



# WHAT IF...

## *Imagining Possibilities*

---

---

### Planning Faith Formation for 2022 and Beyond *A Time for Creativity, Experimentation, Innovation*

John Roberto

*This article presents an approach to planning faith formation that guides you in thinking systemically about what we need to do in faith formation to address the challenges of today. The article suggests three perspectives to guide planning and implementing, and then several examples of systems-level suggestions for creating faith formation that addresses the big challenges we face today.*

#### Part One. Three Planning Perspectives

##### #1. Think Systemically about Faith Formation

Systems thinking is a way of helping us view the challenges we face in faith formation from a broader perspective that includes seeing the whole life span and the context of people's lives today, rather than seeing only a specific issue or concern in isolation, for example: "We've got to solve the youth problem" or "We've got to get families back to church." Our immediate response to the problem or challenge is to create a targeted program or strategy to solve the problem that has surfaced: *How can we keep our teens involved in church? How do involve young adults who have left our churches? How do we make sure our families are practicing their faith at home and bringing their children to church and classes? Etc.*

While the initiatives that are created may be excellent, they are not systemic. They make us think the problem lies with the people – teens or young adults or parents – and all we need to do is design something to "fix" the problem. In large part, the changing religious participation and practice trend is a failure of the whole system of faith forming in churches.

Systems thinking sees individual problems or challenges as connected to a larger system of faith forming that might not be working well. By focusing on the entire system of faith formation, we can attempt to identify solutions that address as many problems as possible in the system. The positive effect of those solutions leverages improvement throughout the system. Thus, they are called “leverage points” in the system. This priority on the entire system and its leverage points is called whole systems thinking.

One important way to think systemically is to adopt a goal-centered mindset, rather than a program-centered one. Envision your church’s goals for maturing in faith for lifetime and design faith formation to make these goals a reality in people’s lives. By starting with goals, you can develop multiple ways (approaches, programs, activities) to help people grow in faith. Consider:

- ◆ What is your vision of maturing in faith and discipleship for a lifetime?
  - ◆ Toward what ends or goals are your church’s faith formation efforts directed?
  - ◆ What is your church try to accomplish in the lives of people at each stage of life from childhood to older adulthood?
- ❖ Read more about goals in the article: “Goals for Maturing in Faith” on the Lifelong Faith website: [www.LifelongFaith.com](http://www.LifelongFaith.com).

A second way to think systemically is to develop a lifelong mindset. See every age and stage of life connected to the whole life span and the other five generations. Don’t try to design or improve faith formation with adolescents without considering their family’s faith, childhood faith formation, and the challenges that teens will face living their Christian faith in their 20s. Don’t try to design or improve faith formation with adults in their 60s and 70s without considering their connections to other generations in the church and in their family (e.g., many are grandparents).

## #2. Plan in a Three-Year Timeframe

It’s helpful to think about planning faith formation initiatives in two ways: 1) How do we enhance and/or expand current faith formation approaches and programming to address new challenges? and 2) How do we create new projects to address the new challenges we are facing?

Think about project planning in a three-year timeframe: short term (within one year), mid-term (within one-two years), and long term (over a three year span). This approach allows implementation of new projects to be sequenced over time.

**Short-Term Planning:** ideas that can be integrated into existing plans and programs or can be designed and implemented quickly in the first year. This would be especially true for initiatives that are enhancements or an expansion of a current program or activity.

**Mid-Term Planning:** ideas that need more design time and that can be implemented within one or two years. These initiatives need to be seen over a one-two year timeframe with a more sequenced implementation that might involve piloting the new initiative first before expanding it to a wider audience.

**Long-Term Planning:** ideas that need design time, piloting and testing, and then implementation over the next several years. The initiatives are long term projects that require more time for planning and building capacity, and need to be introduced in stages over multiple years.

### #3. Build Capacity

Capacity building is the process of developing an organization's strengths and sustainability. Capacity building refers to activities that improve and enhance an organization's ability to achieve its mission and sustain itself over time. In the nonprofit world, this includes identifying a communications strategy, improving volunteer recruitment, identifying more efficient uses of technology, and engaging in collaborations with community partners. When capacity building is successful, it strengthens an organization's ability to fulfill its mission over time and enhances the organization's ability to have a significant, positive impact on lives and communities.

