## Activity 1: Characteristics of Lifelong Faith Formation

Activity 1 explores the **importance** of 31 characteristics of lifelong faith formation in your church and how well each characteristic is **implemented** in your church today. At the conclusion there are also discussion questions to reflect on your responses. Rate each of the following characteristics of lifelong faith formation in two ways:

* *Left Column*: How important is this characteristic for your church? Rate each characteristic from 1-5 (low importance to high importance).
* *Right Column*: How well does this characteristic describe faith formation in your church? Rate each characteristic from 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree, based on how true it is for your church.

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| **How Important?**  *Low to High* | **Characteristics of Lifelong Faith Formation** | **How True for Us?**  *Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree* |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church has a shared vision for lifelong faith maturing with goals that describe what we are seeking to accomplish in people’s lives, and that informs what we do at each stage of life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church has planned and organized faith formation for young children (0-5) and for grade school children. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church offers children a variety of methods and ways to learn and a variety of formats for learning (small group, at home, large group). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church has planned and organized faith formation for middle school and high school adolescents. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church offers adolescents a variety of methods and ways to learn; a variety of formats for learning (on your own, mentored, small group, at home, large group); a variety of programming (physical places, online, and hybrid) in scheduled (synchronous) and unscheduled time (asynchronous). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church has planned and organized faith formation for young adults (20s-30s). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church has planned and organized faith formation for midlife adults (40s-50s). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church has planned and organized faith formation for mature adults (60s-70s). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church has planned and organized faith formation for older adults (80s+). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church offers adults a variety of methods and ways to learn; a variety of formats for learning (on your own, mentored, small group, at home, large group); a variety of programming (physical places, online, and hybrid) in scheduled (synchronous) and unscheduled time (asynchronous). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church has planned and organized faith formation for families of children – at home and at church. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church has planned and organized faith formation for families of teens – at home and at church. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church equips and supports parents to become faith formers of their children and teens. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church provides experiences for the whole family that promote growth in faith and discipleship (learning, service, prayer, worship, etc.) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church helps parents and caregivers grow in faith and discipleship, and practice a vital and informed Christian faith. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church equips parents and caregivers to incorporate faith practices into family life at home. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church provides resources for family faith formation at home | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church engages all ages together in shared faith-forming experiences of caring relationships, worship, service, learning, praying, and more. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church brings all generations together in Sunday/ weekend worship, including children and youth. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church regularly brings all generations together for learning programs and activities that teach the Bible and the Christian tradition. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church regularly brings all generations together in actions that serve the poor and vulnerable, and that promote justice, locally and globally. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church has a website (and other digital platforms) that provides faith forming content and activities for all ages. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church helps people of all ages come to know Jesus Christ personally and learn how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church teaches people of all ages how to read and discover the meaning of the Bible for their lives. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church teaches people of all ages about Christian perspectives on moral questions and how to apply their faith to decisions about what’s right and wrong. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church equips people of all ages to live their Christian faith in daily life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church equips people of all ages to share their faith with others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church teaches the Christian story and beliefs and guides people of all ages in integrating its meaning into their lives. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church teaches people of all ages how to pray and nurtures their spiritual growth through practices and disciplines. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church equips people of all ages to serve those in need, care for God’s creation, and act and advocate for justice and peace. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Our church prepares people of all ages for worshipping God with the community on Sunday and throughout the seasons of the church year | 1 2 3 4 5 |

#### Discussion

If you are doing this activity with a group, develop a composite score of the group’s assessment of the “How Important” ratings and the “How True” ratings.

Discuss the reasons for people’s ratings using the following questions:

Importance

* Is this an accurate picture of what our church holds as important in faith formation?
* Why do we believe it is accurate or inaccurate?
* Should a particular characteristic have a higher or lower importance than it currently has?
* What does this profile tell us about what our church values as important in faith formation?
* What needs to be more important moving forward?

True

* Is this an accurate picture of how our church is actually living each characteristic?
* Why do we believe it is accurate or inaccurate?
* Should a particular rating be higher or lower than it currently is?
* What does this profile tell us about how our church is living lifelong faith formation?
* Which characteristics do we need to improve or strengthen moving forward?

## Activity 2. Investment in Faith Formation

Imagine a pie representing 100% of your church’s investment in faith formation: people, time, energy, resources, money, and programming. What would the percentages look like for the following eight categories? Label each pie slice and write the percentage in the slice.

1. Children (0-5) and Children (6-10) *Split the pie slice into half for each age group*.
2. Adolescents (11-19) *Split the pie slice into half for middle and high school.*
3. Young Adults (20s-30s)
4. Midlife Adults (40s-50s)
5. Mature Adults (60s-70s)
6. Older Adults (80+)
7. The Whole Family Together (church and home)
8. All Ages Learning Together (intergenerational)



#### Discussion

1. What does the pie chart tell you about the allocation of people, time, energy, money, resources, and programming in lifelong faith formation?
2. What does the percentage allocation tell you about the assumptions your church is making about forming faith and how people mature in Christian faith?
3. What do the results suggest about the future development of lifelong faith formation?

# Activity 3. Lifelong Faith Formation Profile

Develop a profile of your church’s current faith formation programs, activities, experiences, and events – at church, at home, online, and in other settings (in your community, at a retreat center, on mission trips, etc.) – for each stage of life. Incorporate intergenerational experiences and events, family programs and activities, and age group programming. Use this format to create your own profile on a large sheet of paper or a spreadsheet.

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|  | **Age Group Faith Formation** | **Parent & Family Faith Formation**  (at this stage of life) | **Intergenerational Faith Forming Experiences**  (at this stage of life) |
| Young Children (0-5) |  |  |  |
| Grade School Children (6-10) |  |  |  |
| Young Adolescents (middle school) |  |  |  |
| Older Adolescents (high school) |  |  |  |
| Young Adults (20s-30s) |  |  |  |
| Midlife Adults (40s-50s) |  |  |  |
| Mature Adults  (60s-70s) |  |  |  |
| Older Adults (80+) |  |  |  |

#### Analyze Your Profile

1. What are the strengths in our current faith formation across the life stages?
2. Where are the gaps (or opportunities)?
3. What do we need to continue doing?
4. What do we need to stop doing?
5. What needs to be strengthened or improved?
6. What needs to be expanded or needs to be extended to reach and engage more people?
7. What do we need to start doing? What new initiatives need to be created to address gaps, respond to new needs and challenges, engage new audiences?