

# Feed Your Faith

You could spend hours reading, researching, designing, crafting, creating, reinventing and test driving the most-awesome-sessions-ever-on-the-planet, but in the end, the heart and soul of your ministry with teens goes back to *Job #1: Know Him*. You can't give what you don't have, so feed your soul! A solid, steady diet of prayer, reading, faith sharing, or journaling will help you continually strengthen your own connection with Jesus in the ULC.

I'm a big reader, a pray-er-while-running, and love my quiet morning prayer time. You aren't likely to join me for a run, or on the couch at 5:30 a.m., so how about a good book?

Here's a variety of personal favorite good reads. It's a broad net. Let me know if you find something you like!

- *A Purpose Driven Life* Rick Warren
- *Changed Heart, Changed World: The Transforming Freedom of Friendship With God* William A. Barry S.J.
- *Consoling the Heart of Jesus* Michael E. Gaitley, MIC
- *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus* Sherry A. Weddell
- *God: The Oldest Question* William J. O'Malley S.J.
- *Guests of God* Monika Hellwig
- *How Big Is Your God?* Paul Coutinho, SJ
- *How Good Do We Have to Be* Harold S. Kushner
- *Inner Compass* Margaret Silf
- *Interior Mansions* Saint Teresa of Avila
- *Introduction to the Devout Life* Saint Francis of Sales
- *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* James Martin, S.J.
- *Meditations with Meister Eckhart* Matthew Fox
- *New Seeds of Contemplation* Thomas Merton
- *Original Blessing* Matthew Fox
- *Rebuilt: Awakening the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, and Making Church Matter* Fr. Michael White and Tom Cocoran

- *Rediscovering Catholicism* Matthew Kelly
- *The Jesuit Guide To Almost Everything* James Martin, S.J.
- *The Last Lecture* Randy Pausch
- *The Problem of Pain* C.S. Lewis
- *The Road Less Traveled* Scott Peck
- *The Sacrament of the Present Moment* Jean Pierre de Caussade
- *The Seven Story Mountain* Thomas Merton
- *The Story of a Soul* Saint Therese of Lisieux
- *There Is A Season* Joan Chittister and August Swanson
- *Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality* Richard Rohr
- *Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints* Elizabeth A. Johnson
- *What Makes Us Catholic?* Thomas Groome
- *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* Harold S. Kushner
- *Wherever You Go, There You Are* John Kabat-Zinn

What should *I* read? I'm always looking for another good read.

Leave a comment and share a suggested title or two...

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# Faith Stuff—Object Lessons, Prayer, Scripture, Saints, and Other Useful Stuff

## OBJECT LESSONS, SCRIPTURE AND PRAYER

- *12 Months of Faith: A Devotional Journal for Teens* Bettie Youngs, Jennifer Youngs, and Debbie Thurman
- *101 Affirmations for Teenagers: Esteem Building Activities for Youth Ministry* Compiled by the Editors of

## Group Publishing

- *Crowd Breakers and Mixers for Youth Groups* Youth Specialties
- *Downtime: Helping Teenagers Pray* Mark Yaconelli
- *Everyday Object Lessons for Youth Groups* Helen Musick and Duffy Robbins
- *Faith Metaphors: 50 Interactive Object Lessons for Youth Ministry* Group
- *Games for Youth Groups* Youth Specialties
- *God, I Have Issues: 50 Ways to Pray No Matter How You Feel* Mark E. Thibodeaux S.J.
- *Ready-to-Go Scripture Skits...That Teach Serious Stuff* Michael Theisen
- *Ready-to-Go Scripture Skits...That Teach Serious Stuff: The Sequel* Michael Theisen
- *The 13 Most Important Bible Lessons for Teenagers* Group
- *The Gospel in Modern Daily Media: Daily Mediation* Fr. Michael Scully, OFM Cap.
- *The Gospel in Modern Daily Media: Daily Mediation, Vol. 2* Fr. Michael Scully, OFM Cap.
- *What If...? 450 Thought Provoking Questions to Get Teenagers Talking, Laughing, and Thinking* Les Christie
- *Where Is THAT in the Bible?* Patrick Madrid

SAINTS ACCESSIBLE—These are all really terrific, though a few would be better for upper level classes or personal study. [Blue indicates most teen friendly.](#)

*All Saints* Robert Ellsberg

*Blessed Among All Women: Women Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time* Robert Ellsberg

[Holier Than Thou](#) Mark Hart and Greg Iwinski

[My Life With the Saints](#) James Martin. [Discussion Questions for getting your creative juices going.](#)

[Saintbook](#) Life Teen

*The Saints' Guide To Happiness: Practical Lessons in the Life of the Spirit* Robert Ellsberg

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# Secular Stuff–Tweak At Will!

Surely you know that there are endless resources out there for designing super-charged lessons in self-awareness, character development, teamwork, communication and group building. For years I've been adapting ideas from these resources to work for my content, because they are often light-years ahead of traditional religion text resources in terms of high energy impact, multiple access points, and reaching every learner.