The good news in the 2020s is that churches now have access to an abundance of resources available to them at little or no cost. Technical expertise is available from websites, blogs, and online groups. Faith formation resources are available in digital formats (websites, video, podcasts, apps, and more). Training is available for free or low-cost through online webinars and courses. The digital transformation of society and church is giving midsize and small churches access to the same resources and expertise that was once reserved for high-capacity churches. And they have faith communities with gifts, talents, skills, and abilities ready to be tapped.

One example of capacity building is utilizing the abundance of high quality video presentations, webinars, and digital content—theological, biblical, social issues, and life issues—created by colleges, seminaries, and religious organizations that are available online for free. The abundance of these free (or almost free) resources allows for the development of a variety of programming – in multiple formats (large group, small group, independent) at church, at home, on digital platforms, and more.

A second example is accessing the variety of programming offered in your community—courses, events, and programs sponsored by local religious congregations, continuing education programs, and community organizations that can become part of a faith formation plan. For example, imagine partnering with the YMCA/YWCA on a parenting course or with a youth-serving agency on a life skills course for teens.

A third example is connecting to retreats sponsored by regional retreat centers and conferences and workshops offered by denominational offices/agencies. For example, adding a retreat program for midlife adults or a retreat for adults in their 70s and 80s to your church's adult faith formation offerings.

Capacity building also includes developing the leadership for faith formation. The basics of volunteer leadership development – identifying or calling, matching, preparing, and supporting – have not changed. But the lives of our leaders have changed! Traditionally, faith formation programming has relied on a core of dedicated teachers who taught classes for thirty weeks a year and adults who led youth group meetings and classes weekly. Finding leaders who will commit to weekly service for a whole year is increasingly difficult because people's lives, work, schedules, and commitments have dramatically changed and become much more complex.

It's time to rethink leadership roles and designing commitments to be more people friendly. We need to build programming around what people can do given their availability, not what we want or need them to do. We need to design (or redesign) programming around the leaders. How can you develop more leader-friendly roles and commitments? Here are a few ideas to spark your creativity in building programming around leader schedules and commitments.

- ◆ *Work with the time commitments that fit people's schedules.* If leaders can serve for one day or one weekend per year, then have an opportunity ready for them. If leaders can serve for a month (four weeks) in the fall and again in the spring, have four-week program options for them.
- ◆ *Offer a variety of roles.* Many people don't want to teach or lead a program but would like to mentor or guide people one-to-one or in a small group. Develop mentoring relationships for people to learn how to pray, to serve those in need, and much more.
- ◆ *Develop leadership roles with fewer tasks and divide up a large leadership role into smaller responsibilities.* It's easier to find and prepare people for a more limited and clearly defined leadership role, than to find a leader to do a large job. It is also a way to involve more leaders in a project or program.
- ◆ *Design a program with a primary leadership role (teaching, presenting, facilitating activities) and support roles.* For example, a children's program might have a lead teacher (or two) and adults or youth who serve as small group activity leaders. Small group activity leaders make a four-week commitment each year. The same could apply to any other program where there are lead presenters or facilitators and small group leaders.
- ◆ *Design programming in shorter units of time.* Rather than a twenty-four-week program with one leader, create four, six-week minicourses—each with a different leader. Eight-week programs can be conducted in two four-week minicourses.

As you build a leadership system, remember that you can build the system around the leadership roles that are needed and find the leaders you need. And you can build it around the gifts of your people and create opportunities for them to utilize their gifts. Be sure to conduct a church-wide

gifts discernment process to discover the gifts, talents, and time of people in your community (there's a sample gifts inventory in the article below).

- ❖ Read more about building capacity in the article: “Building Capacity for Faith Formation” on the Lifelong Faith website: [www.LifelongFaith.com](http://www.LifelongFaith.com).

