AppleTree
Participant Notebook
AppleTree Participant Book

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A stewardship renewal resource for congregations.
For further information contact Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission of the ELCA, 800-638-3522 ext. 2767
Apple Tree
Participant Book
Welcome

This participant book is your key to a successful encounter with the AppleTree process, offered to you as a part of your congregation's stewardship ministry. You can make this experience enjoyable by scanning the contents of this booklet and completing the section, “AppleTrees are People, Too!” before the AppleTree retreat.

Your congregational leaders have chosen this process as a way of bringing stewardship into your life in a way that adds value to what you do every day. With the retreat leaders they offer thanks to God for your lively personal stewardship, and commend you to God's continuing care.

Variety is the mother of enjoyment.

Benjamin Disraeli
About AppleTree

AppleTree: A Vitality Process for Busy People is an asset-based approach (not a needs-based approach) to life.

AppleTree respects each person’s reality, and does not impose a system of time management.

AppleTree is about vitality and energy, not about “simple living.”

AppleTree is about faith in life, and life in faith, not about technique(s).

AppleTree is for busy people – not to make them less busy, to make them feel guilty or to give them more hurdles. AppleTree helps them celebrate their assets, choose their priorities, find spiritual support, enjoy their lives and worship God.
Apple Trees Are People, Too!
Participant Pre-Work

Directions: Complete the following items before the AppleTree event, answering as fully as possible each question or prompt. You will share some of what you have written as part of the retreat experience.

My Strengths

I am who I am.
I am the way God made me.
I am, like all of God’s creation, very good.

I look into the mirror. My eye color is __________. Today my eyes look ______________________. But if you could see behind my eyes - into my soul, even - you would see a person whose strengths include:

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

________________________
My History

My life is part of God's story.
My history is still being written
Because God is still shaping my life.

The story of my life is a history of high points and low spots.
My history could be titled, "__________________"
and would be a story characterized by these features:

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Some of the memorable events that are high points:
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Some low points in my history that I recall:
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
My Gifts

I have gifts,

God-given assets.

Sometimes more than I can count.

Whether they’re abilities, talents, gifts or assets, God has given them to me for my stewarding. They’re positive elements of my life, and so I name them:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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Sometimes other people have named my gifts with these names:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
My Relationships

I am loved and love in return.
These relationships I cherish.
They're gifts from God.

All around me are people I name as those who love me, and who I love. Sometimes I'm overwhelmed by this part of my life. If you could see me being thankful for my relationships, you'd see these names, these people that God graces my life with:

__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________

Sometimes God graces my life with people who challenge me:

__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
__________________________
"How do you keep your roles as "sister" and "daughter" in balance?"
The Basic Metaphor I

The AppleTree process gets its imagery from apple trees. (Are you surprised?)

An orchard of apple trees needs annual care. Young trees grow quite naturally and even start to bear fine apples. But in a few years their branches multiply. Some get entangled with others. Others get so little nourishment that they become weak and unable to bear weight. Worst of all, the nutrients that are devoted to multiplying branches may rob the fruit of its necessary energy. The end result: You get little apples!
Some would suggest that the solution to the problem of little apples is to wish you had an orange tree instead! That’s an example of “needs-based thinking.” (We have a big problem here, and we need to solve it in a big way.) “Asset-based thinking” says, “No, we want this tree and we want it to bear large, beautiful apples!”

Others would suggest that cloning only the “most successful” apple trees could solve the problem of little apples. But think of the tree’s point of view: What if you’re not the “successful tree?” Do you have to deny your reality, learn someone else’s system, become something/someone else?

Let’s hope not!
The Basic Metaphor II

So how do we solve the problem of the overgrown apple tree? Some would suggest the solution of “simplicity.” Just prune all the branches so that the tree looks like a fence post! That way you won’t have any entanglements. (One problem, though: not much fruit comes from fence posts!)

Another solution: Prune the tree so that it takes the shape of a ladder, and then lift yourself by your roots and climb to heavenly bliss! (One problem: you have to have the right technique!)

No great thing is created suddenly.

Epicetus
The Basic Metaphor III

There is a solution better than the previous two, a way of pruning trees carefully. Those who care for apple trees prune so that they don’t cut away the assets of the tree, its capacity to produce fruit. They lop off branches, alive and dead, that limit the growth of other branches. They snip off entangled twigs. Their pruning yields a strong structure, and most of all, they prune so that the tree grows many fine, large, tasty and beautiful apples.

