

# ***GET MY PEOPLE GOING!***

## **How to Use this Program**

Some wellness programs presuppose that people need a health makeover. The fact is, however, that many people are doing quite well in some areas, and just need to make improvements in others. Nobody's perfect, but most people have **SOME** good health practices!

The program asks each participant to define their own barriers to good health practices. Does she need to exercise more and eat more fruits and vegetables? Or does he need to stop smoking and get more sleep?

Each participant then is asked to focus on three areas of their own choice to improve. Choices include get more exercise, drink more water, stop smoking, eat more fruits and vegetables, lose weight, get more sleep, spend more time with friends, find more purpose in life, or deepen spiritual life. They are asked to track those three areas for eight weeks.

**NOTE:** for purpose of Golden Sneaker points each person must choose **more exercise** as one of their three choices. Participants keep track of their miles. Each church creates the method of tracking and collecting participant's miles. Churches turn the total miles walked by your congregation in to the District Office no later than 1 week after the program is completed. See Report Form ([click here](#)). Please encourage your pastor to participate along with you. Be sure to record the pastor's miles on the report form for clergy physical activity credit.

It is difficult to change health behaviors by oneself. This is why *Get My People GOING!* invites each participant to choose a friend or "buddy" for the journey. It is not necessary that they exercise together (although they can), but recommends that they at least check in together weekly for encouragement on goals and progress. There is a signature page in the participant materials for a partner to sign each week.

Last, but NOT least, we have set this wellness program in the context of the Exodus story, with scriptural references along the way. Manna introduces healthy eating habits, striking the stone to find water introduces a discussion of the importance of drinking enough water, and the temple in the wilderness points to the importance of a strong spiritual life, no matter where we are on our journey.

To order contact: International Parish Nurse Resource Center (IPNRC) at 314-918-2559 or [www.parishnurses.org](http://www.parishnurses.org). Cost is \$35 for CD which includes poster, sign-up sheet, bulletin board, newsletter articles, bulletin inserts, weekly e-mail updates, and final survey for participants. Note: Baseline measurements of height, weight and blood pressure are optional.

*Get My People Going* was created by Rev. Dr. Deborah Patterson, Barbara Wehling, PH.D., RN, and Gayle Mason, RN, BSN from the International Parish Nurse Resource Center.

# ***Get My People Going!!***

## ***One Congregation's Story***

By Jo Sanders, RN, BSN, for the publication, *Parish Nurse Perspectives*, Sept. 22, 2008

My church offered the *Get My People GOING!* program over the summer. We had so much fun with it! We did it on 8 Sunday mornings at Sunday School hour. After our preacher initially gave an amazing sermon to kick it off, we had 75 people come down to the altar with a commitment card to sign up. Each week an average of 40 attended. We had some do it independently because they did not want to miss their regular Sunday school classes. This worked, because we recorded the sessions each week and put them as pod casts on our church website. So, armed with the little booklet and a buddy, they could accomplish it that way too. We had 45 minutes each week. 15 min. of checking in with each other and celebrating positives ... motivational stuff, and then we had a speaker for 30 min. Each week, a different topic and speaker. We used our own church resources ... the speakers were either professionals from our church, or we used friends, relatives and co workers of members. We sent all participants weekly e-mails and used the program materials to write things to put in the church newsletters and bulletins. I did not spend \$\$ really-- things like pedometers, bottles of water and handouts were donated. The church covered the expense of copying the little booklets in color, and some postage. Also each week, one of our parish nurses gave a 3-5 minute talk about the program in both of our regular church services, so even those who did not sign up were able to hear an inspirational health message.

If you go to our website [www.marionfirst.org](http://www.marionfirst.org), you can hear the initial sermon (June 8) entitled "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made" by clicking on "Weekly Worship" on the left hand side of the home page. We ended with laughter with a visit from "Nancy Nurse," who reviewed the entire program in a fun and memorable way.

[ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

We had several folks with good weight loss, many who got together with a buddy for a time of prayer and study or exercise. We even had one person who committed to going back to college to finish a degree, and who announced that she had registered to start back at school again this fall!

I love the way this program allows people to decide to work on 2-3 areas that God is calling them to work on. Most had never had a program that included body, mind and soul, and many chose to work on things besides their diet and exercise.

And we loved how Exodus is woven into the program ... how seeking good health is a "journey to the promised land," the walking, the (food) pyramids, God's commandments for the Sabbath and how he showed them where to rest each day, the need for food and water in the desert, not being alone on journey. We did not concentrate on the Bible story, but we had readings for each week that they could do themselves, and we always referred to the story.

\_ Get my people going!! One congregation's story.

I already know that I want to do something next with our kids. The way we did it did not lend itself to the younger kids coming to the sessions, and we put it together so fast that we just didn't have resources to include them this time. But, I think there are a lot of fun things to do for them with the same themes.

Here was our weekly schedule (speakers in parentheses)

1. The Journey Begins: Which Direction is Your Promised Land? (Health Ministry Team)
2. Manna and Quail ... What Will You Eat on the Journey? (Natalie de Mello, Registered Dietician)
3. Exercise for the Journey .... Let My People GO! (Shane Smith, Exercise Physiologist)
4. Water for the Journey ... Striking the Stone (Dr. Jerry Felts, Chiropractor)
5. Finding Our Way in the Desert ... Practicing Prayer and Worship (Rev. Deb Pollex, FUMC)
6. Sabbath Rest ... Finding Rest, Renewal and Delight in our Lives (Rev. Dan Whitfield, Pastor, FUMC)
7. Friends for the Journey ... The Healing Power of Community (Naeem Quereshi, MD, Psychiatrist)
8. Let's Celebrate Our Success! Joy on the Journey-The Healing Power of Humor, with a very special visit from ... Nancy Nurse! (After church ... Pool Party at Ray Fosse Park).

About Jo Sanders is the Health Ministry Coordinator of Southern Illinois Healthcare Community Benefits Department in Carbondale, Illinois. She is also a member of the First United Methodist Church in Marion, Illinois. Recently, Jo offered the IPNRC's "Get My People Going!!" congregational wellness program at her home congregation. She shared an account of her congregation's experience with a few other parish nurses earlier, and gave us permission to share that here. You can also reach Jo at [jo.sanders@sih.net](mailto:jo.sanders@sih.net).

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