



CHRIST
THROUGH US

Faith Formation in Schools that Sticks

Building a Lutheran Worldview in the Next Generation

Melanie Giddings, Elizabeth Melott, and Ben Reichel

WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership
Chicago, Illinois
January 20, 2026



<https://bit.ly/WNCLL26FaithFormationLS>



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Who's In the Room?



Mrs. Melanie Giddings

National Curriculum Coordinator
for WELS Schools
Waukesha, WI



Mrs. Elizabeth Melott

Early Childhood Director at
Christ Lutheran
Pewaukee, WI



Rev. Ben Reichel

Youth and Young Adult Pastor
St. Mark
De Pere, WI



Our Time Together

Norms

- Take Care of Adult Needs
- Equity in Voice
- Presume Positive Intentions
- Learn - ReLearn - Unlearn
- Humble Listener & Flexible Viewer



Roots & Shoots: Humble Listener Continuum

Silos Viewer	Multiple Lens Viewer
Viewing the small, four classroom walls	Viewing the large, invisible walls of our Lutheran Schools



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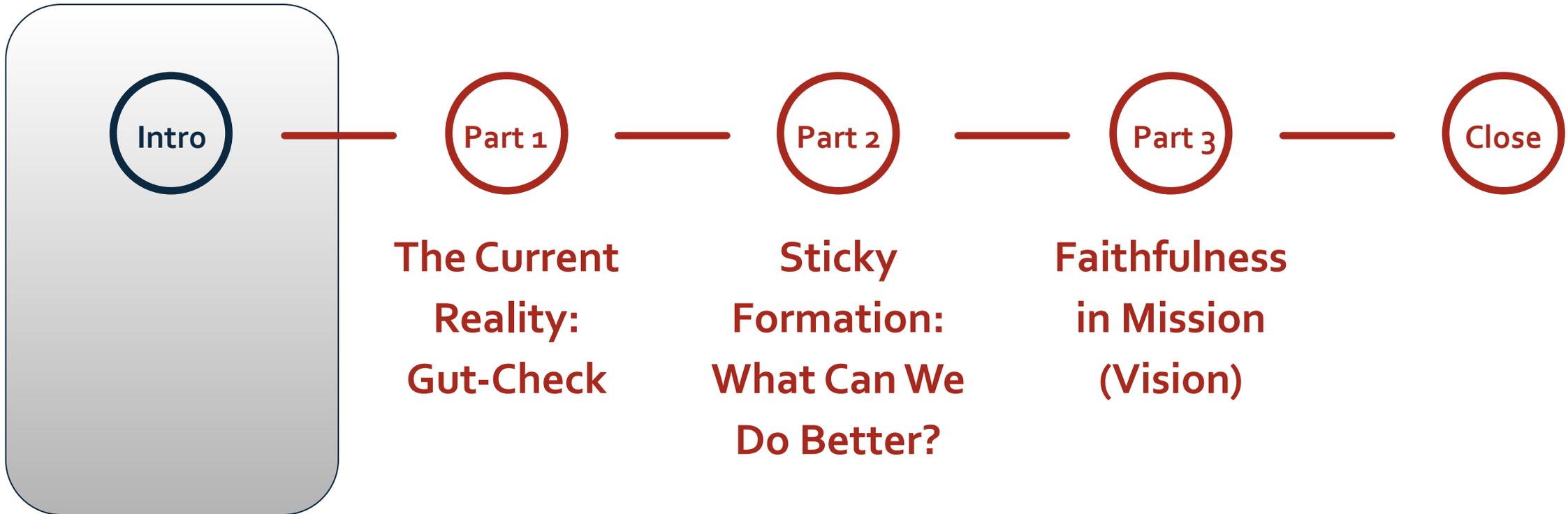
Our Time Together





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Our Time Together





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Vision: Essential Structures



Picture of a Graduate

Motivated by Christ's love for us and rooted in the true, inerrant, and inspired Word of God, the WELS Lutheran Theology Curriculum strives to develop...



