DESIGNING A FAITH FORMATION NETWORK

VISION & PRACTICE OF 21ST CENTURY FAITH FORMATION
JOHN ROBERTO

Network Design Process

Identify a Target Audience
Research the Target Audience
Define the Group's Point of View
Test the Network Prototype
Design the Network

Implement the Network with a Wider Audience & Continue Evaluation and Improvements

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INNOVATION DESIGN PROCESS
STANFORD SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Empathize  Define  Ideate  Prototype  Test

STEP 1
RESEARCH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Children & Families
Teens & Families
Emerging Adults: 20s-30s
Young Adults: 30s-40s
Mid-Life Adults: 40s-50s
Mature Adults: 50s-70s (Baby Boomers)
Older Adults: 75+
Families
All Ages/Multigenerational

1. Life Tasks
2. Life Issues
3. Milestones and Life Transitions
4. Spiritual & Religious Needs
5. Ethnic-Cultural Needs
6. ___________
STEP 1
RESEARCH YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

1. Review the relevant research and effective faith formation practices for your target audience.
2. Conduct focus groups.
3. Conduct research out in the community.
4. Use an Empathy Map to name your insights from the research.

RESEARCH YOUR AUDIENCE

Empathy is the foundation of a human-centered design process. To empathize, we:

- **Observe.** View users and their behavior in the context of their lives.
- **Engage.** Interact with and interview users through 1-1 interviews and focus groups.
- **Immerse.** Experience what your user experiences.
## RESEARCH - EMPATHY MAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAY</th>
<th>DO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you hear your target group saying?</td>
<td>What actions and behaviors do you notice in your target group?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THINK</th>
<th>FEEL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What might your target group be thinking? What does this tell you about their beliefs/convictions?</td>
<td>What emotions might your target group be feeling?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## 10 DECADES OF LIFELONG FAITH FORMATION

- 0-10
- 11-19
- 20s
- 30s
- 40s
- 50s
- 60s
- 70s
- 80s
- 90s
10 DECADES OF LIFE

Children

- Religious socialization & faith practices
- Whole family & intergenerational faith formation
- Parent formation

Teens

- Exploring & discerning
- High quality, diverse faith formation experiences
- Guides & mentors

Millennials

- Fresh expressions & explorations of faith & spirituality
- New forms of communal life
- Mission & service
- Christian practice
- Making a life
- Developing intimacy

10 DECADES OF LIFE

Baby Boomers

- Giving their lives purpose, meaning, & fulfillment
- Spiritual growth in the 2nd half of life
- Making a difference
- Life transitions
- Grandparenting
- Staying connected intergenerationally

Gen Xers

- Embodied, expressive & experiential faith & spirituality
- Communities of belonging and mission
- Artistic expression
- Parenting & family life
- Living solo

Older Adults

- Accepting one’s life journey and faith story
- Confronting losses & accepting gains
- Experiencing a new (renewed) relationship with God
- Health issues & life transitions
- Family
CHILDREN

Religious socialization through the congregation & family.

- Internalization of faith practices
- Whole family learning
- Immersion into the faith life of the church community with robust intergenerational experiences of worship, learning, & service
- Parent faith formation: growing in faith, modeling the Christian faith, and teaching their children

FAMILY RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION

Parental Faith

Parental Modeling & Teaching

Faith

Prayer

Scripture Reading
INTERGENERATIONAL

Intergenerational connection and involvement during high school promotes mature faith in both high school and college – a “sticky faith.”

- Welcoming and valuing young people’s participation in the life of the church
- Worshipping with all of the generations
- Serving and building relationships with younger children
- Having significant relationships with adults in the church and having the community show interest in them
INTERGENERATIONAL

Churches and families wanting to instill deep faith in youth should help them build a web of relationships with committed and caring adults.