It is indeed foolish to be unhappy now because you may be unhappy at some future time.

Seneca
Applying the Basic Metaphor

Here's how the apple tree metaphor makes sense for your life, and here's how it connects to the AppleTree seminar:

1. The AppleTree seminar is about a careful kind of personal pruning.

2. When you prune, you are seeking vitality and joy.

3. What the seminar offers is a way of acting and thinking that leads to fulfillment and possibility.

4. The AppleTree experience is about God's abundance and its presence in your life.
Orchardist's Manual: About Apple Trees

Apple trees start out looking very simple.
Then they grow a few leaves and a few more branches.
And before long, they are big trees with many leaves and lots of apples.
And then an apple tree will get so overgrown that it's a jungle with many TINY apples.
Apple trees need to be pruned. Orchardists prune to make a strong framework with just the right amount of fruit-bearing spurs.
Virtually Visual Devotions

The Apple of God's Eye
(Deuteronomy 32:10; Zechariah 2:8)

Hidden in the Shadow of God's Wings
(Psalm 17:8)
May God who delights in us lead us to delight in God's life-giving word.

We pray:

Creator God, we praise you and honor you and bless your holy name. Touch our hearts and make us receptive to your life-giving word. Empower us to take care of ourselves as you take care of us. Lead us to worship you with our Sabbath rest. Be with us in the hours ahead. We pray in the name of Jesus, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen
What You're Too Busy Doing

**Directions:** Take time out from your busy-ness right now, and complete this page as follows: In the left-hand column write the activities that other people say you are "too busy doing." When you are finished with that quick listing, use the right-hand column to list the activities that you believe make your life "too busy." Hint: Think about all the things you do, in every corner of your life, that contribute to the "too busy" feeling.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What Others Say You're Too Busy Doing</th>
<th>What You Think You're Too Busy Doing</th>
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Whose Responsibility Is It?

Most of the time you want to be “responsible,” and sometimes you really take this idea seriously. Right? Is it possible that sometimes you might confuse your sense of responsibility—its sources, size, direction, results—with something else? And where does “self-love” interact with responsibility? AppleTree can help.

Directions: Draw quick thumbnail sketches of individuals who fit these descriptions in your overall sense of responsibility. Hint: Draw as many as possible in the time you are given.

People I Am Responsible TO . . .

People I Am Responsible WITH . .

People I Am Responsible FOR . . .
The Responsibility Test

Directions: Complete the test on these two pages by circling either TRUE or FALSE on each of the following items to indicate your basic feelings about each application of "responsibility" to your life. In later segments of Apple Tree you will have an opportunity to talk about your responses to these items. There are no wrong answers. You will have five minutes to complete this "test".

TRUE  FALSE  1. I am responsible for my spouse's happiness.
TRUE  FALSE  2. I am responsible for my child's safety.
TRUE  FALSE  3. I am responsible for my child's success.
TRUE  FALSE  4. I always do what I want to do.
TRUE  FALSE  5. I am responsible to my friend(s).
TRUE  FALSE  6. I am responsible with my spouse.
TRUE  FALSE  7. I am responsible for my adult friend's salvation.
TRUE  FALSE  8. I am responsible for my aged parent(s).
TRUE  FALSE  9. I am physically prevented from doing what I want to do.
TRUE  FALSE  10. I am responsible for my child's happiness.
TRUE  FALSE  11. I am responsible to my supervisor.
TRUE  FALSE  12. I am responsible for the happiness of a critically-ill family member.
TRUE  FALSE  13. I seldom do what I want to do.
TRUE   FALSE  14. I am responsible for myself.
TRUE   FALSE  15. I find it easy to change the dynamics in a relationship.
TRUE   FALSE  16. I am responsible for my loved one’s health.
TRUE   FALSE  17. I am responsible for the way our family looks when we are in public.
TRUE   FALSE  18. I am responsible for the feelings in my congregation.
TRUE   FALSE  19. I am responsible for the success of my organization’s next big event.
TRUE   FALSE  20. People who are comfortable like to change.
TRUE   FALSE  21. I am responsible for the harmony or lack of harmony in our home.
TRUE   FALSE  22. I am responsible for my supervisor’s feelings.
TRUE   FALSE  23. I am responsible for the safety of my aged parent(s).