## Part Two. Ideas for Enhancing and Expanding Faith Formation

There are several ways we can introduce systemic initiatives into lifelong faith formation

- ◆ By expanding *hybrid approaches* we involve more people with time- and schedule-friendly programming, reach more people through different learning formats, promote more engaged learners, and find multiple ways to use the programming we create.
- ◆ By creating *seamless family faith formation* from birth to high school graduation we strengthen the primary faith forming community and support parents in providing religious socialization at home.
- ◆ By *strengthening the intergenerational fabric* of our faith community we create relationships and faith forming experiences among all generations, providing an important context for all ages to grow in faith and discipleship.
- ◆ By creating a *menu of faith forming experiences* we address the diversity of people's learning needs and religious-spiritual needs, overcoming the limitations of the one-size-fits-all approach.
- ◆ By building “*front porch*” *experiences* we provide spaces to engage with people and build relationships out in the community.

### Systemic Idea #1. Expand Hybrid Approaches to Faith Formation

Since the early 2010s we have had the tools, methods, media, and models to do faith formation in **Online** models and in **Hybrid** models that blend the physical and online spaces. Over the past three years churches accelerated their adoption of online and hybrid models of faith formation. Now churches have three modes of programming: gathered in a physical space, online in a digital space, and hybrid in both spaces together.

Church have adopted – and many are expanding – hybrid models that integrate in-person gatherings at church or in family groups or in small group meetings with online content such as playlists that provide a menu of learning experiences on the theme of the program, and online meetings for discussion and more in-depth learning.

The creation of online and hybrid models of faith formation means that faith formation programming can be **synchronous** (real time) and **asynchronous** (on your own time)—thereby

expanding the opportunities for people to engage in faith forming experiences that are responsive to their time, commitments, and availability. We deliver synchronous faith formation using physical gatherings, live streaming, video conferencing, online courses, and online small groups. We deliver asynchronous faith formation using online playlists, video and audio programs, online discussion groups, online learning platforms, websites, and more.

Now is the time to expand hybrid faith formation to address the time constraints of gathered participation for those who are engaged in our church community and to (re)engage those who participate occasionally or who have stopped participating in the church community. Hybrid models hold together two important values in faith formation: the importance of in-person relationships and faith forming experiences, and the importance of being responsive to the complexity of people's lives and their religious-spiritual needs. Hybrid models expand faith formation opportunities for everyone. We can become much more strategic and careful about when, where, how, and for what we gather people because we can now integrate online with in-person faith forming. *Hybrid models of faith formation are more resilient, flexible, and adaptable—just what we need to respond to the challenges of change in our world and in lives of our people!*

Hybrid programming provides a way to offer one program in multiple formats. With multiple ways to program in physical, online, and hybrid spaces, one program or experience can be designed in all three spaces, increasing the availability to a wider audience of people. The choice is no longer whether to participate or not, but which option best suits a person's time, schedule, and learning preferences. Here is an example of a video-based program that is conducted in multiple formats – same program, multiple ways to experience it.

- ◆ *Large group physical gathering:* People gather at church and a leader facilitates the program—showing a video, providing time for people to read and reflect, and guiding small groups in discussing the content.
- ◆ *Small group physical gathering:* People gather in small groups in homes or coffee shops or other conducive setting, watch the video, read and reflect on the content, and discuss the content.
- ◆ *Small group hybrid:* People gather online in a small group (Zoom or other video conferencing platform) to watch the video together, read and reflect on the content, and discuss the content.
- ◆ *Online with interaction:* People complete the sessions on their own and share reflections in a Facebook group (asynchronous) or meet on Zoom to discuss the program (synchronous).
- ◆ *Online independent:* People complete the learning program on their own.

Design a three-year plan for expanding hybrid faith formation with a mix of expanding current efforts, reinventing current programs, and creating new hybrid programs. Consider how the following aspects of faith formation can be strengthened through a hybrid approach: formation for church year seasons, marriage preparation, baptism preparation for new parents, formation with families with young children, at-home family component in children's faith formation, First



Communion preparation for parents and the family, confirmation preparation, almost any adult faith formation program (Bible study, theology study), and outreach initiatives to the uninvolved.

## Resources

- ❖ Read more about hybrid faith formation in the article: “A Hybrid Future for Faith Formation” on the Lifelong Faith website: [www.LifelongFaith.com](http://www.LifelongFaith.com).
- ❖ For videos and articles on hybrid faith formation go to the “hybrid” section of the Lifelong Faith website: <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/hybrid.html>.

