

Center for Congregations

Passing Along Faith Project

Project Leader: John Roberto, Vibrant Faith
jroberto@lifelongfaith.com www.LifelongFaith.com www.VibrantFaith.org

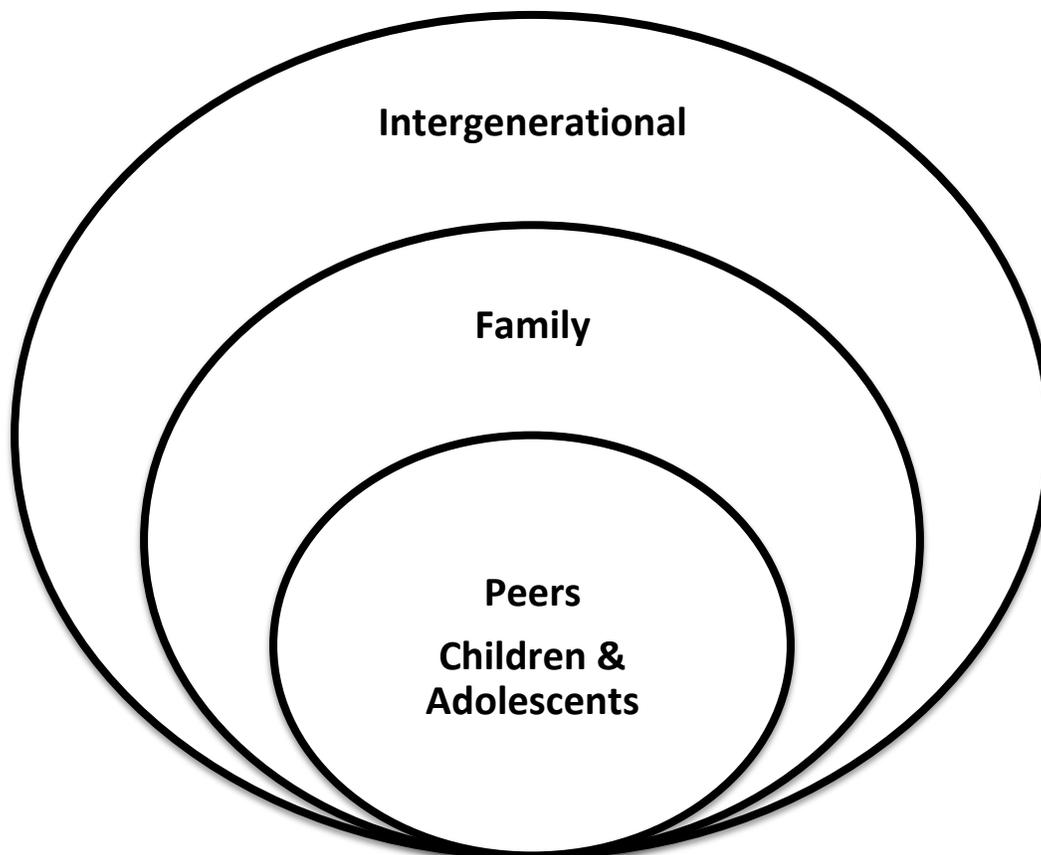
Program 2 - February 7, 2018

Envisioning Lifelong Faith Formation in Faith Communities

1. Envisioning Lifelong Faith Formation
2. Innovative Approaches & Program Models for Lifelong Faith Formation
 - Designing Intergenerational Faith Formation
 - Designing Family Faith Formation
 - Designing Life Cycle Faith Formation from Childhood through Adulthood
3. Digitally Enabled and Digitally Connected Faith Formation
4. What Might Lifelong Faith Formation Look Like in our Church?

Homework: *Designing a Plan for Lifelong Faith Formation*

Faith Forming Environments



Intergenerational

Bringing generations together within the church provides benefits and blessings on a variety of levels. Insights from research and pastoral experience tell us that being intentionally intergenerational:

- ✓ reclaims God’s intent for faith to be shared in community and across generations
- ✓ affirms each person’s value in the total community (regardless of age)
- ✓ fosters a foundation of support of each other’s concerns, interests, and activities
- ✓ provides “up close and personal” formation in faith as children, teens, young adults, middle-aged adults, and older adults engage in sharing faith, teaching, learning, and praying for one another
- ✓ teaches us to care for one another
- ✓ provides role models for children and youth
- ✓ teaches us to value older adults
- ✓ allows us to pass on the traditions of family and faith
- ✓ enhances people’s identification with their congregation and integration within the community
- ✓ encourages greater faith in all generations
- ✓ creates special relationships between adults and youth
- ✓ fosters leadership regardless of age or stature
- ✓ utilizes the strengths (the wisdom, experience, and knowledge) of one generation to meet the needs of another generation
- ✓ promotes understanding of shared values and respect for individuals in all stages and ages of life
- ✓ utilizes the creative talents of younger and older generations to provide service to the church and community

