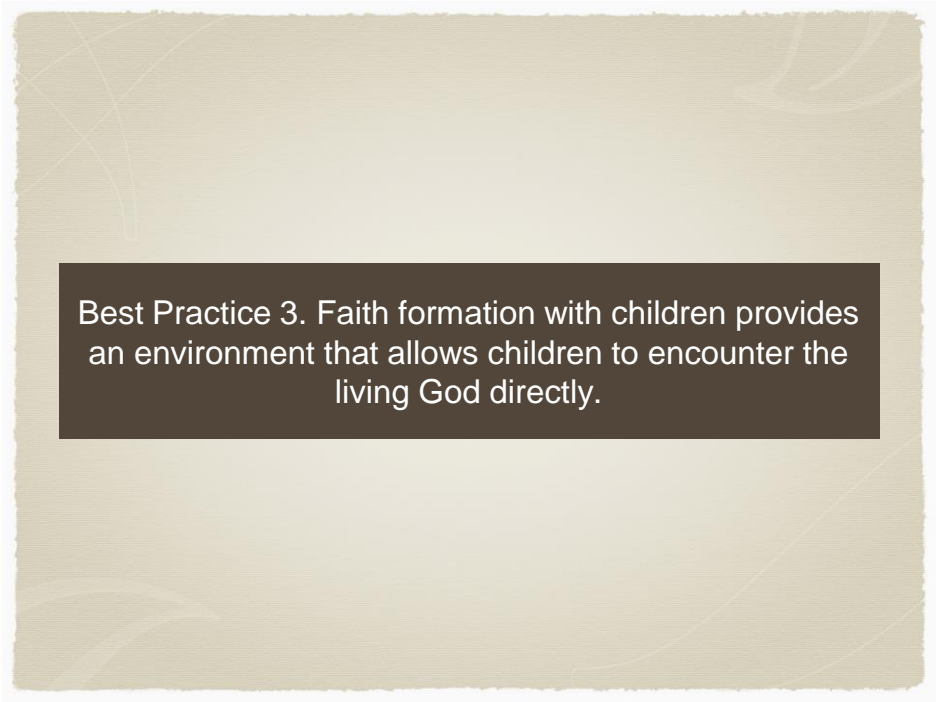
A look at Six Best Practices
by John Roberto



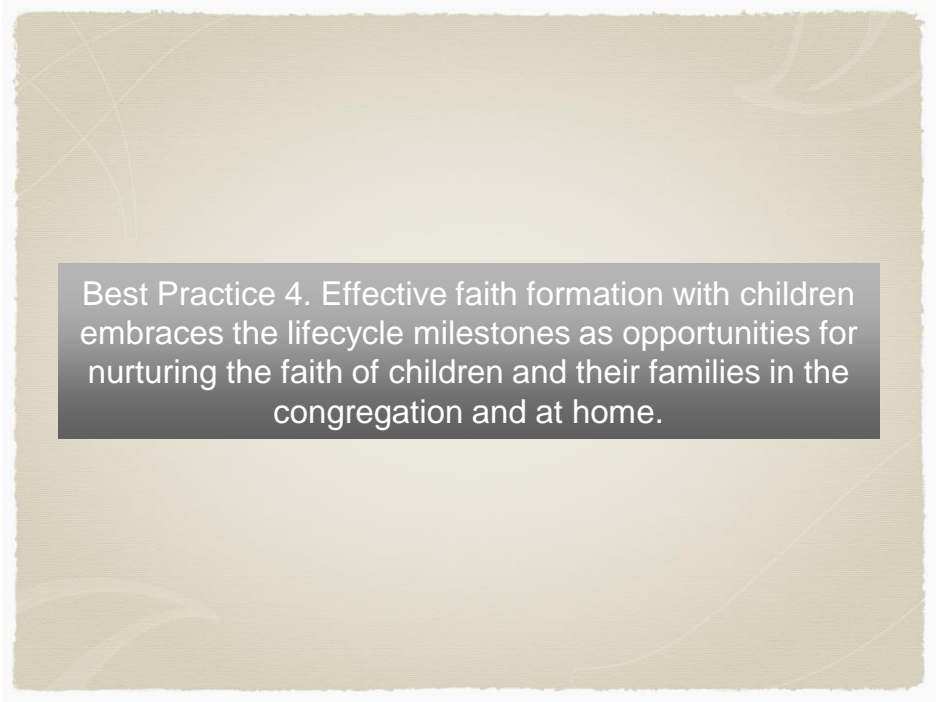
Best Practice 1. Effective faith formation with children respects the ways children learn today by offering learning activities that are experiential, image-rich, multi-sensory, interactive, engaging, and varied in learning style.