## Systemic Idea #2. Create Family Faith Formation from Birth through Adolescence

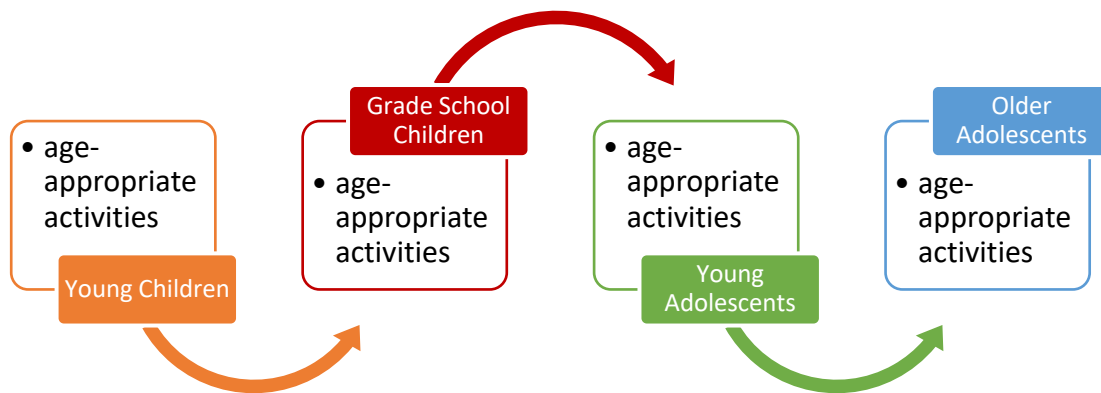
Faith formation needs to start early in life and engage the whole family (three generations: children, parents, and grandparents) throughout the childhood years. We need to start early in the family and build a foundation for a life of faith in the new generation if we hope to address the decline in passing on faith from generation to generation. In most churches, it would be a systemic change to shift priorities and energies to focus on families with young children (0-5 years old) and families with grade school children – moving beyond a “classroom” approach to engage the whole family—at church and at home. We know that the research leads us to this priority:

- ◆ Parents are the most significant influence on the religious and spiritual outcomes of young people.
- ◆ The primary way by which a religious identity becomes rooted in children’s lives are the day-to-day religious practices of the family and the ways parents model their faith and share it in conversation, collaboration, and exposure to outside religious opportunities.
- ◆ The family is the primary community where Christian faith practices are nurtured and practiced.
- ◆ The quality of a parent’s relationships with their children or teens and the parenting style they practice make a significant difference in faith transmission.

Family faith formation is designed to *encourage* parents to grow in faith and become faith formers, *equip* parents to incorporate faith practices into family life at home, and *engage* parents in education and formation, as well as the whole family in faith forming experiences and program.

Over the next three years design and implement a plan for forming the faith of families that incorporates four stages of life: young children, grade school children, young adolescents, and older adolescents. Develop a template that you can use for each stage of life and then design or select age-appropriate programs, activities, and resources. A template can include the following elements:

- ◆ *Family faith practices*: reading the Bible, praying together, serving people, working for justice, caring for creation, eating together, having family faith conversations, providing moral instruction
- ◆ *Celebrating Milestones*: ritualizing important family moments and milestone experiences
- ◆ *Celebrating church year seasons*—at church and home: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, and more
- ◆ *Parenting practices and skills* appropriate to the stage of life
- ◆ *Parenting for faith* programs, videos, and activities
- ◆ *Family-centered gatherings and programs* at church



To create a plan for families with young children we could include the following types of activities that would be offered on a website designed for families, and supported by a monthly e-newsletter highlighting activities that are especially relevant in that month. Activities can be structured in a way that identifies what’s appropriate for each year of early childhood: 0-1, 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, and 4-5. The goal is to provide a comprehensive formation process at church and at home with the parents-only and with the whole family.

