



# Intentionally intergenerational Worship

---

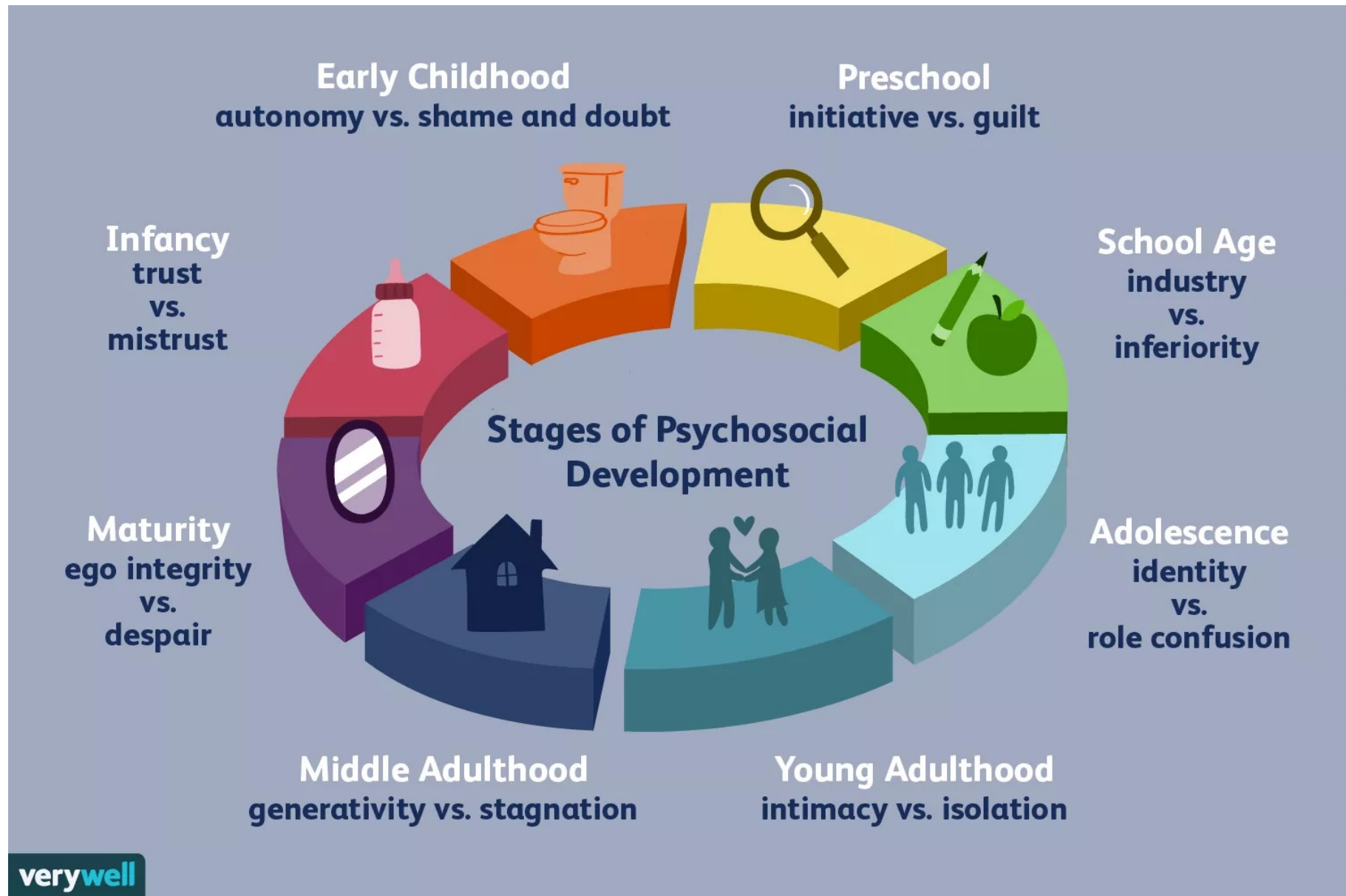
Rev. Dr. Sarah D. Allen

Director of Ministerial Formation and Advanced Studies

Austin Seminary

# Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

- Graphic from [verywell.com](https://www.verywell.com)



