



A Program of the Center for Gerontology at Concordia University Chicago

Session One

The importance of an older adult ministry

“The reality of all life is interdependence. We need to compose our lives in such a way that we both give and receive, learning to do both with grace.”

– Mary Catherine Bateson



Agenda – Session One



90 Minutes

3 min	Agenda review
5 min	Opening Devotion
5 min	Introduction to SAM
20 min	Personal Introductions
15 min	Gerontology for older adult ministry
15 min	Assessing congregational readiness for SAM
15 min	Guided discussion: the need for an Older Adult Ministry
10 min	Questions about SAM
2 min	Session 2 Agenda preview and pre-reading

Session Two

The multi-dimensional nature of spirituality among older persons

*“In God’s eyes we are all the ages we have ever been and will become, grown into a pattern as inclusive as the chambered nautilus that wanders the ocean, carrying with it all the stages of its life”
– Oliver Wendell Holmes*



Agenda – Session Two



60 Minutes

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| 5 min | Opening devotion |
| 10 min | Hallmarks of Christian spiritual formation |
| 15 min | Biblical texts: Reflections on older adult spirituality |
| 10 min | Review and discussion of readings |
| 15 min | Guided discussion: spiritual formation in older adults |
| 5 min | Session 3 Agenda preview and pre-reading |

Session Three

Reframing aging and living our best lives

*“Listen to your life.
See it for the
fathomless mystery
that it is...All
moments are key
moments and life
itself is grace”*

*– Frederick
Buechner*



Agenda – Session Three



60 minutes

- 5 min Opening Devotion
- 5 min Questions from Session 2
- 10 min What is ageism?
- 15 min Biblical texts: Reflections on the role of older adults
- 8 min Discussion of readings
- 2 min Ageism's presence in churches
- 10 min Guided discussion: reframing the conversation about aging
- 5 min Session 4 preview and pre-reading

Session Four

Caregiving by for and with older adults

*“It’s not how much
you do, but how
much love you put in
the doing”*

- Mother Theresa



Agenda – Session Four



*60 minutes**

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| 5 min | Opening Devotion |
| 5 min | Questions from Session 3 |
| 10 min | Landscape for caregiving today |
| 10 min | Review of readings |
| 10 min | Resources needed for assisting caregivers |
| 15 min | Guided discussion: ministering to caregivers |
| 5 min | Session 5 Agenda preview and pre-reading |

*This session may be expanded to 90-120 minutes to discuss the specific resources for caregiving in a given community. A person knowledgeable about the community's specific resources - e.g., the local Area Agency for Aging could partner with the SAM instructor.

Session Five

Impacts of isolation and loneliness on aging



“Faith is not for overcoming obstacles; it is for experiencing them – all the way through.”

*-Richard Rohr,
Falling Upward*



Agenda – Session Five



85-90 Minutes

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| 5 min | Opening Devotion |
| 5 min | Questions from Session 4 |
| 10 min | Challenges of isolation and loneliness |
| 15 min | Biblical texts: reflections on isolation & loneliness |
| 10 min | Discussion of readings |
| 15 min | Mental health – not the absence or a headache |
| 20 min | Guided discussion: addressing mental health, social isolation & loneliness |
| 5 min | Session 6 Agenda preview and pre-reading |

Session Six

Grieving death and celebrating eternal life



*Living or dying,
Lord, I ask but to be
Thine; My life in
Thee, Thy life in me,
Make heaven forever
mine.*

*Henry Harbaugh,
1850 hymn*

Agenda – Session Six



90 Minutes

5 min	Opening devotion
5 min.	Questions from Session 5
10 min	Talking about dying and death
15 min	Biblical texts: reflections on death and life everlasting
10 min	Discussion of readings
10 min	Planning for a “good” and faithful death
20 min	Participant stories/comments
15 min	Leader closing comments & evaluation