1. *Baptism preparation* that engages the parents in their own faith growth and prepares them for nurturing faith in young children
2. *Mentors* from the church community (e.g., grandparents) to accompany parents on the journey from Baptism to start of school (5 years old)
3. *Faith practices* such as Bible stories, prayers, meal rituals, moral values
4. *Seasons of the year* including activities for the church year seasons, holidays, and the four seasons
5. *Milestones* such as birthdays, baptism anniversaries, “first” milestones, entry to preschool and kindergarten
6. *Parenting knowledge* such as understanding young child development and practices for effective parenting of young children
7. *Parenting for faith skills* such as reading a Bible story, praying with a young child, having faith conversations
8. *Online group* for parents of young children (e.g., Facebook group)
9. *Gatherings for parents and for families* at church



## Resources

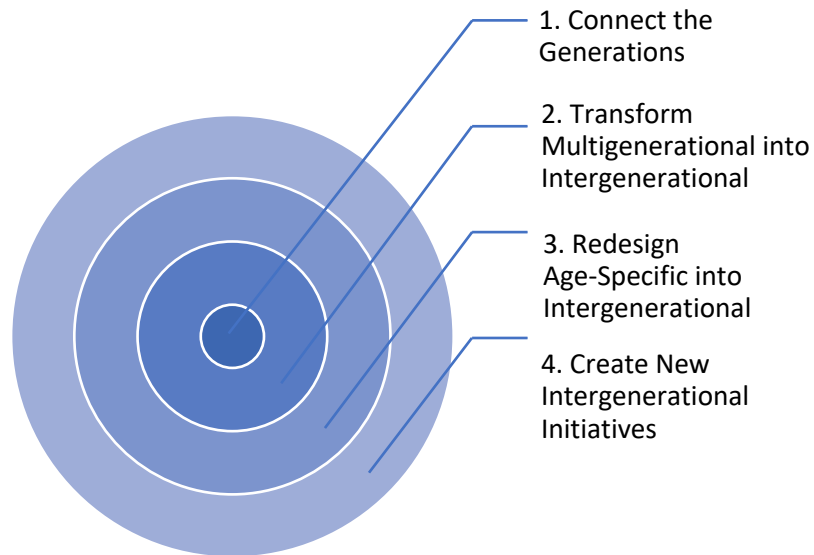
- ❖ For videos and articles on family faith formation go to the “family” section of the Lifelong Faith website: <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/family.html>.
- ❖ For video-based training to design family faith formation go Lifelong Faith Training: <https://www.lifelongfaithtraining.com/family-faith-formation.html>.
- ❖ For an example of a family faith formation website go to the Family Faith Practice website at <https://www.familyfaithpractice.com>.
- ❖ For curated resources for families go to the Lifelong Faith Studio website and find the “family resources” for each content area: <https://www.lifelongfaithstudio.com>.
- ❖ For free family programs go to the Intergenerational Faith website: <https://www.intergenerationalfaith.com>

## Systemic Idea #3. Strengthen the Intergenerational Fabric of the Church Community

It is well documented now that there has been a decades-long trend toward greater generational isolation in our society, now accelerated by the pandemic. A study by Springtide Research, *The State of Religion & Young People 2020: Relational Authority*, found that nearly 70 percent of young people ages thirteen to twenty-five report having three or fewer meaningful interactions per day. Nearly 40 percent say they feel they have no one to talk to and that no one really knows them well, at least some- times. More than one in four young people say they have one or fewer adults in their lives they can turn to if they need to talk. As the number of trusted adults in a young person’s life increases, their reported feelings of loneliness, social isolation, and stress decrease. The pandemic heightened the experience of isolation and loneliness across generations. Individuals and families shifted so many social things to home—work, school, shopping, food, fitness, and even church—that they lost social connection. Older adults dramatically reduced their outside interactions. Families with children and teens worked hard to limit outside exposure, and often selected particular family members or a few local families to create a safe “pod.”

People have a tremendous hunger for in-person relationships and shared experiences, like celebrating holidays, birthdays, and milestones with other generations. One of the best ways to overcome the loneliness and isolation people have experienced during the pandemic is to increase the number of opportunities for intergenerational relationships, experiences, and activities. Connecting the generations—(re)building intergenerational community, relationships, and experiences—is a tremendous opportunity for every church community.