Becoming intentionally intergenerational provides opportunities to:

- ✓ Form and deepen Christian identity and commitment as people develop relationships and actively participate in faith communities that teach, model, and live the Christian tradition and way of life.
- ✓ Provide a curriculum for the whole community—Sunday worship, the lectionary and church year seasons, learning, service, ritual and sacraments, prayer, and more—that is a shared experience in faith and belonging for everyone.
- ✓ Strengthen relationships, connections, and community across generations; enhance their sense of belonging in the faith community; and provide valuable adult role models for children and adolescents.
- ✓ Support families by surrounding them with a community of faith and engaging the whole family in a variety of faith-forming experiences together (caring relationships, celebrating, learning, praying, serving); and providing parents with opportunities to learn from Christians who are practicing their faith and raising faithful children.
- ✓ Strengthen the ability (confidence and competence) of parents and grandparents to promote religious socialization at home; be role models of faithful practice; and engage in faith practices at home and develop warm, affirming, and unconditionally supporting relationships between parents (and grandparents) and their children, teens, and young adults.

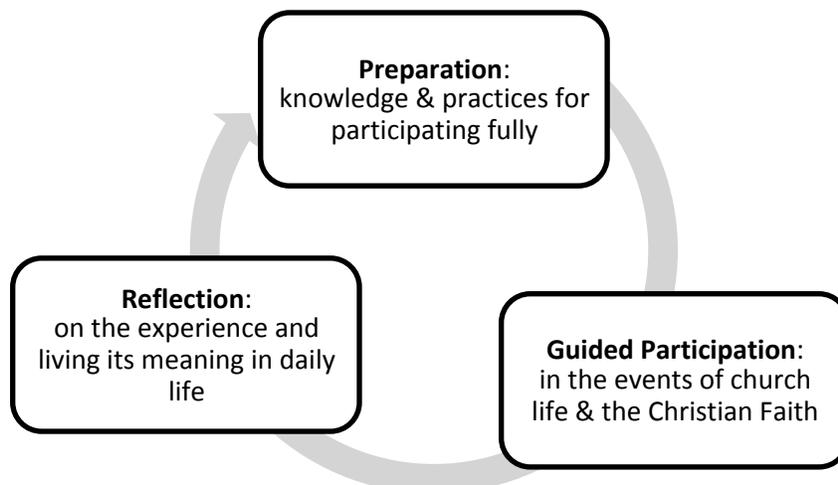
1. Utilize

Utilize the intergenerational events and experiences of church life (worship/lectionary, seasons of the year, service/mission actions, prayer, etc.) the primary “content” and experiences for faith formation in intergenerational programs or age-group programs. Use a three step process:

1. *Prepare* people—intergenerationally or in age groups—with the knowledge and practices—for participating in a church event.
2. *Experience/participate* in the intergenerational church event or experience.
3. *Reflect* upon the meaning of the event and discover how to *live/practice* that learning in daily life (with online activities and resources).

For example:

- ✓ People learn about worship and how to worship in intergenerational settings or age groups; experience Sunday worship with the faith community and practice worshipping; and live the Sunday worship experience at home and in their daily lives (with activities and resources delivered online).
- ✓ People learn about the justice issues of our day and the biblical and church teachings on justice, service, and care for creation in intergenerational settings or age groups; experience acts of justice and service with the faith community—locally and globally; and engage in the practices of serving those in need, caring for creation, and working for justice—as individuals, with their peers, with their families, and with their church and other groups and organizations.
- ✓ People would learn about the Bible and how to read it, interpret it, and apply it to their lives; experience the Bible at Sunday worship and at home; and develop their own practice of Bible study and reading.
- ✓ People would learn about Jesus and the Christian tradition—teachings, history, practices, what it means for life today, and how to live the Christian faith today; and experience the life of Jesus and the Christian tradition through participation in the events of church life, especially church year feasts and seasons.
- ✓ People would learn about prayer and spirituality and how to develop their spiritual lives through prayer and spiritual discipleship; experience the prayer life of the faith community; and develop their own practice of prayer and the spiritual disciplines.



