

Seminary Students Summits

The vows we take at the font compel us to partner with congregations and parents to become a more welcoming worshipping community and to nurture the faith of children through worship and prayer. The Font & Faith Initiative is committed to helping the church live into the promises made in baptism by

- providing occasions for critical and sustaining conversations,
 - creating supporting communities on a common journey,
 - researching, developing, and offering resources to strengthen family and congregational ministries that nurture children in worship and prayer,
- so that children's faith and congregations' worship and prayer life are engaged, enriched, and enlivened.

Summits

Summits are in-person gatherings that gather teams of congregational leaders committed to becoming a more welcoming worshipping community and to nurturing the faith of children through worship and prayer. Our time together will be marked by engaging

- biblical and theological exploration,
- deep listening and critical conversations,
- cultural and contextual realities of challenges and possibilities, and
- best practices and emerging ideas.

From this we intend to foster leadership, to discern what resources need to be developed and experiences offered, and to provide foundations for beginning, strengthening, and sustaining the journey of nurturing children through worship and prayer.

Seminary Students

Faith formation, in families and congregations, is communal work. As such, we are inviting teams of leaders from communities of faith with similar composition and context to participate in Summits. Summits will take place in various formats; multi-staff congregational teams, solo-staff congregational teams, regional intergenerational gatherings, and individual church leaders. Our hope is that these teams will include at least one paid staff member (a pastor, educator, or commissioned leader) and one to two congregational leaders (non-staff) who serve in worship, Christian education, and/or family ministries. These churches may excel in including and supporting children and families in worship. They may be struggling in this ministry but want to grow in this area of faithfulness. None of them need to have it all figured out. A commitment to the journey is most important.

Seminary Students whose vocational call is to congregational ministry are invited to participate in Summits as they learn and lead together with those who bring wisdom from their congregational experience. Students do not have to form a team but will be invited to participate with the teams who comprise a Summit.

Dates and Arrangements

Leadership for the Summits will include seminary professors, experienced practitioners, and artists. Team Summits will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, November 10, and conclude on Tuesday, November 11, 7:30 p.m., 2025, on Union Presbyterian Seminary's Charlotte Campus, 5141 Sharon Road, Charlotte, NC 28210. Since full participation in both days of the event is expected, travel should be arranged on Sunday and Wednesday.

Regional Intergenerational Summits will take place on Saturdays from mid-morning to mid-afternoon in the following cities: Atlanta, GA, Charlotte, NC, Richmond, VA, Greenville, NC, and Dallas/Fort Worth, TX.

Travel, lodging, food, and materials related to participating in the Summits are covered by a generous grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. Our Center staff will assist you with all arrangements.

After The Summits

The ministry of nurturing faith in children and families through worship and prayer continues after the Summits. We are committed to supporting you in ministry. Journey Groups will be established after the Summits to facilitate community and sustain your continued engagement this vital ministry. All participants in Summits are expected to participate in Journey Groups. We will provide space for sharing intentional Christian practices of worship and prayer with children and families, supporting one another along the journey, giving voice to celebrations and challenges, exploring questions, and exchanging ideas. All interactions take place through secure online portals through the Font & Faith website. Resources will also be available to Journey Groups to continue to engage and empower their work.

At the end of the three-year Journey Groups, all Summits will reconvene in their original locations for a time of celebration and evaluation. These final Summits will dream and plan for future needs.

Application Process

Summit participants will be selected through an application process. Applications are available on the Font & Faith Website:

<https://fontandfaith.cece.upsem.edu/>