A systemic response is to build a church culture of intergenerationality – to make a commitment to become more intentionally intergenerational in everything we do. Faith formation can take a lead in strengthening an intergenerational culture in four ways with increasing depth and scope:



Here are ideas to spark your own creativity for each of the four ways to strengthen an intergenerational church culture:

1. *Connect the Generations*: Creating small actions to build relationships, trust, and respect by praying for other generations; mixing generations in leadership and ministry teams; developing mentoring relationships between generations (old to young, young to old); and encouraging generations sharing and contributing at worship.
2. *Transform Multigenerational Settings into Intergenerational Experiences* by including relationship building activities; engaging in storytelling; praying for each other; participating in shared activities as mixed-generation groups; sharing leadership roles appropriate to gifts, abilities, and age; and making people feel welcome, respected, valued, and recognized by other generations.
3. *Redesign Age-Specific Programs into Intergenerational Experiences* by incorporating another generation to share their life story, faith, wisdom (interviews, storytelling, presentations, demonstrations); adding mentors or spiritual guides such as grandparent mentors for young parents and spiritual guides for young people in confirmation; adding regular intergenerational gatherings into age group programs throughout the year; and redesigning an age-specific program such as camp or vacation Bible school into a grandparent-grandchild program and a service program or mission trip into an intergenerational activity.
4. *Create New Intergenerational Initiatives* that will contribute toward building an intergenerational culture in your congregation by celebrating milestones throughout life as intergenerational experiences at church and home, conducting intergenerational learning programs—weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or seasonally—for the whole faith community;

offering intergenerational models of vacation Bible school, camp programs, Bible study programs; retreat programs (in a variety of time formats); and intergenerational local and global service projects, actions for justice, care for creation.

Develop a three year plan for strengthening the intergenerational fabric of your church community through faith formation by creating strategies for the four ways described above. Move from *connecting* and *transforming* into the more challenging *redesigning* and *creating* over three years. No one action brings about an intergenerational church culture. It is the cumulative effect of becoming intentional using these four ways that leads to strengthening the intergenerational fabric of your church community.

## Resources

- ❖ For videos and articles on intergenerational faith formation go to the “intergenerational” section of the Lifelong Faith website:  
<https://www.lifelongfaith.com/intergenerational.html>.
- ❖ For video-based training to design intergenerational faith formation go Lifelong Faith Training: <https://www.lifelongfaithtraining.com/intergenerational-faith-formation.html>.
- ❖ For free intergenerational programs go to the Intergenerational Faith website:  
<https://www.intergenerationalfaith.com>

## Systemic Idea #4. Create Menus of Faith Formation Experiences for All Ages

A significant systemic change in faith formation programming is the move from one-size-fits-all programming to multiple approaches and programming for each season of life (children, teens, young adults, midlife adults, mature adults, and older adults) that provide a variety of experiences, activities, content, and resources for diverse needs and interests; in a variety of formats (on-your-own learning, mentored, small group, large group, church-wide, in the community); with gathered in-person, online, and hybrid modes of faith formation.

The assumption of the one-size-fits all approach is that people of a certain age or stage of life learn in the same way, are in a similar place in their faith journey, have similar religious backgrounds, share common interests and learning needs, and, therefore, have the same religious and spiritual learning needs that can be addressed by one program. This mentality focuses churches on how to get everyone (whoever the audience might be) to participate in the one program.

Even though we all recognize the diversity of people’s religious experience and practice, churches continue to design “one-size-fits-all” programming because that mindset is so deeply ingrained in our practice. We know that the one-size-fits-all approach to curriculum and programming does not address the diverse spiritual-religious identities and needs of people. No one program, class, or resource can do that. Churches can offer a *menu of experiences* with wider variety of content,

experiences, and activities if we are going to help people grow and mature in faith and discipleship.

At every stage of life we can build a *menu of experiences* that include intergenerational, family, and age group activities. People can select programs, activities, and experiences from the menu to create their own learning plan for the year or for a season of the year. You can establish participation guidelines so that each year or season children (and their families) and youth would select a certain number of intergenerational experiences, family at-home activities, and age-specific programs at church. This approach puts the learner at the center of faith formation and gives them choice over what and when and where they will learn.