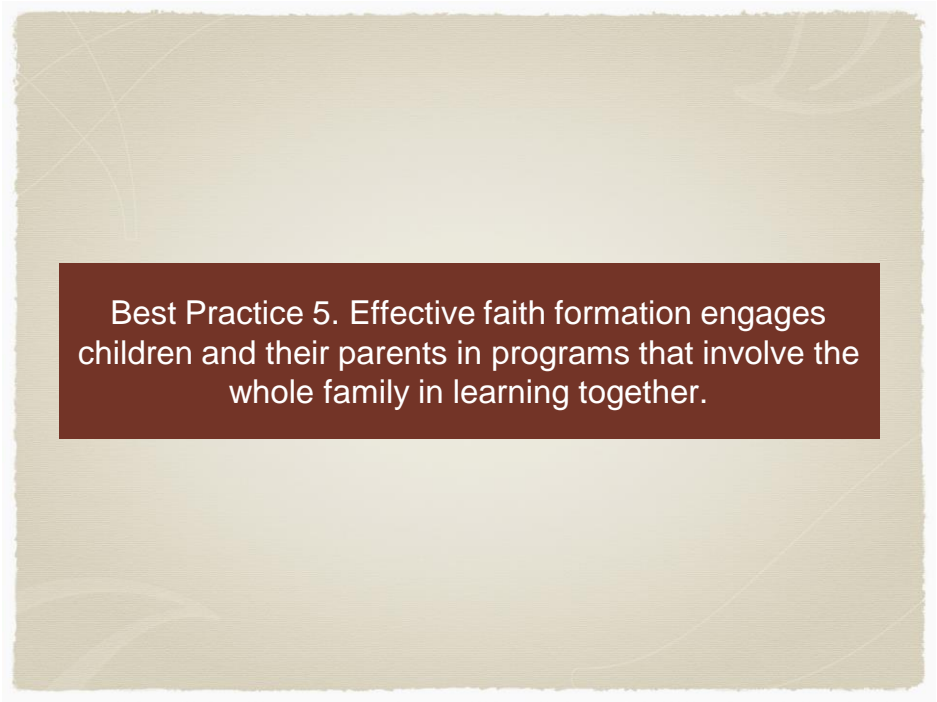
Best Practice 2. Effective faith formation with children provides opportunities for children to experience and imagine how their personal story is intertwined with the Bible and Christian tradition.



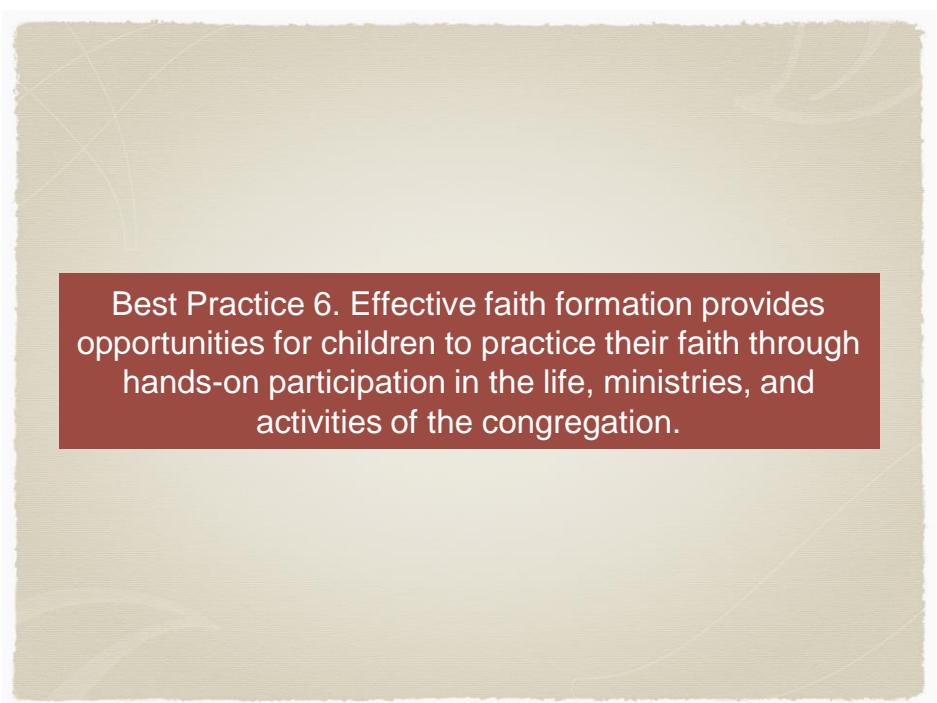
Best Practice 3. Faith formation with children provides an environment that allows children to encounter the living God directly.



Best Practice 4. Effective faith formation with children embraces the lifecycle milestones as opportunities for nurturing the faith of children and their families in the congregation and at home.



Best Practice 5. Effective faith formation engages children and their parents in programs that involve the whole family in learning together.



Best Practice 6. Effective faith formation provides opportunities for children to practice their faith through hands-on participation in the life, ministries, and activities of the congregation.

What new resources are available for C&W?

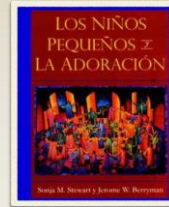
- multi-cultural figures
- C&W material is now available in Spanish
Korean, Japanese, Afrikaans

Complete Resource List available at the end
of the Webinar



Spanish

Available from Faith Alive Christian Resources



Korean

And other translations available. Contact
olivia@childrenandworship.org

Family Stories

“I have a myth about
 the big bang”



Luke

and the desert box



Children & Worship in Mexico



Resources

Children & Worship materials can be purchased from Faith Alive Resources

Wooden figures can be purchased from Faith Alive or Worship Woodworks.

<http://www.childrenandworship.org/worship-woodworks>

www.faithaliveresources.org

www.childrenandworship.org

Email: olivia@childrenandworship.org

Training

Children and Worship **training opportunities** for fall and winter:

November 21, 2015 at **Knox Presbyterian Church**, Oakville, ON

January 28, 2016 9am - 3pm: Enrichment Training on StoryTelling for **Children and Worship**, given by Olivia Stewart; Central Reformed Church, 10 College Ave, NE, Grand Rapids, MI

January 28, 2016 6-8pm: Introduction to **Children & Worship**, by Olivia Stewart; Central Reformed Church (see address above)

*For up-to-date training opportunities check these websites:

www.childrenandworship.org

www.rca.org/childrenandworship (U.S.)

www.presbyterian.ca/children-and-worship (Canada)

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Questions & Answers

For additional information

www.childrenandworship.org

Email: olivia@childrenandworship.org