



# GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

*from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study*

#227 - December 2024

## A Best Practice:

In an effort to “try something different,” the Faith Formation Committee of St. Lawrence Parish, Louisville, KY planned and hosted two events which – wisely – went beyond the usual “classes, courses, and intellectual content.”

Remembering that adults learn in various ways and through diverse avenues, especially

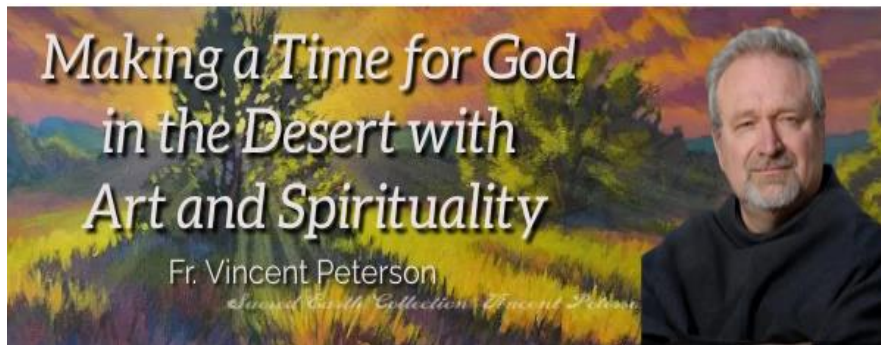
- engaging all our [multiple intelligences](#)
- and utilizing [all of our abilities](#)

the committee planned two events which incorporated the arts as well as enthusiastic participant involvement.



Friar Vincent holds a bachelor's degree in Studio Arts from St. Louis University and a Master of Divinity from the Washington Theological Union.

## An Event Planned for All Ages



Friar Vincent Petersen is an environmental artist who works mostly in the acrylic medium. Since childhood, the beauty of the Earth held him captive. Growing up in rural Minnesota, he credits the shapes, seasons, dimensions, and moods of creation for coloring his understanding of God and spirituality.

Friar Vincent's work has been greatly influenced by the landscapes of the Southwest where he was involved in ministry from 1997 to 2015. During a 2006 exhibition benefiting a local effort to preserve open spaces and vulnerable habitat in the area, his artistry was first noticed.

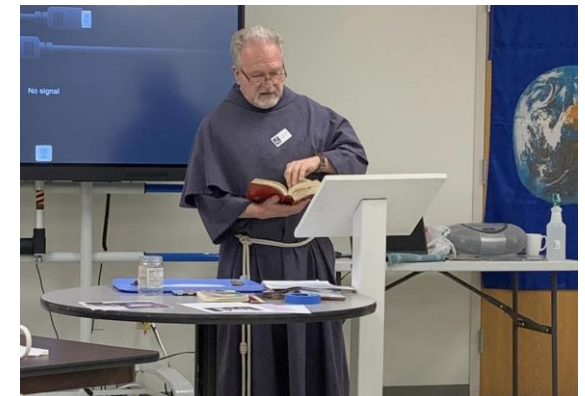
## Flow of the Day

As the people gathered, Friar Peterson focused on artistic expression and how he sees God's presence in nature.

Using various Scripture readings, he invited the participants to reflect on the beauty all around them in God's created world.

A guided meditation invited people to think about some of the past times when they felt God's presence in their lives.

Utilizing music, singing and a video about creation, the participants were invited to reflect on where they find God in their surroundings: what are the sights, sounds and feelings?



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Friar Peterson then shared ways to paint with watercolors, demonstrating some techniques to use with the watercolors and then invited everyone to practice them.

After “practicing,” the participants were eager to paint. Fr. Peterson encouraged them to paint what they “saw” during the meditation.

Mike Raymer, one of the members of the Faith Formation Committee, shared: “For me I feel closest to God when I am in nature away from the busyness of the city. I especially like mountain streams. I find them very peaceful and it's there that I can rest in God's presence and thank God for my many blessings. So, I painted a mountain stream, cascading over the rocks.

Mike's wife painted a sun and rainbow.

Another participant who loves and paints horses, of course, painted a horse.

One young mom of a 3-month-old baby, painted her baby. One of the women who loves the mountains painted mountains with the sun coming over them.



Everyone responded to Fr. Peterson's invitation to paint what makes them happy, where they see God or to just let the Spirit guide them and paint whatever lands on the paper.

At the conclusion of the painting, any of the participants who wished to were invited to talk about their painting and why they chose to paint their scene.



## Publicity for the Day

Flyers were designed and posted in the gathering space and in the bulletin. In addition to the flyers:

- The pastor announced the events.
- Surrounding parishes advertised it in their bulletins.
- It was announced in social media posts.
- It went in the school e-newsletter and a parish e-newsletter.

People were able to sign-up after Mass or contact the parish office to sign-up.

## Motivation to participate

As Mike Raymer, a member of the Faith Formation Committee reflected on why he thought people were attracted to this; what motivated them to participate, he shared:

- “I think it was something different.



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- We had all ages, with many people having done the “Paint and Sip” programs and liked them, they thought they’d like this too.
- The cost was reasonable: \$10 which covered materials.”

## A Concert and Morning Retreat

A second offering was a concert and morning retreat with Dan Schutte.



### The Planning

These two events with Dan Schutte entailed a year-long planning process, including discussions with neighboring parishes and the archdiocese of Louisville.

