## Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA – Reimagining Faith Formation Project

## *Workshop #1. Designing New Faith Formation Initiatives*

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| Design Principles 1. Focus on the life tasks, needs, interests, and spiritual and faith journeys of people in the target audience.
2. Target the spiritual and religious diversity in the target audience.
3. Develop programming around the essential eight faith-forming processes.
4. Offer a wide variety of programming to address the diversity of adults’ lives.
5. Use multiple environments for programming: self-directed, mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, church-wide, in the community, and in the world.
6. Design online and digitally enabled strategies into all programming.
7. Incorporate intergenerational programming into faith formation.
8. Design missional initiatives to reach the spiritual but not religious and the unaffiliated.
 | Design Process Step 1. Research your target audience and identify needsStep 2. Build the faith formation network designStep 3. Generate programming for the faith formation networkStep 4. Design a season of faith formation programmingStep 5. Build the digital platform—a faith formation websiteStep 6. Design a process for assessing & personalizing learningStep 7. Test the seasonal plan and web designStep 8. Launch the faith formation networkStep 9. Evaluate the season of programmingStep 10. Design the new season of programming |

### Innovation Design Process

(Stanford School of Design)

#### #1. Developing a Profile of Key Themes from Research

**Target Audience \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| **Observation** | **Interviews** | **Focus Groups** |
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#### #2. Developing a Profile & Generating Ideas

**Target Audience \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| **Faith Formation Content Areas** | **Important Needs from Research for this Area**  | **Current Programming in this Area** | **Intergenerational Events/Programs that Connect to this Area** | **New Program Ideas**  | **Digital Strategies** |
| **Caring Relationships:** intergenerational and peer relationships, supportive communities  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Celebrating the Liturgical Seasons**: feasts and seasons of the church year  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Celebrating Rituals and Milestones**: celebrating rituals, sacraments, and milestones at significant moments in one’s life journey and faith journey  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Reading the Bible**: studying and interpreting the Bible—its message, its meaning, and its application to life today |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Learning the Christian Tradition:** learning the content of the tradition (Trinity, Jesus, church, beliefs, morality and ethics), reflecting upon that content, integrating it into one’s faith life, applying it to life today, and living its meaning in the world |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Praying, Devotions, and Spiritual Formation**: personal and communal prayer; being formed by the spiritual disciplines |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Serving and Justice**: living the Christian mission in the world—engaging in service to those in need, care for God’s creation, and action and advocacy for justice |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Worshipping God with the Faith Community**: experiencing God’s living presence through Scripture, preaching, and Eucharist; and being sent forth on mission |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Addressing Life Stage Needs & Interests & Transitions** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Missional Activities:** Outreach & relationship building in the wider community; building pathways to faith and discipleship and community belonging |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Additional Area** |  |  |  |  |  |

#### Family Only Profile

**Family Stage of Life \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| **Faith Formation Content Areas** | **Important Needs from Research for this Area**  | **Current Programs in this Area****- At Home****- At Church** | **Intergenerational Events/Programs that Connect to this Area** | **New Program Ideas for this Area** | **Digital Strategies** |
| **Caring Relationships:** intergenerational and family relationships at home and church |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Celebrating the Liturgical Seasons**: at home & church |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Celebrating Rituals and Milestones**: at home and church |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Reading the Bible**: at home and church |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Learning the Christian Tradition:** at home and church |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Praying, Devotions, and Spiritual Formation**: at home and church |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Serving and Justice**: at home and church |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Worshipping God with the Faith Community**: at church |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Addressing Family Life Stage Needs & Interests & Transitions** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Building Family Assets*** Nurturing relationships
* Establishing routines
* Maintaining expectations
* Adapting to challenges
* Connecting to the community
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| **Ministry with Parents*** Parent faith formation
* Parenting for faith growth skills
* Parenting knowledge and skills
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| **Missional Activities:** Outreach & relationship building in the wider community; building pathways to faith and discipleship and community belonging |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Additional Area** |  |  |  |  |  |

#### #3. Generating New Ideas

**Key Questions**

* What new programming do we need to offer to address the needs that surfaced in our research?
* What would our target audience like to see the church offer them through faith formation?
* How can we address the audience’s needs through age-specific programming?
* How can we address the audience’s needs through intergenerational or family programming?
* How can we develop missional outreach programming and strategies to reach the spiritual but not religious and the unaffiliated in our target audience.

