Faith Formation in the Age of Networks
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Common Goals

Churches want faith formation that helps people. . .
➢ grow in their relationship with God throughout their lives
➢ live as disciples of Jesus Christ at home, in the workplace, in the community and the world
➢ develop an understanding of the Bible and their faith tradition
➢ deepen their spiritual life and practices
➢ engage in service and mission
➢ relate the Christian faith to life today
➢ participate in the life and ministries of the faith community
Lifelong Faith Formation

“Lifelong Christian Faith Formation in The Episcopal Church is lifelong growth in the knowledge, service and love of God as followers of Christ and is informed by Scripture, Tradition and Reason.”

(Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation)

Lifelong Faith Formation

Faith formation is an integrated process incorporating

1. formation through participation in the life of the faith community
2. education in Scripture and the Christian tradition
3. apprenticeship in the Christian life
4. intimate connection with the liturgy and rituals of the church
5. development of a life of prayer
6. engagement in actions of justice and service

(General Directory for Catechesis)
Emerging Convergence

Changes in Religious Landscape - Growing Diversity

New Internet & Communication Technologies

21st Century Faith Formation

New (Digital) Resources

AMERICA’S RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE
Increasing Diversity in Congregational Life

- Generational
- Ethnic & Cultural
- Family Structures
- Faith Practice
- Participation in Religious Congregations
- Religious & Spiritual Needs

5-Generation Diversity

- iGeneration (2000 - )
- Millennials (1980-99)
- Generation X (1961-79)
- Baby Boomers (1946-60)
- Builders (pre 1946)
1. Increasing number of “Nones”
2. Increasing number of “Spiritual but not Religious”
3. Accepting and embracing diversity: culturally, sexually, and in family structures
4. Declining participation in Sunday worship and sacraments/rites of passage (marriage, baptism)
5. Marrying later & having children later OR not marrying & having children, increasing inter-faith marriages
6. Declining levels of family faith practice & socialization
Diversity in Faith Practice & Religiosity

Not Religiously Affiliated  
Spiritual but Not Religious  
Minimal Engagement with Faith and Community  
Vibrant Faith & Active Engagement

Two Critical Uncertainties

Dominant Cultural Attitude toward Organized Religion
Receptive
Low People’s Hunger for God and the Spiritual Life
High
Resistant
4-Scenario Thinking

Scenario 4: Uncommitted & Participating
Scenario 1: Vibrant Faith & Active Engagement
Scenario 3: Unaffiliated & Uninterested
Scenario 2: Spiritual but Not Religious

Emerging Convergence

New Internet & Communication Technologies

Changes in Religious Landscape - Growing Diversity

21st Century Faith Formation

New (Digital) Resources
New Technologies Emerge
New Digital Resources

Video Programs
Online Resource Centers
Websites
Social Networks
Apps
Digital Books
Blogs
Online Courses

MIT OpenCourseWare

iTunes U
Click. Sync. Learn.

Stanford on iTunes U
Stanford to go.
To keep your family’s daily prayer life on track during the often-less-structured summer months, make a prayer calendar that specifies a special intention to pray for each day.

**Summer Prayer Calendar**

**By Julie Filby**

To keep your family’s daily prayer life on track during the often-less-structured summer months, make a prayer calendar that specifies a special intention to pray for each day.

**Needed**
- Preprinted calendar (or use the template on the next page), list of prayer intentions, markers or colored pencils
- Optional: corresponding photos of family members, friends and loved ones; adornments such as stickers, glitter and decorative papers

**Prepare in Advance**
- Purchase a calendar, use one you already have, or print off three copies of the template included: one for June, July, and August.
- Optional: Gather photos or other decorations to include on the calendar.
- Consider about 90 prayer intentions.

**Activity Plan**
1. Gather as a family and start a list of prayer intentions.
   - Include specific petitions such as each other, grandparents, extended family members, deceased family members, friends, neighbors, teachers, priests/pastors/church leaders and leaders of the country.
   - Consider general intentions near and dear to your hearts: the poor, hungry, sick, suffering, lonely, countries at war, and so on.
   - Include days of thanksgiving for your many blessings: a loving family, roof over your heads, good health, peaceful community, summer weather, summer fun, freedom, and so on.
2. Write a prayer intention on each day of the calendar. Optional: add a corresponding photo or drawing with the intention; or otherwise decorate the calendar.
3. When finished, designate someone to read 1 Timothy 2:1: “First of all, then, I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone.”
CHAPTER 3

Nicodemus. *Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. *FN 35 He came to Jesus at night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.” 36 Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old?” 37 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 38 Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” 39 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 40 ‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 41 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 42 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”*
It’s not a message problem!
It’s not a people problem!
It’s not a technology problem!
It’s not a resource problem!

It’s a delivery system problem –
the models we are using were created in a different era!

How do we provide 21st century faith formation?

21st Century Faith Formation

What could a 21st century approach to faith formation look like?