<https://cls.welsrc.net/theology-curriculum/>



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SYNOD CONVENTION 2025

Vision: Essential Structures



church

home

school



Faith Formation in Schools that Stick:
Building a Lutheran Workview in the Next Generation
Marian Gidding, Elizabeth Neel, and Ben Rieckel
WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership - Chicago, Illinois - January 20, 2016

Where do we see faith formation sticking best right now (in the relationships, rhythms, or routines of our church, homes, and schools) and where are we most likely losing momentum or connection?

My Notes	Group Discussion

What is one simple, relational step we could take in the next six months to strengthen those connections and help faith "stick" more deeply in the lives we're shaping?

My Notes	Group Discussion



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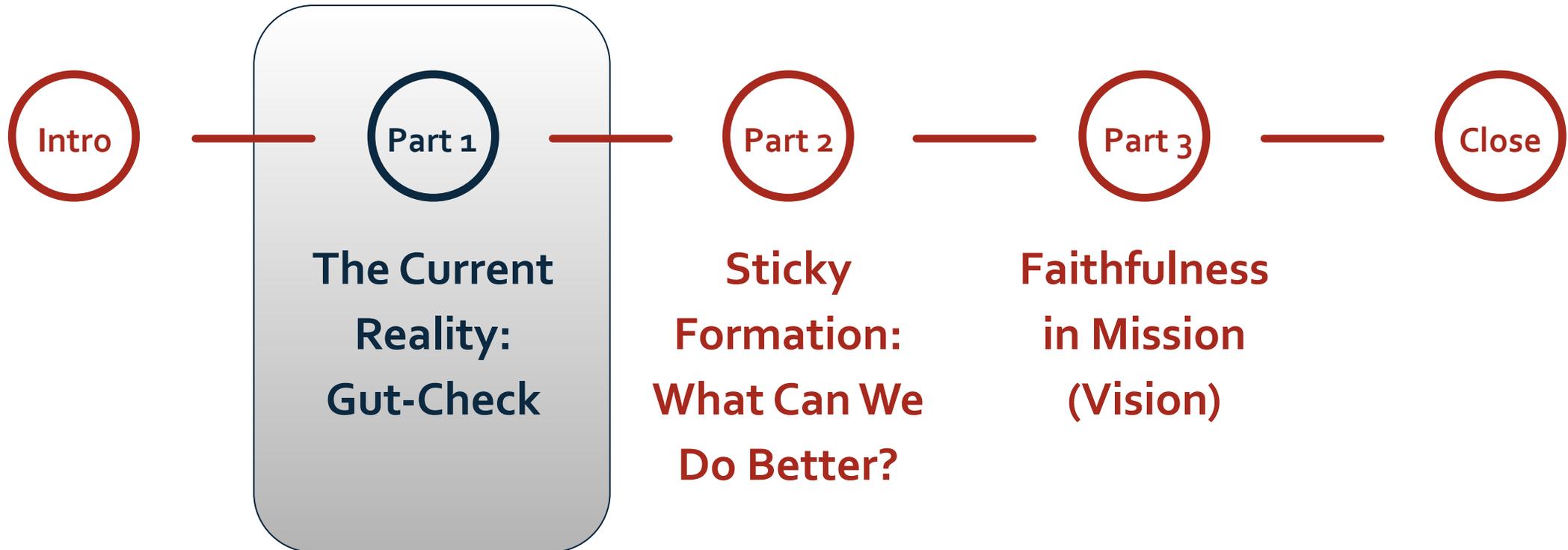
Who wouldn't want this?