The menu approach can transform current one-size-fits-all marriage, baptism, first communion, and confirmation preparation programs. We can create a menu of faith-formation experiences—intergenerational, family, and age group-specific—tailored to the religious experience and practice of the people (i.e., people who are actively engaged in practicing their faith, who are minimally engaged, who are not engaged but want to participate in a significant milestone or sacrament). Use a menu approach to structure learning with experiences, programs, and activities designed to promote growth in faith for people who want to grow deeper in the faith, for those who are inquiring or aren't sure the Christian faith is for them, and for those who don't need God or religion in their lives.

At every stage of life – children (0–10), adolescents (11–19), young adults (20s–30s), midlife adults (40s–50s), mature adults (mid 50s–mid 70s), and older adults (75+) – we can offer people faith-forming experiences in intergenerational, family, and life stage settings with (1) a variety of content, programs, activities, and resources; (2) a variety of formats—on your own, mentored, small groups, and large groups; (3) a variety of scheduling—synchronous and asynchronous; and (4) in hybrid, online, and gathered modes of programming.

## Resources

- ❖ Read more about the menu approach to faith formation in the article: “Networks of Faith Formation” on the Lifelong Faith website: [www.LifelongFaith.com](http://www.LifelongFaith.com).
- ❖ For an example of an adult menu approach go to the Seasons of Adult Faith website at [www.SeasonsofAdultFaith](http://www.SeasonsofAdultFaith). See especially the Bible and Prayer and Spiritual Life sections for illustrations of a menu of faith forming experiences.
- ❖ For an example of a family menu approach go to the Family Faith Practice website at <https://www.familyfaithpractice.com>. See especially the Just for Parents section for an illustration of a menu of faith forming experiences.

## Systemic Idea #5. Building “Front Porch” Faith Forming Experiences



Churches are feeling the impact of the dramatic rise of disaffiliation from organized religion, and the challenge of greater diversity in religious practice. We know that people’s participation in church life and Sunday worship has been declining for the past two decades and has only accelerated during the pandemic. Many churches are expending a lot of time and energy on getting people “back to church” for worship and faith formation programming. This focus on “bringing back” needs to be balanced with an emphasis on “going out.”

What if churches and faith formation began to focus on “bringing the church to people”? What if we created “front porch experiences” – spaces, programs, and experiences that expand the scope and reach of the church into the lives of people in the neighborhood and community? What if we made a special effort to reach and engage people who are not involved or have given up on church or were never affiliated with any church or religion?

One way to build a “front porch” is to move some of the at-church programs and activities into community settings, such as Bible study offered in a café or a prayer/retreat experience offered at a retreat house or other quiet setting. Changing the location of a program opens up the possibility of inviting people to join in a “neutral” setting.

A second way is open-up programs currently sponsored by the church to the whole community, such as a vacation Bible school offered for all of the children in the community, and service projects and care for creation projects that welcome people from the community to get involved.

A third way is to offer activities directed to the needs, hungers, and interests of people sponsored by the church in a variety of settings and spaces so that everyone feels comfortable participating. We have seen examples of this type of outreach in the variety of “theology on tap” or “God on tap” programs offered for young adults in pubs. A church could offer a variety of projects targeted to different ages or audiences, for example:

- ◆ Workshops, resources, and support groups targeted to all parents of young children, grade school children, middle school and high school adolescents
- ◆ Family events for the whole community such as concerts, movie nights, games day
- ◆ Programs and activities designed for older adults at the senior center or adult living center or nursing home.
- ◆ A Dinner Church ministry (<https://dinnerchurch.com>) that brings people together over a meal to share stories, build relationships, and engage with each other spiritually.
- ◆ Career and life mentoring or coaching, especially for young adults
- ◆ Life skills courses for teenagers and young adults
- ◆ An arts program such as art exhibits or arts workshops
- ◆ A music program such as concerts, opportunities to join a musical group, and music workshops
- ◆ Community-wide service days, service projects, and mission trips
- ◆ And much more

## Conclusion

The five suggestions in this article – expanding hybrid approaches, creating seamless family faith formation, strengthening the intergenerational fabric of the faith community, creating menus of faith forming experiences, and building front porch experiences – are offered as a way to think and act systemically in faith formation. They are intended to spark your own creativity and help you to launch innovations in your church. Be sure to check out the resources suggested in this article to assist you in designing new initiatives.