Elders who have been a part of a faith community their whole lives benefit from participating in worship with its rituals, prayers, songs and the sense of belonging to a faith community. Elders with dementia, however, do not find a typical sermon with its dependence on words and concepts to be as meaningful.

“Sensing the Sacred” is a tactile, story-centered small group worship experience for elders experiencing Alzheimer’s disease or other age-related dementias. This multi-sensory worship experience was adapted from “Young Children and Worship”—a well-tested, Montessori based children’s worship program. In this program wooden figures are used to tell biblical stories as the “sermon” part of worship.

**Final Thoughts**

It has been my experience that those telling the stories and leading this worship receive as much as those seeing and hearing the stories. Learning these stories and telling them are soul nurturing and sustaining practices. And participating in this ministry to a group that is often overlooked helps diminish the fear around aging and dementia that is so prevalent in our culture.