It's a joy to gather with brothers
and sisters in Christ

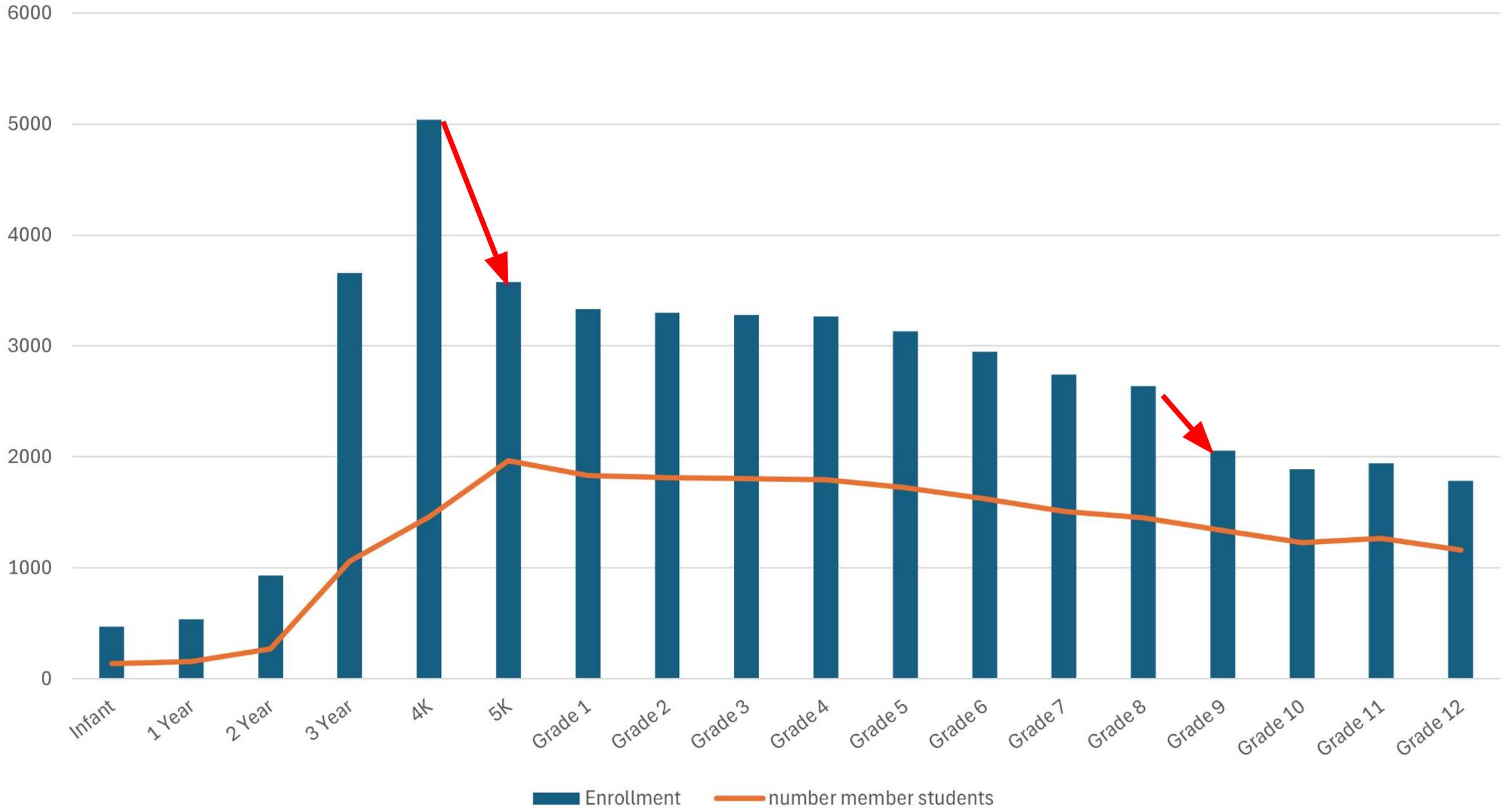