2. Connect & Infuse

Connect the generations through new activities and/or **Infuse** intergenerational experiences and relationships into existing ministries and programs. For example:

- ✓ Incorporate intergenerational dialogues into programming.
- ✓ Develop mentoring relationships (prayer partners, spiritual direction, service involvements, confirmation mentors)
- ✓ Link people of different generations who have insights and life experiences that may be helpful to other generations (midlife and older adults helping young adults and new parents with financial management and household management, or young people helping older adults navigate the digital and online world).
- ✓ Involve the community in praying for a generation (on a mission trip or retreat weekend, celebrating a milestone, such as the birth of a child, marriage, graduation, retirement).
- ✓ Organize social and recreational activities that build intergenerational relationships.
- ✓ Sponsoring community-wide service projects that engage all ages
- ✓ Include other generations in current age-group programs, such as mission trips, service projects, retreat experiences, vacation Bible school, etc.
- ✓ Developing specific roles for the younger generations in church leadership, such as adolescents serving as teachers in children's faith formation or as worship leaders.
- ✓ Organize a leadership or ministry apprenticeship for younger generations to serve in church ministries and leadership positions.
- ✓ Sponsor music and art projects such as a community concert where musicians of all ages perform together, or an intergenerational art exchange or exhibit, or an Advent or Lent music festival.
- ✓ Organize social and recreational activities that build intergenerational relationships, such as an intergenerational Olympics, a Friday night simple meal during Lent, or a summer film festival (maybe outdoors on a large screen).

3. Create

Create new intergenerational programs and experiences that bring together all of the generations for learning, celebrating, praying, reading the Bible, serving and working for justice, and worshipping.

Intergenerational Learning

One model of intergenerational learning begins with an All Ages Learning Experience (intergenerational); moves to an In-Depth Learning Experience (age-specific or intergenerational) taught in one of three formats: age group, whole group or learning activity centers; and concludes by Sharing Learning Reflections and Preparing for Practice (intergenerational).

1. Gathering and Opening Prayer
2. All-Ages Learning Experience. Intergenerational learning begins with a multigenerational experience of the theme that all the generations share together.
3. In-Depth Learning Experience. Through structured learning activities each generation—families with children, adolescents, and adults—explores the biblical and theological understanding of the topic, using one of three possible formats:

- The *Age Group Format* provides parallel, age-appropriate learning for groups at the same time. Though age groups are separated, each one is focusing on the same topic—utilizing specific learning activities that are designed for their life cycle stage: families with children or children alone, adolescents, young adults, and adults.
 - The *Whole Group Format* provides a series of facilitated learning activities for everyone at the same time using intergenerational or age-specific small groups or table groups.
 - The *Learning Activity Center Format* provides structured intergenerational and age-specific learning activities at a variety of stations or centers in a common area.
4. Sharing Learning Reflections and Application. In intergenerational groups participants share what they learned and prepare for applying their learning to daily life using resources and activities provided in print or online.
 5. Closing Prayer Service

Ideas for Intergenerational Learning

1. Develop a faith formation curriculum for the whole community using intergenerational faith formation as the primary learning model.
2. Extend a topic featured in the faith formation program for children or teens, to the whole community through intergenerational learning.
3. Replace a topic in the children or teen program with intergenerational learning on the same theme.
4. Add intergenerational learning to sacramental preparation and celebrations.
5. Conduct intergenerational faith formation before liturgical year feasts.
6. Add intergenerational learning to a vacation Bible school, camp, or summer program. Design an intergenerational VBS or camp or summer program—all ages or grandparents and grandchildren.
7. Conduct intergenerational learning for justice issues and action projects.
8. Sponsor an intergenerational retreat for the whole community.

Milestones

Milestones are significant moments in life’s journey that provide the opportunity for people of all ages to experience God’s love, and grow in faith through sacred and ordinary events both in the life of the congregation and in daily life. Faith formation around milestones, sacramental celebrations, and life transitions provides another way that congregations can be intentionally intergenerational—engaging the whole community in the celebration of the milestone, promoting the spiritual and faith growth of all ages, enhancing family faith practice at home, and strengthening people’s engagement in the church community.

Congregational milestones include: baptism, welcoming young children to worship, first communion, presentation of Bibles, confirmation, marriage, a funeral, sending people on mission trips, and much more. *Lifecycle milestones* include: entering a new stage of schooling, graduations (middle school, high school, college, or graduate school), getting a driver’s license, leaving home for college or the military, first home or apartment, new career or job, moving, retirement, death of a family member, and much more. *Annual milestones* include birthdays, anniversaries, start of the school year (e.g. blessing backpacks), seasons of the church year (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week), and much more.

