What does a maturing adult Christian look like? What expectations are appropriate for forming faith in the first two decades of life? How might we influence the spiritual lives of young people from 0-19 years old?

These foundational characteristics are drawn from research of faith maturing in young people and from the wisdom of the Christian leaders engaged in faith formation with children and adolescents. They are developmentally-appropriate, realistic expectations for faith maturing in the first two decades of life. They provide the beginnings of lifelong process of growth in Christian faith and discipleship that has direction and purpose.

The following thirteen characteristics are descriptive, not prescriptive. They assist leaders with channeling direct energy and attention toward specific faith formation goals and outcomes.

1. Sustaining a relationship with Jesus Christ by praying, sharing faith, and reading the Bible.
2. Making the Christian faith a way of life by integrating beliefs into the conversation, decisions, and actions of daily life.
3. Possessing a vital faith and being aware of God's presence in their own life and the lives of others.
4. Seeking spiritual growth by actively pursuing questions of faith, learning what it means to believe in God, and what it's like to follow in the way of Jesus Christ.
5. Living a life of service by caring for others, reaching out to those in need, and addressing injustice in the world.
6. Sharing the Good News through words and actions, through Christian stewardship, and working for peace, justice, and human dignity.
7. Participating fully, consciously, actively, and regularly in the ritual and worship life of the faith community.
8. Articulating the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith and demonstrating a commitment to learning and growing in this faith.
9. Exercising moral responsibility by applying Christian ethics, virtues, principles, values, and social teaching to moral decision-making, life situations, and in interactions with the larger culture.
10. Practicing faith in Jesus Christ, privately and publicly, through participation in the congregation's worship, ministries, and leadership.
11. Discerning and using gifts to actively belong to, and participate in, the life and mission of the Christian community.
12. Exploring God's call to vocation through prayer, reflection, and discernment.
13. Possessing a positive spirit with loving and hopeful attitudes toward others and life, convinced that they can make the world a better place.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FAITH FORMATION LEADERS

- What's your definition of a spiritually maturing Christian?
- What might be some other indicators of spiritual maturity (fruits of the Spirit, etc.)?
- What would a mature, and maturing Christian, say, do, think, and value?
- What are we doing to create settings and experiences that foster lifelong faith formation?