- How would we address the diversity of people’s religious and spiritual needs today?
- How would we engage people? How would we reach people?
- What technologies would we use?
- What resources would we access?
21st Century Faith Formation

We now have the models, resources, and technologies to . . .

- **Expand** faith formation to address the diversity of people today – life tasks and issues, religious and spiritual needs
- **Deliver** religious content and experiences to people wherever they are, 24 x 7 x 365
- **Engage** people in a wide variety of experiences tailored to their needs, interests, spiritual journey, and busy lives
- **Connect** people to each other – in physical places and virtual spaces
We are moving from the limitations of faith formation in a schooling, linear, textbook model with children and teens. . .
The 20th Century: Age of “Linear” Curriculum
The Shift to Networks

“I don’t think education is about centralized instruction anymore; rather, it is the process of establishing oneself as a node in a broad network of distributed creativity.”

Joi Ito

The Shift to Networks

“Planned information structures like textbooks and courses simply can’t adapt quickly enough to incorporate network-speed information development. Instead of being the hub of the learning experiences, books, courses, and classrooms become something more like a node in part of a much broader (often global) network. The shift to networks is transformative in how a society organizes itself.”

George Siemens
Instead of being the center of faith formation experiences, programs, classes, and books now become nodes on a much broader faith formation network that is lifelong and lifewide.

The shift to networks will be transformative in how we imagine and organize faith formation for all ages and generations.
One God. One Book. One Story.
Introducing The Biblical Story Course
Christ in Scripture from Genesis to Revelation

LEARN MORE  BUY NOW

Watch short films and videos
Explore in depth content
Learn through interactive quizzes
Discuss topics in groups

FROM THE BLOG:
"The Bible’s linguistic influence"
In its December 2011 issue, National Geographic celebrated the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, noting the reasons...

Packet (January 24, 2011)

OVERSEEN ON TWITTER:
NationalJournal: The Bible’s linguistic influence
@biblemesh
3 days ago

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING:
platform is a great way

iTunes U
Online Courses

**The Death of Jesus: Four Gospel Accounts**

*Introduction to the Witnesses, Evangelists, and Historical Context*—Rev. Dr. Simcha Jacobovici, Institute of Religion, New York University; Rev. Dr. John Dominic Crossan, Trinity College, Dublin

The course will explore the various testimonies to the death of Jesus in the New Testament Gospels. It will examine the differences in the accounts and the historical context in which they were written.

**Mentors and Community Programs**

User-generated content, social media, and video conferencing will be used to facilitate mentorship and community programs.

**Online Resources:**
- Print: Books, articles, videos
- Audio: Podcasts, music
- Video: Lectures, documentaries
- Apps: Mobile applications
- Blogs: Online journals
- Social Media: Platforms for connection

Lifelong Faith Formation Network is a way to provide faith formation for everyone, anytime, anywhere, 24x7x365.

**A Network Approach**
Multiple Models of Faith Formation

- Community & World
- Church Community
- Large Group
- Small Group
- Face-to-Face & Virtual
- On Your Own
- Mentored
- @Home

Network Model of Faith Formation

We are moving from . . .
One Size Fits All Curriculum & Programming
to
A Network of Personalized & Customized Faith Formation Activities & Resources
focusing on addressing people’s spiritual and religious diversity by offering a wide variety of religious content and experiences

Providing Differentiated Faith Formation
Personalized Faith Growth

Assessing Spiritual Growth

Working with a Mentor/Guide

Finding Resources on the Network

Engaging in Formation

Sharing with the Community

Reflecting on Growth and Identifying New Needs

Reflecting on Growth and Identifying New Needs

Engaging in Formation

Sharing with the Community

Finding Resources on the Network

Working with a Mentor/Guide

Assessing Spiritual Growth
**Blending Methods**

Offer programs and activities in face-to-face physical settings; in virtual, online settings, and in blended settings that combine both.

- They can be offered only in **physical locations**, such as church facilities, homes, retreat centers, camps, and community settings.
- They can be offered only in **virtual settings**, such as an online course, collaborative wiki, and online resource center.
- They can be offered in a **blended approach**, combining a gathering in a physical location with online delivery (activities, group projects, interaction) and some element of individual control over time, place, path, and/or pace.
## Blending Methods

| Fully online program or activity with options for face-to-face interaction in physical settings. | Mostly or fully online program or activity with regular interaction and programming in physical settings. | An online platform that delivers most of the program or activities with leaders providing on-site support on a flexible and adaptive as-needed basis through in-person mentoring and small group sessions. | Programs and activities in physical settings guided by a leader with online components that extend beyond the program sessions. | Programs and activities in physical settings that include online resources to supplement the program content. |

## Examples of Networks in Practice
### Building Networks

- Around Sunday worship
- Around service and mission projects
- Around programming: children’s faith formation, youth ministry, Vacation Bible School
- Around age groups/generations: young adults, midlife adults, Baby Boomers, older adults
- Around families