**Becoming a 5:1 Church**

5 Adults to 1 Young Person in Worship, Teaching, Mentoring, Rituals, & Community Life

ADOLESCENTS

Exploration experiences & discernment

- An adventure of local and global explorations into the Bible, Christian tradition, worship, justice, service, ministry, leadership. . . .
- Informed and trustworthy adults who serve as tour guides and companions on the journey of exploration
- Youth as the creators of religious content and experiences
SECOND DECADE: EXPLORATION EXPERIENCES

Local Church Life & Ministries:
- Worship
- Service
- Leadership
- Pastoral Care

Global Church
World Religions

Inquiry Learning:
Bible, Christian beliefs, history and tradition

Online Learning Resources:
- People
- Audio & Video Conferencing
- Virtual Tours

Ministry & Leadership Apprenticeships

YOUNG ADULTS/MILLENNIALS

- A living & learning laboratory to create fresh expressions of the Christian faith that both honor the tradition and reflect the millennial generation’s perspectives.
- Fresh expressions of the Biblical message, Christian teachings & practices, spiritual disciplines, worship, art and music, mission to the world, church community. . . .
- A generational faith community that embodies these expressions & is still connected to the intergenerational church community

- Engaging in mission & service
- Developing a Christian life – practices
- Making a life; developing intimate relationships
MIDDLE-ADULTS/GEN XERS

- An embodiment of the religious experience, both physically (rituals and gestures) and socially through a welcoming and caring religious community
- An ability and willingness to place the particular congregation within the larger history of Christianity
- A recognition of the importance of artistic expression—whether musical, visual, or through some other medium—to the spiritual journey
- Faith communities that provide encouragement and direction to pursue spiritually-driven passions, whether through service to others or via creative expression.
- Focus on parenting and family life; values, building strong families, activities
- Going solo: making a life as a single person
- Managing career
- Balancing multiple involvements

BABY BOOMERS

- **Service**: Boomers want service opportunities that have a mission—doing things that give their lives purpose, meaning, and fulfillment.
- **Spiritual Growth**: Boomers are in a season of significant life transitions—seeking meaning and purpose in the second half of life.
- **Intergenerational Relationships**: Boomers want to stay connected with the other generations—sharing their lives and faith across generations.
- Life issues & transitions—careers, housing, retirement, relationships, finances
- Family life & grandparenting
- Caring for aging parents
STEP 2
IDENTIFY NETWORK THEMES/CONTENT

1. Identify the big themes or content areas.
2. Add existing programming, events, activities, etc.
3. Select the themes or content areas that you will add to your network.

NETWORKS OF FAITH FORMATION

- Mentors & Guides
- Sunday Worship
- Age-Specific Programs
- Family & Intergen. Programs
- Online Courses, Webinars, & Podcasts
- Faith Practices
- Spiritual Formation
- Scripture & Theological Enrichment
- Justice Service & Mission
- Life Tasks, Issues, & Milestones
- Community Outreach
- (re) Discovering Faith
Families with Children Network

- Bringing Sunday Worship Home
- Whole Family Programs
- Intergenerational Experiences
- Children’s Programs & Events
- Faith Practices: Bible, Prayer, Rituals, Service
- Parent Faith Formation
- Parenting Education & Support Groups
- “Getting Started in Faith” Experiences
- Milestones
- Mentors for Parents
- Parent Faith Formation

Youth Faith Formation Network

- Confirmation Program
- Adolescent Life Issues
- Parent-Teen Activities & Resources
- Bible Study & Religious Learning
- Service Projects & Mission Trips
- Prayer & Spiritual Formation
- Youth Leadership
- Intergenerational Connections
- Parent Faith Formation
- Milestones
- Parent Education & Support Groups
1. Generate **new** programs, activities, or strategies to program each theme or content area.

2. Add **blending learning** programs for existing or new programming.

3. Use a variety of learning environments.

4. Design new initiatives to address priority needs.

5. Research resources for your programs.
LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Courses & workshops
- Large group learning events
- Online courses & activities
- Small groups: Bible study, theological study, faith sharing, mission/action groups, support groups
- Mentored experiences
- Webinars & video conferencing
- Audio and video podcasts
- Apps and digital resources
- Extended programs, camps, mission trips
**BLENDED FAITH FORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Sunday Worship</th>
<th>Resource</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online Courses</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apps &amp; E-newsletters</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online Prayer &amp; Spirituality</td>
<td>Resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Small Group Bible Study</td>
<td>Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Growth for Baby Boomers</td>
<td>Trip to the Holy Land (with Road Scholar)</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<td>Retreats</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<td>Day at the Monastery</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<td>Spiritual Book of the Month Club</td>
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<td>Monthly Spiritual Practices Series</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spiritual Seeker Program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Third Place Spiritual Conversations</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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**BLENDED FAITH FORMATION**

| Fully online with options for face-to-face interaction in physical settings. | Mostly or fully online with regular interaction in physical settings. | Online platform that delivers most of the program with support, mentoring, and small groups. | Programs in physical settings guided by a leader with online components. | Programs in physical settings with online resources to supplement the program. |
“PROGRAMMING” THE NETWORK