One of the neighboring parishes, St. Peter the Apostle, partnered with St. Lawrence Parish: the event took place at St. Peter since their facility was larger.

The archdiocesan Worship Office contributed a stipend to help cover the costs of the event; the Faith Formation Office joined in the promotion of the events through their email blasts.

### Publicity for the Day

In addition to the marketing avenues used for the Friar Vincent Peterson event, for this Dan Schutte concert and retreat, an ad was placed in *The Record Newspaper* (the archdiocesan newspaper).

Tickets were sold through an online ticket selling service (Ticketleap).

A combo ticket was offered (both concert and retreat) as well as a concert-only ticket and a retreat-only ticket.

COMPOSER OF  
"HERE I AM, LORD,  
"CITY OF GOD"  
"YOU ARE NEAR."  
AND MANY MORE

ST PETER THE APOSTLE, MARY QUEEN OF PEACE  
ST LAWRENCE CATHOLIC CHURCH PRESENT

**DAN SCHUTTE**

AS WE WAIT... A 2-DAY ADVENT EVENT  
FRIDAY NIGHT CONCERT • SATURDAY RETREAT

CONCERT: FRIDAY DECEMBER 8  
7:30 PM  
RETREAT: SATURDAY DECEMBER 9  
9:00 AM - NOON  
COME TO ONE OR BOTH!

ST. PETER THE APOSTLE  
5431 JOHNSONTOWN ROAD  
LOUISVILLE, KY 40272

TICKETS

### Motivation to participate

Mike Raymer (member of the Faith Formation Committee) shared that:

- For many people it was an opportunity to meet the author of the songs that they sing at Mass
- Some participants, especially non-Catholic friends who attended, said they enjoyed the testimony part of it as much as the music
- Once again, it was different from the usual adult faith formation offerings which was intriguing to parishioners

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## Reflection on both events

### What were some of the factors that made these initiatives successful?

- The committee was excited about both events; that enthusiasm overflowed to and was caught by the parishioners.
- These events were something new that hadn't been tried before.
- Many workers: ticket takers, hospitality, food servers, bakers, faith formation committee members talking about it at Mass, pulpit announcements.
- Varied publicity: flyers being distributed, ads in newspaper, social media engagement, posters around campus, e-news blasts.



### Some other resources parishes might consider

- [One-woman play about St. Catherine of Siena](#) (and other women)
- [Brother Mickey McGrath](#)
- [Artists, Authors and Composers of Oregon Catholic Press](#)
- [Frank Runyeon](#)
- [GIA Artists and Composers](#)
- [ValLimar Jansen](#)
- [Matt Maher](#)

### Some other Possibilities

What do these endeavors suggest to you?  
How might you tweak them for your parish?

- [An Art Conference](#)
- [A Celebration with Art and Tea](#)
- [Grieving and Remembering](#)
- [Faith Rituals in the Neighborhood](#)

### Have you incorporated the arts in adult faith formation in any of these ways?

- 1- Visual arts focus:
  - Study religious iconography and its symbolism
  - Create personal spiritual mandalas
  - Explore sacred geometry in religious architecture
  - Paint or draw scenes from scripture
- 2- Music and sound:
  - Learn and perform sacred music from different traditions
  - Write original spiritual songs or chants
  - Practice meditative listening to sacred music
  - Explore the use of bells, gongs, or singing bowls in spiritual practice
- 3- Movement and dance:
  - Learn liturgical dances
  - Practice embodied prayer through gentle movement
  - Explore the labyrinth walking as a spiritual practice
  - Study sacred dance traditions from various cultures

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- 4- Drama and storytelling:
  - Perform dramatized readings of scripture
  - Create and perform short plays based on parables or spiritual themes
  - Practice storytelling techniques for sharing personal faith journeys
  - Explore the use of puppetry in spiritual storytelling
- 5- Creative writing:
  - Write spiritual poetry or psalms
  - Practice journaling as a form of prayer
  - Create short stories exploring faith themes
  - Write and share personal testimonies
- 6- Mixed media projects:
  - Create spiritual vision boards
  - Design and make prayer beads or rosaries
  - Craft personal prayer flags
  - Build a community altar or sacred space

For each session, we could:

- Begin with a brief teaching on the spiritual significance of the art form
- Provide instruction in the artistic technique
- Allow time for individual or group creation
- Close with reflection and sharing on how the artistic process impacted participants' faith



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Past issues of **GEMS** are archived at [www.janetschaeffler.com](http://www.janetschaeffler.com)

Additional ideas for Adult Faith Formation Planning and Best Practices can be found in:

- *Deepening Faith: Adult Faith Formation in the Parish*  
<https://www.litpress.org/Products/4652/Deepening-Faith>
- *Guided by the Directory for Catechesis: Transforming the Vision and Practice of Parish Catechesis*  
<https://twentythirdpublications.com/products/guided-by-the-directory-for-catechesis>
- Lifelong Faith Training: <https://www.lifelongfaithtraining.com/>
- Lifelong Faith: <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/>
- Seasons of Adult Faith website: <http://adultfaith.weebly.com/>
- The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation:  
[https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/seasons\\_of\\_aff\\_-\\_journal\\_special\\_issue.pdf](https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/seasons_of_aff_-_journal_special_issue.pdf)