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| **“What If” You Used Your Imagination?**Use imagination to generate ideas. The easiest way to begin is by saying: “I need fresh and novel ideas to solve my challenge. I will suspend all judgment and see what free and easy ideas we can think up. It doesn’t matter how weird or offbeat they are.” Ask team members to list as many “what if” statements as they can on Post-it notes (for example, “What if we developed a community café to reach people who are spiritual, but not involved in the church community?”). Ask them to complete the “What if…” statement personally, writing one statement per post-it. After several minutes, ask people to place their Post-it notes on a sheet of easel paper. Then cluster similar ideas together. A sense of priority is often revealed as one or more of the clusters claim the energy and interest of the group.  | **“How Might We”**Brainstorm responses to the question: “How Might We?” Distribute Post-it® notes and pens/markers to everyone on the team. Ask them to start their opportunity statements with “How Might We . . . ” and abbreviate on post-its with “HMW.” Go for quantity, not quality at this point. Post all of the ideas on sheets of easel paper. Cluster similar HMW statements.  |

#### #4. Building a Faith Formation Network

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| Foundational Content Areas1. Caring Relationships
2. Celebrating the Seasons
3. Celebrating Rituals & Milestones
4. Learning the Christian Tradition
5. Praying & Spiritual Formation
6. Reading the Bible
7. Serving, Working for Justice, & Caring for Creation
8. Worshipping God
9. Missional
10. Life Issues
11. Life-Stage
12. Major Programs
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#### #5. Designing a Season of Programming

1. **First**, identify the season: January 1–May 1 or May 1–September 1 or September 1–January 1.
2. **Second**, add continuing age-group programs to the seasonal plan. Use the seasonal plan template to record the results: list the network content areas and then add the programs to the appropriate month.
3. **Third**, add intergenerational events and programs from the faith community to the seasonal plan. Explore the possibility of redesigning current age-specific programs to become intergenerational experiences. Explore the possibility of designing new programs that are built around intergenerational events and programs. (For more ideas go to www.IntergenerationalFaith.com.) Add redesigned or new programming to the seasonal plan.
4. **Fourth**, explore the possibility of redesigning existing programming by adding a digital blended strategy, such as adding digital content to extend a program, or “flipping” the program, or offering the program in multiple learning environments, such as video recording a presentation to offer it online as a self-study or small group study or offering the same program as in a large group format or small group format. (See the blended faith formation ideas in Chapter Three.) Add redesigned or new programming to the Seasonal Plan.
5. **Fifth**, review all of the new age-specific programs and intergenerational events/programs generated in Design Step 3. Select new program ideas to introduce in this season. Use the Seasonal Plan template to record the results: list the content areas and then add the programs to the appropriate month.
* Try to provide programs in *different learning environments* and/or one program in multiple learning environments: on your own (self-directed), with a mentor, at home, in small groups, in large groups, in the congregation, in the community, in the world.
* Try to implement a program idea with a *blended (digital) faith formation* strategy: gathered program with online content, gathered program andonline content, online and gathered in one program, mostly online, and fully online.
1. **Sixth**, develop the final version of the seasonal plan. Select the program ideas for each network content area. Some content areas may have too many programs to launch in one season. Select the ones that will be included in this season and save the other program ideas for another season.

