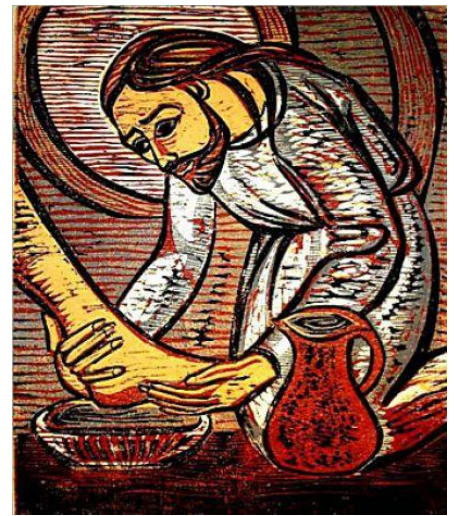


**MN 504 Young Adult Formation**  
**Spring 2022 (Online) and May Term 2022 (Residential)**  
**2 credits, grade only**  
**Rev. Dr. Susan Forshey**



**Course Description**

This course explores the challenges of young adult Christian formation in the Church today. Approaching this topic from a multigenerational perspective, students will reflect on their own generational and social locations with a goal of developing their gifts for leadership and ministry with and for young adults in multigenerational contexts.

The course will be taught during Spring 2022 as an online course **and** in May Term as a week-long residential course, where students will build a community of learning marked by large group learning, daily prayer, meals together, reflective periods of silence, and small group discussion. **The Residential Course fee is \$150. This is a required course fee for all students, even those living in Dubuque. For those traveling to Dubuque, accommodation arrangements can be made at a local B & B.**

**Course Objectives** By participating fully in this class, students will:

- Learn and practice a method of contemplative practical theological reflection in a variety of contexts;
- Articulate the characteristics and impact of cultural formation, with regards to formation as a disciple of Christ;
- Gain an introductory awareness of teaching and learning models, human development patterns, and brain research on learning so as to communicate Gospel truths in ways that meet young adults in their particular stage of developmental and learning needs;
- Be able to describe and assess the ways to approach the tasks of Christian formation with young adults;
- Explore models of young adult catechesis, worship, and incorporation into the Body of Christ.
- Explore best practices and develop personal skills relevant to leadership and ministry with young adults.

**MDiv Curricular Goals Fulfilled by This Course**

- Be formed by, live in, and minister out of Scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the Church.
- Educate and equip individuals and congregations to live and minister joyfully and faithfully as part of their own denomination and the ecumenical church.
- Lead and nurture congregations to promote peace and justice in the public arena and encourage the witness and service of the church in mission to the world.
- Integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry.
- Develop, implement, and assess strategies for missional living in a specific cultural context.
- Adopt spiritual practices that nurture their personal lives as faithful disciples and witnesses.
- Develop skills and capacities for faithful and competent Christian witness.

**Requirements**

1. Attendance, reading, and attentive participation in the class – 20%
2. Three book summaries (900 words each) – 5% each
3. Young adult description and questions – 10%
4. Ministry with young adults context description (1000 words) – 15%
5. Final Project: Create a formation approach for your context - 40%

## Required Texts

Root, Andrew. *Faith Formation in a Secular Age*. ISBN-13: 978-0801098468

James K. A. Smith. *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*. ISBN-13: 978-0801035784

Keith Anderson. *The Digital Cathedral*. ISBN-13: 978-0819229953

David Robinson. *Ancient Paths: Discover Christian Formation the Benedictine Way* ISBN-13: 978-1557257734

Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, Brad Griffin. *Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*. ISBN 978-0-8010-1925-8

## Why young adult formation in intergenerational contexts?

- A tidal shift is occurring in the Church today in how ministry to youth and young adults is being conceived and practiced. The "age and stage" models, which separate people into age and developmental groups, are giving way to an inter-generational approach. Under the old model, youth who have grown up in the Church find that "adult church" has few recognizable aspects--music, activities, environment--so church can feel foreign. We will look the role of memory formation and how important it is in building and maintaining connections in a community. While we will focus on specific strategies for discipleship for specific ages groups, we will explore how those strategies actually work across generations as well.
- We also are facing the reality that many churches do not have youth or young adults. The focus on "getting more young people" into the churches as a means to survive makes youth a means to an end. It follows culture and priorities youth over elders. We will explore generational theory, the markers of our own generation (silent, boomer, buster, genX, millennial, iGen), and the reason youth culture is so revered in the US context, and how it has driven church growth approaches for over 60 years.
- Consumerism is the air we breathe in US. The commodification of things, experiences, and people affect how we experience church. We will explore how our formation as consumers affects our discipleship, and how it affects evangelism and discipleship for the next generations.
- Finally, technology, screen media, and social networking, has connected us and divided us. We are discovering that many thirst for a deeper sense of community than social media provides. We will explore the historic gifts of the monastic movement--hospitality, community, stability, and daily practices of prayer, among others--and consider how these gifts might be practiced in our congregations.