Church Ideas for Graduates
Some of these ideas can be modified for regions, camp connections, and more.

At the end of the day, the most important thing you can do for any graduate is spend quality time listening and being with them.

“Walk” with them in this life and in their faith journey.

These ideas have PDFs at http://www.docfamiliesandchildren.org/graduates
Faith Based - Graduation Parade
Virtual Faith Graduation Gatherings
Virtual Worship Service Liturgies
Love Letters to Camp

Footprints – Walking with graduates sounds impossible in a time where we cannot be that close to one another, but here are some symbolic representations!

1) Write an inspirational message on the bottom of a pair of shoes and post it to social media, text it to your seniors, or even just email them out. Encourage others in your faith community to do the same so the support grows. Please e-mail images to wshuffitt@dhm.disciples.org or hashtag #ministriesacrossgen, #ccdoc, and #dhmissions

2) Another way to do this is by cutting out feet from paper and writing inspirational notes on them and mailing them to your seniors. (PDF is found at http://www.docfamiliesandchildren.org/graduates.)

Rock collection – Similar to the footprint idea, write an inspirational message to your seniors on a decorated rock and leave it for them to find outside their home, sort of like an Easter Egg Hunt! Another idea could be to put this collection of church rocks in a see-through vase or box so that the senior can see/appreciate them all.

Update or Add Church Signs for Graduates Outside Building – Have any seniors in your local congregation? Make a yard sign that honors them and place it on the church lawn. If you have a church sign you could even rearrange the letters to honor your seniors as well.

Drop Off Graduation Breakfast – Does your church do a breakfast for graduating seniors? You can have food delivered to them at home and have a virtual meal and gathering. (Don’t forget to video some fun moments!)

Camp Song Caroling – Camp is a big part of many seniors’ transition to young adulthood. Would leaders in your camp community such as counselors, staff, and camp managers be willing to offer a virtual song time where seniors can reflect on their camp experience and have some closure they may not have gotten otherwise.
**Decorate Graduation Caps** – If you yourself are a senior we encourage you to decorate your graduation cap with Bible verses, symbols of your faith, or even pictures that have represented your faith journey. For graduate supporters, check out fun graduate decorations, and “add a little Jesus” to those caps, picture frames, and even gift cards. You can share those with church family on social media and beyond as well! Please e-mail images to wshuffitt@dhm.disciples.org or hashtag #ministriesacrossgen, #ccdoc, and #dhmissions

**Care Comments/Candy Grams/Care Notes/Love Lines/Cards/Prayer Partners** – Different regions, congregations, and groups within the church have different rituals of how to share love and support in these ways. Have one of these options mailed to your seniors, get together pen pals, get creative in your decorating, and share fun messages that are sentimental and special to your specific seniors.

**Videos** – Putting together a video of congregants wishing support to their seniors. OR put together a video where your seniors share the ways the church influenced them.

**Adopt a Graduate** (and maybe a parent) – Churches have been doing mentoring partners for years. Now, however, is a time this model can be updated for both the old and young seniors (and everyone in between). Every graduate who has been part of this discussion has stated they are more worried about their future (jobs, starting school, transitioning to adulthood, etc.) than missing events. Parents seem to be grieving in different ways, and thus the dynamic in the house is tough. Most of them just need people to talk, listen, pray, and encourage them. There may be people in your congregation who also did not experience a “regular” graduate experience (think Vietnam War veterans), and connections can be made. The transition from youth to young adulthood is a hard one. Each youth needs at least 5 adults to help them remain faithful during life’s tough questions. How can the whole community (church, camp, divinity house, etc.) build quality virtual relationships and celebrate multiple gifts?

**Sacred Space Walk** – What space is holy for your graduate? What spaces are part of this time of transition? While we can not all gather in big groups, individuals and families can gather physically (and even at times virtually) to walk through the churches, campgrounds, campuses, and sacred spaces. InsideOut curricula writers have been brainstorming many ways to create a type of “prayer station” experience in sacred spaces. How can you create a time and space for your graduate to engage with the Holy on holy ground?

**And Much More!** – Get creative in the way you share with your seniors, any attempt at showing love and kindness is influential and can help someone feel even a little better. Our faith communities are important our development throughout our lives, and as church we are good at caring for and helping one another through times of grief and loss. What our seniors are experiencing is no exception so let us come together and show them just how much we care!