Here are many of my favorites. [Blue indicates most used.](#)

- *104 Activities That Build: Self-Esteem, Teamwork, Communication, Anger Management, Self-Discovery, and Coping Skills* Alanna Jones
- *Character Education Book of Plays (Middle Grade Level)* Judy Tuesdell Mecca
- [Chicken Soup for the Soul in the Classroom \(Middle School Edition\)](#) Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and Ann Unkovich
- *From Sticky Notes to Dragon Boats: 20 Slightly Off-Kilter Activities for Middle School* Jan Burgess
- *I Did It Without Thinking: True Stories about Impulsive Decisions That Changed Lives* Bob Hugel
- [Improv Ideas: A Book of Games and Lists](#) Justine Jones and Mary Ann Kelley
- *More Team-Building Activities for Every Group* Alanna Jones
- [Quotes to Spark Discussion](#) Susan Savion
- *Quotes to Stretch Your Brain* Susan Savion
- [Team Challenge: 170 Group Activities to Build Cooperation, Communication, and Creativity](#) Kris Bordessa
- [The Creative Journal For Teens: Making Friend With Yourself](#) Lucia Capaccione

- *The Nuts and Bolts of Active Learning: Purposeful, Successful Strategies for Every Classroom* (Middle Grades) Incentive Publications
  - *The wRECKing Yard of Games and Activities* Alanna Jones
  - *Treasure Chest II: Problem Solving Activities, Brain Stretchers, and Active Games* Karynne L. M. Kleine
  - *Treasure Chest: Problem Solving Activities, Brain Stretchers, and Active Games* Karynne L. M. Kleine
  - *What Do You Stand For? For Teens: A Guide to Building Character* Barbara A. Lewis
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## Know Them

FAITH AND CULTURE: Below are several good reads offering succinct overviews of the latest research on the generation of teens in our sessions and classrooms. Particularly good resources exist for understanding how they define and relate to 'faith.'

- *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the Church* Kenda Creasy Dean
- *Branded: Adolescents Converting From Consumer Faith* Katherine Turpin
- *Engaging a New Generation: A Vision for Reaching Catholic Teens* Frank Mercandante
- *Generation Me* Jean M. Twenge
- *Looking For God: An Unexpected Journey Through Tatoos, Tofu and Pronouns* Nancy Ortberg
- *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* Christian Smith and Melina Lundquist Denton
- *Understanding the Digital Generation* Ian Jukes, Ted McCain, and Lee Crocket

BRAIN BASICS—Brain research is ever changing and ever evolving, not to mention completely fascinating. Here's a few of the most readable and most impacting works of the last few years.

- *A User's Guide to the Brain* John Ratey
  - *Brain Rules* John Medina
  - *Play* Stuart Brown
  - *Religious Education and the Brain* Jerry Larson
  - *Spark* John Ratey
  - *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* Nicholas Carr
  - *The Teenage Brain* Frances E. Jensen with Amy Ellis Nutt
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## Reaching Every Learner

There are a lot of books out there on learning theory and classroom management.

Here's what I consider some of the best of the best.

- *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* Daniel Goleman
- *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus* Sherry A. Weddell
- *Frames of Mind* Howard Gardner

- *G.U.I.D.E. Differentiated Instruction for Christian Educators* Beth Ackerman
- *How to Differentiate Instruction in the Mixed-Ability Classroom* Carol Ann Tomlinson
- *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory In Practice* Howard Gardner
- *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God* Gary L. Thomas
- *Teaching with the Brain in Mind* Eric Jensen
- *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners* Carol Ann Tomlinson
- *To Know As We Are Known* Parker Palmer
- *Tools of Engagement: Managing Emotional States for Learner Success* Eric Jensen

**BONUS BOOK:** *The Win-Win Classroom: A Fresh and Positive Look at Classroom Management* by Jane Bluestein is hands down the most useful teaching resource I've ever read. Bluestein is such an advocate of positivity and healthy classrooms!! She's also an amazing presenter, should you have an opportunity to see her, or have access to her CDs. Her website, [janebluestein.com](http://janebluestein.com), offers a ton of useful materials under the 'Educators' and 'General Interest' tabs.

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## Mind Their Gender!

The guys and gals in your room will learn differently not only because of their brain wiring, but due to gender differences. Part nature, part nurture, the resulting learning diversity in our groups needs to be respected if our sessions are going to have effective access points for all.

These resources offer a general overview of theory, lots of

'aha' moments that explain what you're seeing in your sessions, and plenty of tips and strategies for tweaking your lessons.

- *A Fine Young Man* Michael Gurian
- *Bam! Boys Advocacy and Mentoring* Peter Mortola, Howard Hiton, Stephen Grant
- *Brave New Girls: Creative Ideas to Help Girls Be Confident, Healthy, and Happy* Jeanette Gadeberg
- *Girls Will Be Girls: Raising Confident and Courageous Daughters* Joann Deak
- *Guarding the Fire* Bob Bartlett
- *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine* Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette
- *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* Michael Thompson
- *School Girls* Peggy Orenstein
- *Strategies for Teaching Boys and Girls, Elementary Level* Michael Gurian, Kathy Stevens, and Kelley King
- *Strategies for Teaching Boys and Girls, Secondary Level* Michael Gurian, Kathy Stevens, and Kelley King
- *Successful Single-Sex Classrooms: A Practical Guide to Teaching Boys and Girls Separately* Michael Gurian, Kathy Stevens, and Peggy Daniels
- *The Difference* Judy Mann