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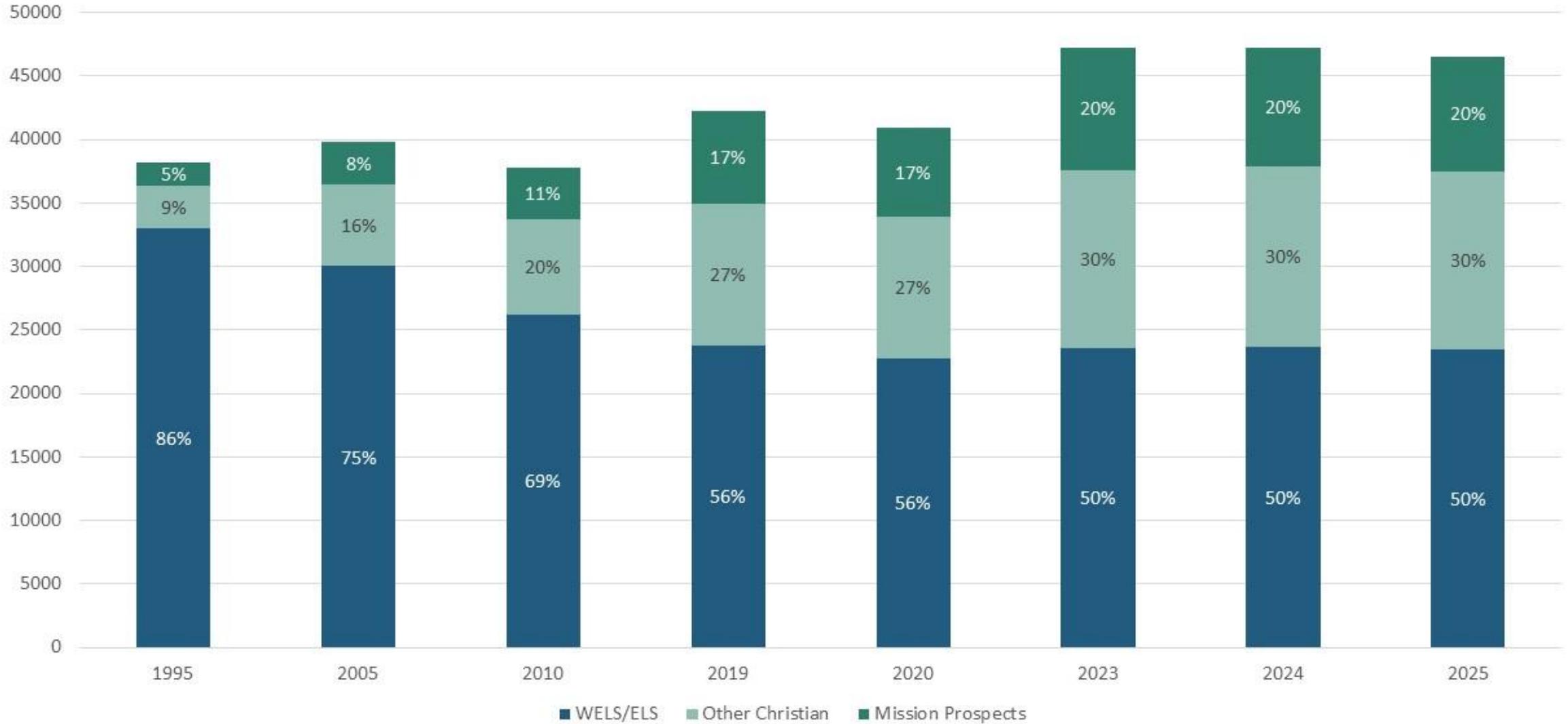
Our Time Together