# Vocation according to Cahalan

---

- Callings are discerned
  - Through relationships
  - They evolve over time
  - They are multiple and changing
  - They are dependent on the emergent capacities of the body
  - Mutually influencing and responsive to others

"God calls each person as the embodied person he is in the time of life he is....each has an 'already' vocation; we fail if we see younger people as living in a time of 'not yet' vocations or older adults as having lived out their callings." – *Calling All Years Good*, Cahalan and McLemore, 24..

# General Vocational tasks of every lifestage

---

- Childhood: wonder, learning, growing, forming adults
- Adolescence: Passion and possibility
- Young Adults: sorting through narratives to discern what they will stake their lives on
- Middle Adults: generativity, focus on living a worthy life
- Late Adulthood: mentor, love, share stories with younger generations
- Older adulthood: blessing others, slowing down
  - From *Calling All Years Good*, Kathleen Cahalan and Bonnie Miller-McLemore

# Childhood: Grow and learn, Trust and Wonder

---

- Infancy and Toddlerhood
  - Trust : caring relationships with adults is paramount
  - Wonder: connecting God with creation, with everyday activities, foundational narratives of faith
    - Exposure to ritual, liturgy, worship, music
- School-age (6-11)
- Grow and learn
  - Curiosity at an all-time high
  - Abilities constantly changing and evolving: both cognitive, physical
  - Beginning to connect themselves to God's story- seeing themselves as contributing members to worshiping community

# Adolescence: Seeking identity and belonging

---

Passion and Possibility: vocational tasks

How do we connect the passion of adolescents with the passion of Christ?

How do we share that this faith is one worth staking one's life on?

How do we open possibilities for joy, service, talent in our ministries?

James Fowler, in his book, *Stages of Faith*, says this about adolescents' growing self-awareness

- "I see you seeing me: I see the you I think you see." (*Stages of Faith*, 71).

Kenda Creasy Dean: "adolescents are wired for passion... they feel it in their bones, proclaim it in their hopes and hormones, act out its power and herald its promise for the imprecise art of human life." (Creasy Dean, *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church*, 6.)

## So what?

# Young Adults: Sifting and Discerning

---

Vocational task: exploration of identity outside of the structure of family and context of origin. (Cahalan/McLemore, Ch. 5)

Need exemplars, people in middle adulthood outside of family who are mentors/guides

They need a community of faith that acts out of integrity; they want to see that what we say is what we do and that what we do serves the community and world.

# Adults at different stages

---

- Middle Adults: Generativity, focus on making an impact on next generation
- Needs: community where they can connect with younger generations as mentors and where they can sort out the priorities for the changing realities of their lives (middle-age, for some empty-nests etc.)
- Late Adulthood: mentor, love, share stories with younger generations
  - Needs: a community that provides opportunities for storytelling, for wisdom-sharing, for mentoring
- Older adulthood: blessing others, slowing down
  - Needs: a community that values Sabbath rest, that honors the slowing down, notices the changes and celebrates the life lived.



# Why does this matter in worship?

---

- The communal aspect of vocations
  - Our calling is mutual: it responds to the calling of another.
  - The diversity and beauty of God's being are best seen in an intergenerational community that shares the gifts and talents of each life stage.
  - Today's society treats us mostly as 'consumers' and offers us weak alternatives to our calling to love God and love our neighbor. For adolescents and young adults, in particular, this can lead to 'purposeless drift.' Intentionally fostering relationships across the lifespan that honor young people's gifts, talents, and skills and harnessing their God-given passion and prophetic call to justice transforms lives and sparks young people to faithful action that glorifies God and works towards the common good.