1. Flip Sunday School or Youth Group: learn on your own or in small groups outside of the gathered program; discuss/apply/practice/demonstrate at the gathered program.
2. Connect Church Programs/Events with Online Content.
3. Offer 1 Program in Multiple Formats.
4. Offer an Online Video Program (in a Google+ Hangout) for Small Groups with Online Content.
5. Offer Online Courses & Activities with the Option for Mentors, Small Group Experience, or Large Group Gathering.
6. Offer a Webinar or Streaming Presentation (at a scheduled time and available as a recording later) with Online Learning.
7. Differentiate Program Content using Gathered Settings for Core Content & Experiences, and Online Learning with 1-1 Mentored and/or Small Group Experiences.

ONE PROGRAM – DIFFERENT MODES

Course or Program or Workshop

1. Presentation/Teaching at Church
2. Continuing Learning Online: post-presentation to extend learning
3. Streaming the Presentation Online (real time)
4. Online Video Course – learning on your own with a mentor
5. Online Video Course – small group experience “off-campus” using a small group learning plan
LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

VIRTUAL & PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS
- Church facilities
- Home
- Workplace
- Schools
- Camps
- Retreat Centers
- Museums
- Libraries
- Restaurants & coffee shops
- Sports settings

VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS
- Network Website
- Website Resource Centers
- Online Schools
- YouTube, Ted Talks, etc.
- Pinterest
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Google+
- Meeting Sites (Meetup)
- Edmodo
FAITH FORMATION CONTENT

1. Church Programs & Activities
2. Community Programs & Activities
3. People Resources
4. Print Resources
5. Audio & Video Resources
6. Art, Drama, and Music Resources
7. Online Content: Websites, Blogs, Video
8. Online Education: Webinars, Courses
9. Apps & Digital Resources

STEP 4
BUILD AN ONLINE PLATFORM
ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
INTERACTIVITY + SOCIAL MEDIA
STEP 5
CREATE & TEST A PROTOTYPE

Implement the faith formation network through small scale prototyping with a small group of your target audience.

STEP 5
TEST A PROTOTYPE

Testing is the chance to refine our solutions and make them better. Prototype as if you know you’re right, but test as if you know you’re wrong.

- Refine our prototypes and solutions.
- Learn more about our user. Testing is another opportunity to build empathy through observation and engagement—it often yields unexpected insights.
- Test and refine our POV. Sometimes testing reveals that not only did we not get the solution right, but also that we have failed to frame the problem correctly.
STEP 5
TEST A PROTOTYPE

- Prototyping is getting ideas and explorations out of your head and into the physical world.
- In early explorations keep your prototypes rough and rapid to allow yourself to learn quickly and investigate a lot of different possibilities.
- Prototypes are most successful when people (the design team, the user, and others) can experience and interact with them. What you learn from those interactions can help drive deeper empathy, as well as shape successful solutions.

STEP 5
TEST A PROTOTYPE

We prototype to:

1. **Learn**: If a picture is worth a thousand words, a prototype is worth a thousand pictures.
2. **Solve disagreements**: Can eliminate ambiguity, assist in ideation, and reduce miscommunication.
3. **Start a conversation**: Can be a great way to have a different kind of conversation with users.
4. **Fail quickly and cheaply**: Allows you to test a number of ideas without investing a lot of time and money up front.
5. **Manage the solution-building process**: Encourages you to break a large problem down into smaller, testable chunks.
WHY use a feedback capture grid

Use a feedback capture grid to facilitate real-time capture or post-mortem unpacking of feedback on presentations and prototypes. Times when presenter-critic interaction is anticipated. This can be used either to give feedback on progress within the design team or to capture a user’s feedback about a prototype. You use the grid because it helps you be systematic about feedback and more intentional about capturing thoughts in the four different areas.

HOW to use a feedback capture grid

1. Section off a blank page or whiteboard into quadrants.
2. Draw a plus in the upper left quadrant, a delta in the upper right quadrant, a question mark in the lower left quadrant, and a light bulb in the lower right quadrant.

It's pretty simple, really. Fill the four quadrants with your or a user’s feedback. Things one likes or finds notable, place in the upper left; constructive criticism goes in the upper right; questions that the experience raised go in the lower left; ideas that the experience or presentation spurred go in the lower right. If you are giving feedback yourself, strive to give input in each quadrant (especially the upper two: both “likes” and “wishes”).
.CONNECTING & COMMUNICATING

DESCRIBING, CONNECTING, AND PROMOTING YOUR NETWORK

Be sure to pay careful attention to the titles and descriptions so that they capture people’s interests. Develop descriptions that are positive in tone, indicate clearly the content or focus of an activity.

