



The following are suggestions to nurture a spirit of encouragement within a congregation.

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- Create a “tree” of faith and commitment for display in your congregation during the fall. Invite everyone to hang a commitment card on the tree, beginning with your Rally Day kickoff. Commit to follow Christ through active participation in the seven faith practices.
 - Encourage all congregation groups to focus on discipleship and faith practices from September through August. Utilize the theme art and promotional resources to motivate participation.
 - Schedule visits by pastor, staff or members of the congregation council to each of the homes in your congregation. Use these visits for conversation about faith practices and spiritual maturity. Deliver devotional or study materials that can be used in the home.
 - Focus on involving older youth and adults in daily devotions, prayer and small group Bible study.
 - Schedule a series of articles (written by lay people, including children and youth) for your congregational newsletter, offering insight and perspective on what it means to serve in your congregation and community as a faithful disciple.
 - Host a local confirmation rally, high school youth gathering or young adult conference that addresses the theme of discipleship from the practical perspective of how to live faithfully as a Christian in this present day. If possible, include the planning help and participation of several congregations.
 - Focus on prayer, worship or discipleship during Lent or Advent. Shape midweek worship around the themes and ask some in the congregation to present dramas that focus on the theme.
 - Partner with Augsburg Fortress, Publishers to provide a consignment bookstore in your congregation. Offer books and resources on discipleship for all ages during fall.
 - Offer a special focus on the ministry of your members in daily life. Focus on different ways discipleship is expressed by members.
 - Find ways to encourage those living out their discipleship on our behalf in ministries beyond the congregation. For example, organize an occasional thank you “petition” for a local person running a soup kitchen, a missionary, etc.