Each milestone incorporates intergenerational components at home and church: 1) a ritual celebration or a blessing marking the milestone with the whole church community; 2) a home ritual celebration or blessing marking the milestone; 3) a learning program, for the individual and the family, that prepares them for the milestone and its significance for their life and faith; 4) a tangible, visible reminder or symbol of the occasion being marked, given by the church community; and 5) people and resources to support continuing faith growth and practice after the milestone.

Intergenerational Service

Intergenerational service provides many benefits to individuals, families, and the whole church community. Intergenerational service helps narrow the generation gap between older and younger church members; recognizes that all people in the church, regardless of age, have talents to contribute that are valuable and important; assists children and youth in feeling a part of the church today, not just the church of tomorrow; connects the generations and builds relationships as they serve God by serving their neighbor; communicates that it is the responsibility of all Christians, regardless of age, to serve people and work for justice as a follower Jesus Christ.

Churches can incorporate intergenerational service into existing service projects and activities *and* create intergenerational versions of an existing program. Almost any service project can become intergenerational. For example:

- ✓ Offering mission trips for adults and young people.
- ✓ Connecting youth with adults in the church who already preparing and serving meals at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter.
- ✓ Engaging children, parents, and older adults in collecting and delivering food baskets, school kits for children, “personal essentials” for those at a homeless shelter, toys at Christmas, gift packages for prisoners, and so on.
- ✓ Involve families in caring for the elderly by visiting them at a convalescent home or senior citizen facility or doing chores and shopping.
- ✓ Supporting efforts to provide vaccines and medical care to the world’s poor, such as mosquito nets for malaria prevention and immunizations against childhood disease.
- ✓ Conducting a church-wide or community-wide intergenerational fundraising project to a) support the efforts of local and national groups who work directly with the poor, b) adopt a community in another country by supporting them financially and learning about their culture and community life, or c) support organizations that are building schools and libraries for children in the poorest countries of the world by providing books and/or our money to purchase books for children.
- ✓ Develop intergenerational justice teams to advocate for just policies and priorities that protect human life, promote human dignity, preserve God’s creation, and build peace by 1) becoming familiar with pending legislation or proposals that affect people’s basic needs, 2) writing advocacy letters or emails, 3) working with advocacy groups, and/or 4) working with organizations that are changing the structures that promote injustice.
- ✓ Holding a fair trade festival to provide a way for people to buy fair trade products, such as coffee, chocolate, and crafts, that benefit local producers in the developing world.
- ✓ Sponsoring a community-wide “care for the environment day” by planting trees and cleaning-up the community

Connecting, Infusing, and Creating Worksheet

Caring Relationships & Community

1. How can you CONNECT generations at church, at home, and in the community using the opportunities that already exist and developing new ways to connect generations?
2. How can you INFUSE intergenerational relationship building into current congregational ministries, programs, activities, and experiences?
3. How can you CREATE new intergenerational programs, activities, and experiences that create caring relationships across generations?

Celebrating Worship, Seasons, Rituals

1. How can you CONNECT generations through Sunday worship, seasonal celebrations, and milestone rituals (before, during, and after worship and celebrations)?
2. How can you INFUSE intergenerational relationship building into Sunday worship, seasonal celebrations, and milestone rituals (before, during, and after worship and celebrations)?
3. How can you CREATE new intergenerational worship, seasonal celebrations, and milestone rituals that bring all of the generations together or TRANSFORM existing worship, seasonal celebrations, and milestone rituals into intergenerational experiences?

Learning

1. How can you CONNECT generations through current educational programs offered by the church?
2. How can you INFUSE intergenerational learning into current educational programs, such as age-group programs, vacation Bible school, retreats, service projects, milestone and sacramental learning experiences, preparation for church year seasonal celebrations, and more?
3. How can you CREATE new intergenerational learning programs and experiences for the whole faith community or TRANSFORM existing age-group programming into intergenerational learning programs, such as intergenerational vacation Bible school.

Praying & Spiritual Formation

1. How can you CONNECT generations through the prayer life of the congregation and spiritual formation programs and experiences?
2. How can you INFUSE intergenerational relationship building and experiences into the prayer life of the congregation and spiritual formation programs and activities?
3. How can you CREATE new intergenerational prayer experiences and spiritual formation programs that bring all of the generations together or TRANSFORM existing prayer and spiritual life activities into intergenerational experiences?