1. Describe how your offerings respond to something within the lives of people. Highlight the relationship between the content and the particular spiritual or religious needs, interests, passions, concerns, or life issues of people.
2. Describe the 2-3 benefits of participating or engaging in faith formation.
3. Explain to people how to use the Network and how to access the activities and resources.
CONNECTING STRATEGIES

1. Connect to (or extend from) a gathered event, program, ministry.
2. Use personalized invitations.
3. Establish a Facebook page for faith formation for Network announcements, updates, stories and photos from people engaged in faith formation, etc.
4. Use Twitter to announce updates, events, and invite reflections from people on their experiences in the Network.
5. Send email or regular e-newsletters to targeted groups (use a service like Constant Contact).
6. Provide ways to share experiences using blogs, Twitter, Facebook: videos, reports, photos, etc.

CONNECTING TO SOCIAL NETWORKS

Our social network is made up of all the people we’re connected to, all the people they are connected to, all the people they are connected to, and so on.
RESEARCH - FOCUS GROUPS

8-12 people in your target group reflecting a diversity of people

1. How would you describe your age group in key words or phrases?
2. What are some of the key life tasks that your age group is experiencing?
3. What are some of the important life issues that your age group is experiencing today?
4. What are the significant spiritual issues that your age group is experiencing today?
5. What are the most meaningful experiences you have in life? What makes these experiences meaningful to you?
RESEARCH - FOCUS GROUPS

6. How important is your relationship with God? Why?
7. Where do you experience God most?
8. What is most important to you about being a Christian (or a member of a particular denomination or faith tradition) today?
10. How can the church help you to continue growing as a Christian? Be specific. Name some of the things you would like to see your church offer for your age group?

DEFINE – POINT OF VIEW (POV)

The define mode is when you unpack and synthesize your empathy findings into compelling needs and insights, and scope a specific and meaningful challenge. It is a mode of “focus” rather than “flaring.”

Task: to come up with an actionable problem statement: the point of view of your target audience(s)
**DEFINE - POV**

Your **point of view** should be a guiding statement that focuses on specific users, and insights and needs that you uncovered during the empathize mode.

A point of view (POV) is your reframing of a design challenge into an actionable problem statement that will launch you into a generative ideation.

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**DEFINE - POV**

A good point of view (POV) is one that:
1. Provides focus and frames the problem
2. Inspires your team
3. Provides a reference for evaluating competing ideas
4. Fuels brainstorm by suggesting “how might we” statements
5. Captures the hearts and minds of people you meet
6. Saves you from the impossible task of developing concepts that are all things to all people
7. Is something you revisit and reformulate as you learn by doing
8. Guides your innovation efforts
A POV Want Ad can be a good way to express your distilled findings in an intriguing format. The want ad format tends to accentuate a specific user, and her important character traits. Embed your user, his or her need, and your insights within the format of a want ad.

**Format**

Descriptive characterization of a user. . . . .

followed by “seeks” an ambiguous method to meet an implied need . . . .

plus additional flavor to capture your findings. . . .
MATURE ADULT POV WANT AD

Active, energetic, empty-nest, working & retiring, grandparent (and almost grandparent), “always young” Baby Boomer adults seek a faith community that engages them in meaningful spiritual growth and faith enrichment, provides enriching worship services, engages them in making a contribution to the church & world, and connects them to each other and the other generations in the faith community. Must be a faith community that sees us as an experience-rich generation ready to make a difference in our mature adult years. Just don’t call us OLD or offer us “old people” trips to the casino!

FAMILY POV WANT AD

Family Example

Time crunched, stressed and pressured families seek connections, support and guidance to develop a strong, healthy, value-centered family life where faith can be applied to daily needs. Must deal with contradiction that we want to feel welcome and involved, but don't bug me or take my time.
YOUNG ADULT POV - WANT AD

Young Adult Examples
A single energetic young adult seeks a social network. Desires a connection with others to get together and serve our community, hang out & have fun. Passionate about making a difference and doesn't want to be left on the sidelines.

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Highly motivated single young adults seek engaging faith-based social network that will help them navigate fast paced living in a hook-up town.