2025 WELS School Enrollment by Age/ Grade



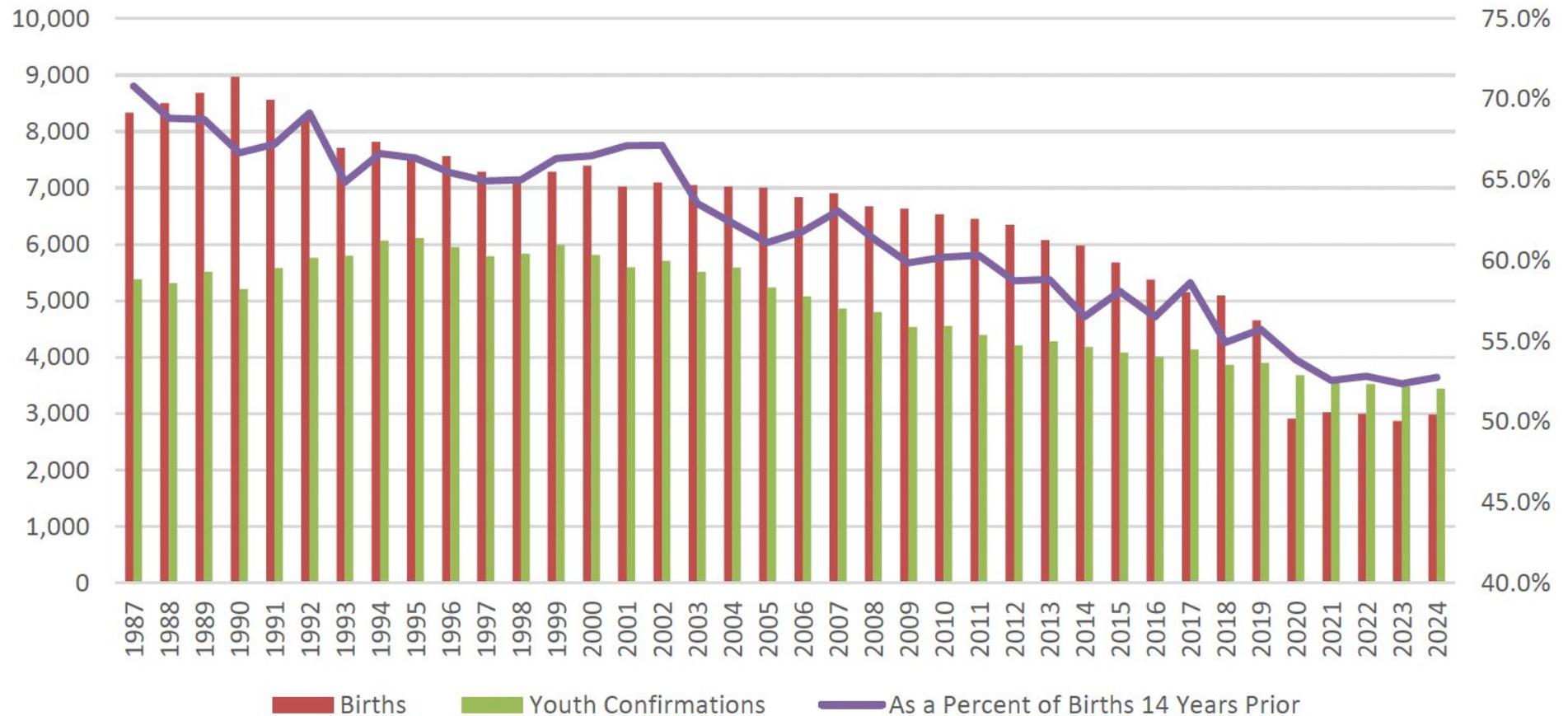
WELS Schools Enrollment by Affiliation





2024 WELS Statistics

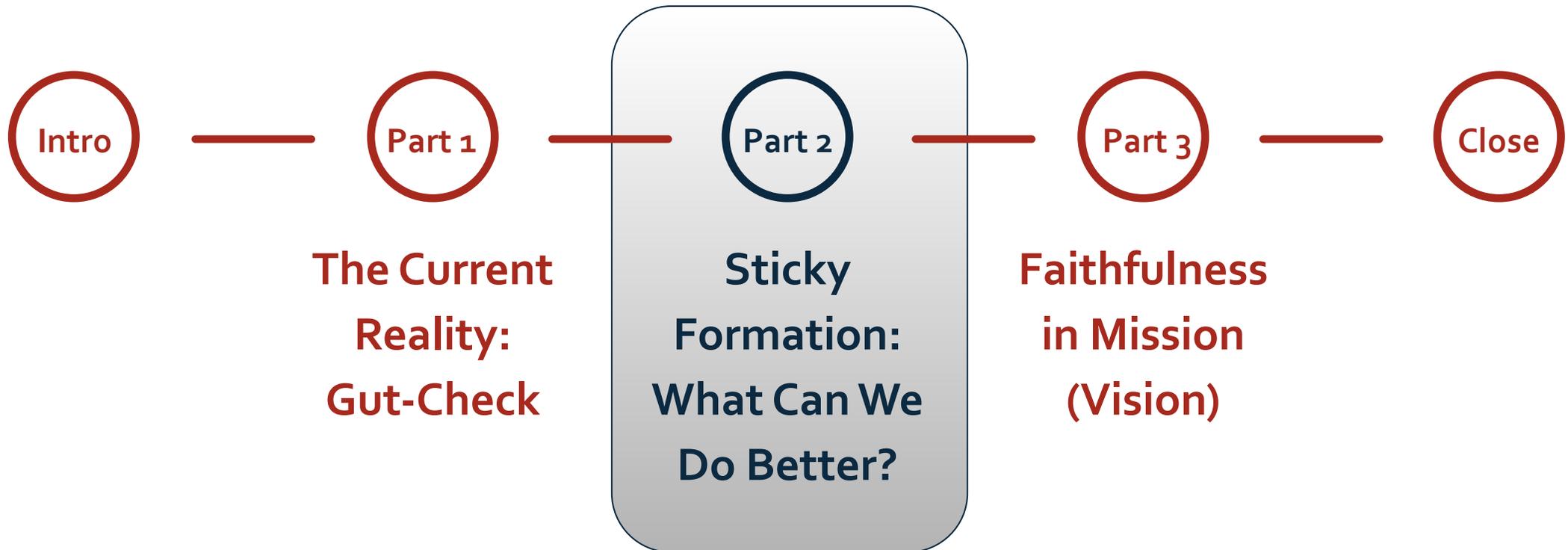