Habit is habit, and not to be flung out of the window . . . but coaxed downstairs one step at a time.

Mark Twain
Responsibility Freedom

On the preceding pages you reacted to these four statements:

- I always do what I want to do.
- I am physically prevented from doing what I want to do.
- I seldom do what I want to do.
- I am responsible for myself.

Review your true/false answers to these statements and use the following page to complete one of the following tasks:

- Make a "Values Map" that shows the values or beliefs that unify your responses. (Hint: Use circles and arrows and captions.)

- Copy one of the four statements that is the most characteristic of your beliefs and write at least five answers to the question, "Why is that true of you?"

- Briefly outline the story of an event in your life that illustrates how your answers make sense together.
We will either find a way or make one.

Hannibal
Sabbath Communion
With God

What moves your soul into communion with God?
☐ Is it pure worship – praise, prayer, listening?
☐ Is it some form of contemplation alone?
☐ It is reading or study of the Bible?

How much time do you need for Sabbath rest?
☐ The whole day?
☐ What parts of the days?
☐ Five minutes? An hour?
☐ When will this happen?

Where will you find a place for Sabbath with God?
☐ A familiar place made new?
☐ A new place for this new activity?
☐ A place close by or a place far away?

Who will accompany you, or will you be alone?
☐ Those dear and near to you?
☐ New friends?
☐ Only memories and thoughts of others?
What will you stop doing so that you have a time and place for Sabbath rest?

☐ Things that are unimportant but urgent?
☐ Matters of non-urgent importance?
☐ What you falsely cherish as necessary?

(How) will you tell your family or friends what you are doing?

☐ Will you not tell them for their own benefit?
☐ Will you let your actions speak for themselves?
☐ What words will you use?

How will you ensure that you do not fail in this endeavor?

☐ How will you achieve balance in this matter?
☐ What/who will strengthen or encourage you?
☐ How will you know if “Sabbath” is working well?

How much do you trust God and God’s providing?

☐ Where else in your life do you trust God’s power?
☐ How do God’s gifts comfort your soul?
☐ How can the Holy Spirit engender trust in God?

What will be the power of this quiet time with God?
A Sabbath Journal
Day One

I Will Name This Day: _______________________

The Events of This Day:
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

The Quiet Rest in This Day:
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

How Sabbath Surprised Me This Day:
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

What I Want to Remember About This Day:
_________________________________________________________________
Day Two

The Name of This Day: ________________________

The Elements of This Day’s Blessings:

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

One Moment/Time of Sabbath Rest:

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

Who I am Most Like:

_________________________________________

A Story About Today’s Best Moment:

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________
Day Three

If Today Was a Song, Its Title Would Be:

___________________________________________

Because of today, tomorrow I will hum: ___

___________________________________________

God sang to me today because of: __________

___________________________________________

___________________________________________

In moments of Sabbath rest, I sang to God about: ______________________________________

___________________________________________

___________________________________________

___________________________________________

___________________________________________


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Day Four

This Day Will Be Called: __________________________

Today was like: __________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Today God slowed me down and quieted me down when: __________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Today I found energy to/for:________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Who will come to mind as my “teacher” today:

________________________________________________________________________

Who gave me a gift today, for which I cannot repay him/her:____________________
Day Five

If Today Was a Romance, Its Title Would be: ________________________________

Today God's love came to me when: _________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

The Moment Today I Realized How Deeply I am Loved by Others: ________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Today I was Given The Gift of: _________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.

Ethiopian Proverb
Day Six

Today’s First and Last Name(s): ___________

______________________________

A Symbol of Today’s STOP! Sign From God:

___________________________

The Smallest Time of Sabbath Today:

______________________________

The Biggest Chunk of Sabbath Today:_______

______________________________

The Differences/Similarities Between Them:

______________________________

*Shared joy is double joy, and shared sorrow is half sorrow.*

Swedish Proverb
Day Seven

If This Day Was a Member of My Family, Its First Name Would Be: ________________________

God's Purpose for Me This Day Might Have Been To: ____________________________________________

________________________________________

What Most Affected My Soul This Day: ___________________

________________________________________

The People God Placed Into This Day as a Blessing:

________________________________________

________________________________________

Tonight I (Will) Thank God Most for:

________________________________________
Day Eight

If Today Was a Tool God Gave Me for My Life, I Would Call It: _________________

The Work God Called Me to do Today: ______

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

The Part of the Work God Did: ____________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

The Part of the Work I Did: ______________

_________________________________________________________________________

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.