### Newly Married Couples

- Faith Formation Before Marriage
- Preparation for and Celebration of Marriage
- Faith Formation After Celebration of Marriage
Discernment

Faith Formation

Marriage Preparation

Mentors

Support Groups

Parish Website

S1 Faith Growth Plan

S2 Faith Growth Plan

S3 Faith Growth Plan

Couples before Marriage

Faith Growth Plan

MARRIAGE

MENTORS

FAITH PRACTICES

CONTINUING FORMATION

MARRIED LIFE TASKS & ISSUES

SUPPORT GROUPS

QUARTERLY COUPLE GATHERINGS

PRAYER, RITUALS, BIBLE READING, SERVICE, FAITH CONVERSATIONS

THEOLOGY, SCRIPTURE, SPIRITUALITY

COURSES, WORKSHOPS, ONLINE RESOURCES

Newly Married Couples
Newly Married Couples

MENTORS

SOCIAL NETWORK

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT - Workshops - Online - Retreats

SMALL GROUPS & Support Groups

MARRIAGE PREP - Online - Gathered

FAITH GROWTH - Programs - Online Courses & Resources

Families in the First Decade of Life

MENTORS

FAITH PRACTICES @ HOME

PARENT FORMATION & PARENTING SKILLS

MILESTONES

FAMILY LEARNING PROGRAMS

ONLINE RESOURCE CENTER

BAPTISM

Prayer, Rituals, Bible, Family Conversation, Service

Workshops Courses Online Resources Support Groups

Baptism Anniversary, First Prayers, Start of School

Church Gatherings Small Groups Workshops
Adult Faith Formation Network

Content Areas

- Faith & Life
- Spiritual Growth
- Community Life
- Life-Affirming Values
- Social Change
- Acts & Serves
Spiritual Growth

- Sunday Worship
- Online Theology Courses
- Retreats
- Small Group Bible Study
- Trip to the Holy Land (with Road Scholar)
- Day at the Monastery
- Book of the Month Club
- Monthly Spiritual Practices Series
- Online Prayer & Spirituality Resources

Extending Gathered Events

Gathered Events

- Worship
- Milestones
- VBS
- Mission Trips
- Educational Programs

Talk About It: Conversation Questions

Learn More: Watch a Video, Listen to a Talk, Read an Article

Live: Action Project for the Month

Pray Devotions, Bible Reading, Table Prayer

Share What You’re Learning: Write a Blog Entry, Create & Share a Video or Project

Family & Parents Center: How-to helps (video, audio, print) Family Faith Practices
Extending a Gathered Program

Building a Network: Extending Worship into Everyday Life

**Share It**
Blog/Forum
After Mass
In Programs
Family Conversation Activity

**Live It**
Living the Message Daily
Living Christian Practices
Service Ideas for the Week

**Study It**
Taking Faith Home Insert
Homily Video + Study Guide
Daily Readings
Scripture Commentaries
Online Bible Study

**Pray It**
Weekly Table Prayer
Praying with the Saints
AM & PM Prayer

Sunday Worship
Building a Network: Differentiating Faith Formation

Option 1. Program (current model)

Option 2. Small Group Program

Option 2. Online Small Group Program using Skype

Option 3. Mentored

Option 4. Online Program (print & video) with Regular Check-in

Core Content & Experiences

Social Networking Space for a Blog, Project Sharing

Online Projects (everyone)

Differentiating Faith Formation

Content & Activities for those of Vibrant Faith & Engagement

Core Content & Experiences for Everyone

Content & Activities for Spiritual but Not Religious

Content & Activities for Occasionals
Example: Confirmation

All Youth
- Sunday Worship
- Service projects
- Confirmation blog & online confirmation projects
- Celebration of confirmation

Scenario 1 (In-Depth Experience)
- In-depth faith formation in theology, Bible, spirituality, and Christian practices offered in different formats, customized to the needs of the young people: small group program, online courses and resources, and mentors
- Spiritual formation experience (retreat) on spiritual practices and disciplines
- Whole group confirmation-specific content
Example: Confirmation

Scenario 4 (Foundations Experience)

- Foundational program in Christian life essentials offered as a whole group experience, integrating confirmation-specific content
- Experience of Christian practices and spiritual disciplines
- Active participation in the activities of church life and ministries; apprenticeships with ministries and leaders to experience church life as “insiders”
- Mentors to guide growth and participation in church life
- Whole group confirmation-specific content

Example: Confirmation

Scenarios 2 and 3 (Exploration Experience)

- Exploration experience to investigate the claims of the Christian faith in an informal, no pressure, non-judgmental, and friendly environment, offered in small group settings with a meal and including topics such as: Who is God? Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus die? Who is the Holy Spirit? How can we have faith? Why and how do I pray? Why and how should I read the Bible? How does God guide us? How can I resist evil? What about the Church? How can I make the most of the rest of my life?
- Introductory experiences of Christian life through participating in Christian practices, service, worship, and so on.
We Can Now Provide Faith Formation for All Ages & Generations!