Schedule programming in each network content area. Some of the programming flows through multiple months in a season, such as a weekly Bible study group or children’s program. Some programs are monthly, such as a monthly webinar for parents. While other programs are seasonal—Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter—and therefore anchored in one or more months. Still other programming/resources are always available, such as an online course or a video program or Bible study resources. One way to manage the variety of programming is to focus on one month of major programming in the network content areas. For example the “Learning the Tradition” content area might select one month to schedule its theology enrichment series with four presentations from guest experts and options for small group study and online study using the video recordings. The Bible area might focus its programming in different month, perhaps around a church year season, such as Lent. This approach reduces the overlap among major programming and helps people participate in multiple experiences. See the example of adult and family learning pages in Step 5. (For an online example of this monthly approach view http://holytrinityadults.weebly.com, and http://holytrinityfamilies.weebly.com.)

##### Programming Examples

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| **Adult Learning Page: November Scripture Enrichment***Focus:* Gospel of the New Lectionary Cycle beginning in Advent1. Three-session speaker series on major themes in the gospel: Thursday from 7:30–9:00 pm at the church center.
2. Video presentations of the three sessions online for self study.
3. Video presentations of the three sessions online for small group study with accompany study guide.
4. Scripture study groups using a four-session introduction to the major themes of the gospel conducted at church, in homes, and in the community.
5. Gospel self-study using links to Scripture websites such as www.enterthebible.org from Luther Seminary.
6. Online course on the gospel with one or more links to existing online courses at a seminary or university or on iTunes U in the Apple iTunes Store
 | **Family Learning Page: For Parents Only***Focus:* Parenting Education1. “First Wednesdays” parent webinar series: 9:00–10:00 pm online with guest presenter. Each month presents a topic of interest for parents, such as positive parenting, communicating well, raising responsible children and teens, celebrating rituals and milestones, and more.
2. “Learn More About. . . .” resources on parenting topics with links to expert websites and videos, such as www.ParentFurther.com from The Search Institute.
3. “Secrets of Happy Families” five-session book group using Bruce Feiler’s book of the same name with study groups organized at church, in homes, in a Google+ Hangout, and by parents in self-organized groups. Study group and supportive resources available on the For Parents Only page.
4. Parent videos on a variety of topics available for viewing on the For Parents Only page or with descriptions and links to YouTube or other websites.
5. List of valuable websites and online resources for parents such as the Boys Town Parenting Center with a national hotline just for parents available 24 hours a day.
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**Final Plan for the Season**

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| **Content Area** | **Programming & Dates** |
|  | **Month 1** | **Month 2** | **Month 3** | **Month 4** |
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**Lastly**, develop specific plans for each program. Include the following information: **1) Date or month, 2) Learning environment(s), 3) Digital strategy(s), 4) Resources, 5) Leaders,** and **6) Cost.**

#### Online & Digitally-Enabled Faith Formation

**Online ---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------- Face-to-Face**

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|  **Fully Online**An online program with all learning done online and limited face-to-face, gathered learning settings |  **Mostly Online**A mostly online program with opportunities for regular interaction in face-to-face, gathered settings | **Online and Gathered**Online learning focused on presenting the content of the program *combined with* face-to-face, gathered sessions using active learning methods to discuss, practice and apply the content.  | **Gathered and** **Online Content**A gathered event or program that provides online content and activities to extend and expand the learning from the gathered program | **Gathered with Online Content**A gathered event or program that uses online content as part of the design of the event or program |