Theodore Roosevelt
Day Nine

Today's Name: ________________________________

One Way in Which God Quieted My Soul
Today: ______________________________________

_____________________________________________

God laughed with me today when: ____________

_____________________________________________

People who gave me the gift of fun or humor
today: ____________________________

_____________________________________________

My prayers at the end of the day will include:

_____________________________________________

_____________________________________________
Day Ten

I will call Today: Tenth-______________ Day

The Smallest Evidence of God’s Overwhelming Grace Today:_________________________

____________________________________

How I Was Able to Notice It:____________

____________________________________

How God Graced _________________ Through Me This Day:________________________

____________________________________

How I Was Able to Notice It: __________

____________________________________

____________________________________
Day Eleven

Today's Secret Name: __________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

An Unknown Good I Encountered Today:

__________________________________________________________________________

What God Revealed to Me Today:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

What I Still Want to Know About God: _____________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Day Twelve

I Will Name Today: God's ________________

Today I Was Heading In a Wrong Direction
Until: ____________________________________

________________________________________

What I've Been Thinking About My Life's Path:

________________________________________

________________________________________

Today's Gentle Nudges From God: __________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
Day Thirteen

If Today Had Been a Dictionary, Its Title Would Be: ____________________________

What I Learned Today About My Life's Meaning: __________________________________

How God Added New Meaning to an Ordinary Part of My Life Today:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

How God Made Simple a Complicated Part of My Life Today: _______________________

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Day Fourteen

If This Day Was a Friend, I Would Call It: ________________________________

A Quiet Pleasure I Enjoyed Today: ________

_____________________________________________________________________

How My Life Gave Enjoyment To Someone Else Today:

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

How God Was Pleased Today: __________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Where I Found Satisfaction Today: ________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________
Partnered Commitments

You have made a commitment to one (or more) other individuals about your mutual hopes and plans for a lifestyle that is more vital, energized and fruitful. Use the space here to record your promises to/with these individuals.

My AppleTree Partner(s): _____________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

What I Have Promised to Do: _____________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

The Times We Will Check With Each Other:
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

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Things We Can Talk About:


A Check-In Time Is Like:

☐ A Rewind and Fast Forward Combined
☐ Taking Off Your Makeup at the End of a Day
☐ Unwrapping a Gift You Already Have
☐ Taking Time to be Seriously Silly
☐ A Prayer With Food and Friends Added
☐ Talking With Your Coach, Only There’s No Score Card and You Already Know You’ve Done Just Great!
☐ Eating Energy Food That Tastes Good
☐ Finding Money on the Ground
☐ Watching God Smile
☐ One of Those Times in Church Where You’re Glad to Be There With All These Wonderful People, and You Wonder How God Could Have Done So Well With Their Lives, and You’re So Thankful That You Find It Hard to Sing, and the Tears Are Hot and Happy.
☐ Other:
And Finally . . . ?

With the devotional thoughts and materials here, AppleTree is finished. But God is hardly finished with this group - with you! "Finally" is never quite final with God. And so you can leave this time together with other believers calmly curious about what God has in store for your life. You can end your prayers with exclamation marks AND with question marks because you know that God will continue to be with you, whether pruning, watering or fertilizing your life with blessing and insight. Finally, then, AppleTree is about God. Just like your life is finally about God.

A Reading About One of Jesus’ Disciples
(John 21:19b-22)

After this [Jesus] said to [Peter], "Follow me." Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!"
Psalm Verses About Happy Folks
(Psalm 1, verses 1-3)

Happy are those
who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread,
or sit in the seat of scoffers;
but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law they meditate day and night.
They are like trees planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.

Psalm Verses About Fruitful Trees
(Psalm 52, verse 8)
But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.
I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever.

(Psalm 92, verses 12-15)
The righteous flourish like the palm tree,
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
They are planted in the house of the Lord;
they flourish in the courts of our God.
In old age they still produce fruit;
they are always green and full of sap,
showing that the Lord is upright;
he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.
Notes to Myself
Notes to Others
What If . . . .
Salt
Seasoning Faith & Generosity