LL. COMPARISON OF WELS BIRTHS TO YOUTH CONFIRMATIONS





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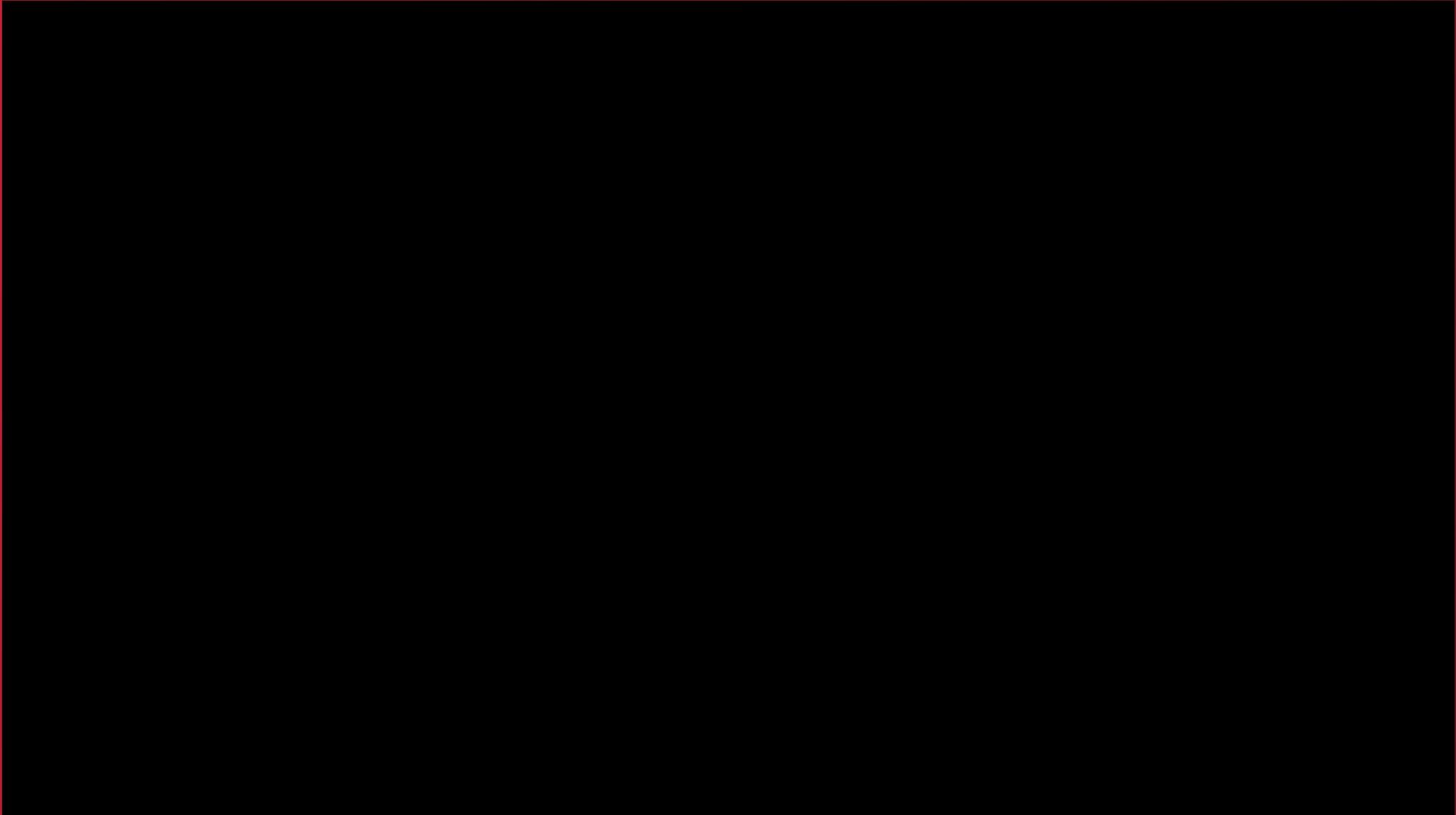
Our Time Together