#### Multiple Environments for Ministry and Faith Formation

1. **Independent (on your own, self-directed)** programming provides maximum flexibility for the person—when to learn, how to learn, where to learn, and what to learn. With the increasing number and variety of books and printed resources, audio podcasts, video presentations, video programs, online courses, and online resource centers, independent learning offers a 24/7 approach to faith growth and learning for busy people. Congregations can serve as guide to helping people find the best learning format and content to address their learning needs, and then deliver that programming online at the church’s faith formation website.
2. **Mentoring** provides a one-to-one relationship for faith formation that can be utilized as an individual program option, such as a spiritual director/guide with an individual, or as a component in a larger program, such as having mentors for each person in the Christian initiation process or for those who want to explore Jesus and Christianity after leaving church earlier in life. Mentoring works older to younger, but also younger to older as in the case of young people mentoring older adults on the use of digital tools and media.
3. **At Home** programming provides individuals and whole families with faith formation programs, activities, and resources designed for use at home or in daily life, and delivered through a faith formation website. This can include a wide variety of digital media and online programs and resources, such as online learning programs, resources for the church year seasons, Sunday worship resources, online communities and support groups, and links to online faith formation resources and resource centers.
4. **Small Group** programming provides an excellent way to address the diversity of needs by organizing a variety of small groups with each one targeted to a particular need or topic. Small groups also provide lots of flexibility in schedule and location. Groups can meet at times and places that best fit their lives, such as group that meets for breakfast weekly at the local restaurant or for coffee at a local coffee shop. Small groups create an accepting environment in which new relationships can be formed. It is not always necessary for the congregation to sponsor small group programs. Congregational leaders can provide resources, support, and training for leaders, thereby enabling people to organize their own small groups. Small group programming learning can take many different forms including:
* Discipleship or faith sharing groups or study groups such as Bible study groups, theological formation study groups, theme or issue oriented study groups, Sunday lectionary-based faith sharing groups, book study groups
* Practice-focused groups such as prayer groups and service/faith in action groups
* Support groups such as parent groups, caregiving groups, life transition groups
* Ministry groups involved in leadership in the church and world

Study-action small groups combine study with an experiential hands-on action project . One type of study-action model focuses on engaging people in the ministry of justice and service, weaving together study, small group learning, retreat experiences, and action projects. (The programs from JustFaith Ministries: http://justfaith.org are a good example of this .) A second type of study-action model involves ministry or leadership groups that prepare for their particular ministry or leadership role through study accompanied by actual involvement in their ministry or leadership role. This type of learning involves a continuous cycle of study-action-study-action, as the involvement in action generates new learning needs.

1. **Large Group** programming provides a way to serve a large number of people on topics that appeal to a wide audience. Here is a sampling of large group programming:
* Multi-session programs, such as multi-week courses on theological themes, books of the Bible, parenting at particular stages of family life, life issues)
* One-session program, such as a monthly session on a theological topic
* Speaker series, such as a multi-evening or multi-week program focused around a particular theological themes, Christian practices, current events, or the season of the church year
* Roundtable discussions after Sunday worship, such as exploring the Sunday Scripture readings in age groups or intergenerational groups with refreshments
* Parent parallel learning program at the same time as their children’s program
* Workshops, such as one day programs targeted to specific life issues—parenting, mid-life issues, aging, and more
* Film festivals that explore key themes such as relationships, social issues, and meaning in life, and then explore faith themes in the films
* Field trips, such as visiting an art museum or attending a musical or theatrical performance and then exploring faith themes in art or music or drama
* Retreat experiences in an evening, one-day, or weekend format at church or at a retreat center
* Intergenerational programs for all ages in the congregation
1. **Congregational** programming focuses on the events already present in the life of the church: Sunday worship, the feasts and seasons of the church year, sacramental and ritual celebrations, works of justice and acts of service, prayer experiences, spiritual traditions, and events that originate within the life and history of a individual congregation. Faith formation can provide experiences for people to *prepare*—with the appropriate knowledge and practices—for participation in the central events of church life and the Christian faith; and to *guide* their *participation* and *reflection* upon those events. Congregational programming includes leadership and ministry in the congregation and to the world—providing the opportunity for faith formation to prepare people for leadership and ministry, and to reflect upon their engagement.
2. **Community and World** programming provides a way for congregations to utilize existing programs and activities outside the church as part of a faith formation plan. This involves researching the resources and programs being offered locally in the community (programs, courses, clinics, workshops, presentations, and more) at community colleges and universities, retreat centers, YMCAs, libraries, bookstores, and more; and nationally/globally through national organizations, religious organizations, online resource centers, and more. This is an important environment for developing initiatives for serving, working for justice, and caring for creation. Many organizations—locally, nationally, and globally—have already created programs that be adopted by the congregation.