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“Sticky Formation”





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Church: Sticky Formation



- Beyond Confirmation
 - High School Ministry
 - Obstacles and Challenges
- Clear Pathways
 - Clear Expectations
 - Mentors
 - Belonging
- Commissioning/Capstone
 - Church as Community



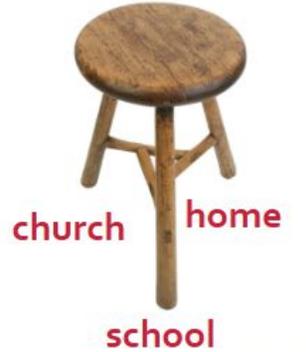
Teens stay where they are known.



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Church: Sticky Formation



- Young Families
 - Multigenerational Discipleship
 - Pay attention!
 - Intentionally Reach
 - Disciple Parents
- Points of Connection
 - Worship
 - Relationships
 - Daily Life



Sticky formation starts early and happens together.



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Home: Sticky Formation



Dedicate a child to the way he should go,
and even when he becomes old, he will
not turn away from it.

PROVERBS 22:6 (EHV)

Parenting Essential - Mentoring the Next Generation of Disciples



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Home: Sticky Formation Stages of Parenting



directors

coaches

consultants

Shifting
Roles

What does
this mean
for
Leadership
Support?





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Home: Sticky Formation Parenting with a “Village”



Consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together.

HEBREWS 10:24-25 (NIV)





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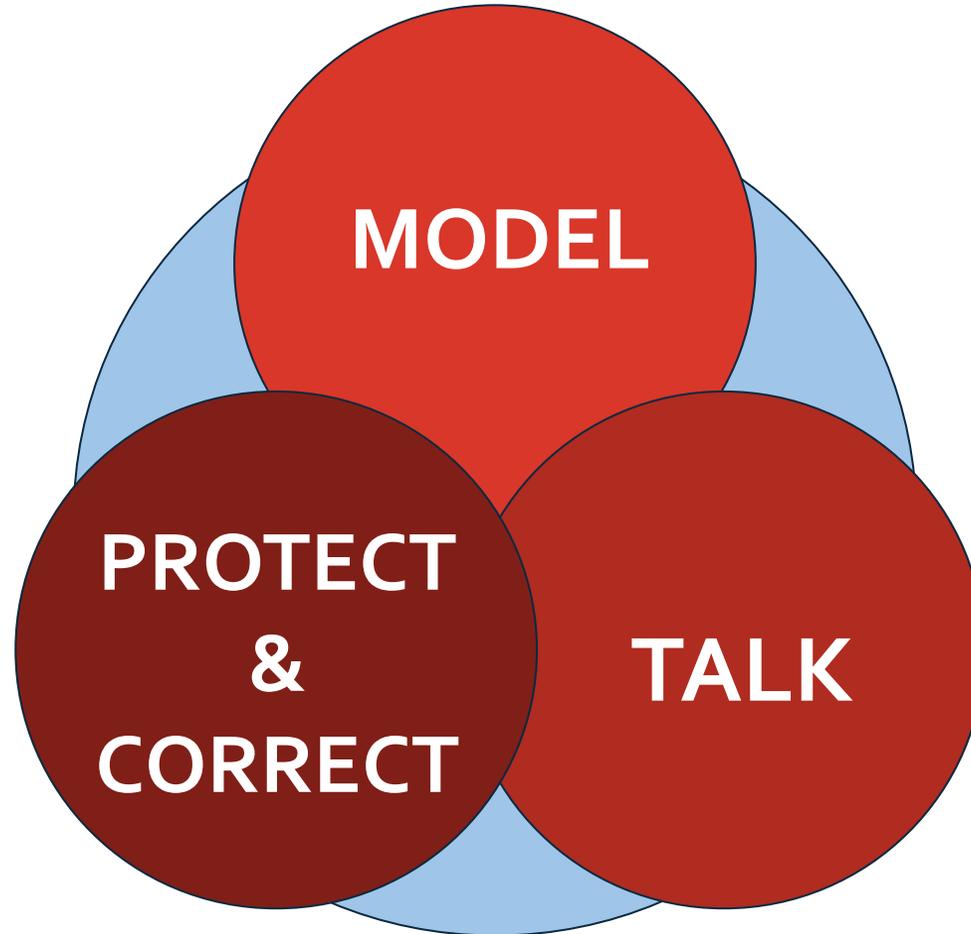
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Home: Sticky Formation

Foster Lifelong Discipleship Habits



church home
school





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School: Sticky Formation





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Our Time Together





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Vision: Essential Structures



Picture of a Graduate

Motivated by Christ's love for us and rooted in the true, inerrant, and inspired Word of God, the WELS Lutheran Theology Curriculum strives to develop...



Who wouldn't want this?

Picture of a Graduate
3-Legged Stool
Sticky Formation



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Faithfulness in Mission (Vision)

Why This Matters Now



church home
school

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

EPHESIANS 4:14 (NIV)

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, which are in accord with human tradition, namely, the basic principles of the world, but not in accord with Christ.

COLOSSIANS 2:8 (EHV)



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Group Discussion



- Select a Leg
- Assemble in Designated Area
- Discuss and Record
- Don't Worry
- Whole Group Share

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RECORDER'S COPY
GROUP DISCUSSION

Where do we see faith formation sticking best right now (in the relationships, rhythms, or routines of our church, homes, and schools) and where are we most likely losing momentum or connection?



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SYNOD CONVENTION 2025

Whole Group Share

1. Where do we see faith formation sticking best right now (in the relationships, rhythms, or routines of our church, homes, and schools) and where are we most likely losing momentum or connection?
2. What is one simple, relational step we could take in the next six months to strengthen those connections and help faith “stick” more deeply in the lives we’re shaping?

[Link to Small Group Recording Sheets](#)



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Our Time Together

Intro

Part 1

Part 2

Part 3

Close

**The Current
Reality:
Gut-Check**

**Sticky
Formation:
What Can We
Do Better?**

**Faithfulness
in Mission
(Vision)**



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SYNOD CONVENTION 2025

Closing Thoughts



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Thank You!



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