Serving, Working for Justice, Caring for Creation

1. How can you CONNECT generations through the congregation's service and mission to the community/world, and through its age-specific service and mission projects.
2. How can you INFUSE intergenerational relationship building and experiences into the congregation's service and mission to the community/world, and through its age-specific service and mission.
3. How can you CREATE new intergenerational service projects and mission activities that bring all of the generations together or TRANSFORM the congregation's current service/mission activities and age-specific service and mission projects.

Forming Faith in the Family

1. Families and Faith

Key Faith Factors

1. Parents' personal faith and practice
2. Parent-child relationship: close and warm
3. Parents' modeling and teaching a religious faith
4. Parents' involvement in church life
5. Grandparents' religious influence & relationship
6. Religious tradition a child is born into
7. Parents of the same faith
8. Family conversations about faith
9. Embedded family religious practices: praying, reading the Bible, serving, celebrating holidays and rituals

Religious Parenting

(From *A Report on American Catholic Religious Parenting*. Justine Bartkus and Christian Smith. University of Notre Dame, 2017)

1. The crucial location where youth's religious outcomes are largely decided is not the congregation or the parish, but the home.
2. The primary mechanisms by which Catholic identity becomes rooted in children's lives are not Catholic schooling or sacramental preparation, but rather 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.
3. This is all to say that the definitive causal agents in the religious and spiritual outcomes of American youth are neither clergy nor youth ministers, neither educators nor the voices of popular culture and media, but parents.
4. The single most powerful force in a child's religious formation is the spiritual personality of the parent.
5. Effective transmission of the Christian faith is completely possible for parents who genuinely intend this goal.
6. Parents by the power of their personality, practices, and way of being, model and generate the culture of the household (both explicitly and implicitly).
7. Parents produce, induce, and interpret the household's experiences of Christian faith.
8. Parents are one influence among others - they are nevertheless the dominant influence which orders and shapes the way children experience other influences, i.e. they constellate children's experiences of various cultural currents, including religion..
9. Both parents and churches need to understand the cultural and psychological centrality of parents' role in religious transmission.
10. The faith of the household is a common fund from which all draw freely. To be effectively handed on to children, such faith cannot be perceived as "belonging" only to parents, even if parents must often coerce children into participating in religious activities.

One of the most basic suggestions of our findings is that young adults arrive at a sense of their fundamental identity and worldview not by weighing all possible intellectual arguments for and against a proposed way of life, but rather by roughly adopting the worldview of those mentors who left the deepest impression upon them—and who loved them and cared for them the most. It should come as no surprise, then, that the emergence of the new generation of dedicated young Catholics will rise and fall with the choices of their parents.

Three Primary Roles in Transmitting Religion

(From *A Report on American Catholic Religious Parenting*. Justine Bartkus and Christian Smith. University of Notre Dame, 2017)

1. Sponsor of the Catholic Faith

Parents are the point of access between the Church and their children. To differing degrees, neighborhoods, ethnicities and mainstream cultural attitudes toward religion have all declined as cultural “carriers” of Catholic belief. If children are not initially exposed to the Catholic faith by their parents, they usually will not be exposed to it at all.

2. Gatekeeper of the Catholic Faith

Parents have nearly total control over how much and what sorts of religious content their children encounter—whether children attend Catholic school; whether prayer, reading the Bible, or receiving Communion and going to Reconciliation will occur regularly in their lives; whether they will be exposed to relationships and communities that have a religious dimension, and so forth. Parents are thus the “gatekeeper” of religious content for their children. To use another metaphor, parents are like a faucet, determining whether religious content will arrive in children’s lives at an occasional drip or in a regular flow.

3. Interpreter of the Catholic Faith

Parents do not act as a neutral medium, a mere channel, between Catholicism and their children. Rather, they are definitive role models, mentors, who embody a specific manner of being Catholic. They teach children how to apprehend the world, how to understand what is good and what is evil, how one ought to affectively, intellectually and practically engage with the world, and so on. They do not just “represent” the faith; in many cases, they are the only meaningful embodiment of that faith in the lives of children. Parents render faith a matter of flesh and blood rather than a lifeless mishmash of doctrines and teachings. If children do not “see” Catholicism in the “face” of their parents, they will likely never gain sufficient familiarity with it to commit to practicing the faith in the long run.

As “sponsors,” “gatekeepers,” and “interpreters” of the Catholic faith for their children, parents give children a glimpse of what Catholicism seems to be all about and whether or not it can meaningfully inform one’s day-to-day life.

Because parents’ commitment to practice and transmit Catholicism in the household is so demonstrably different from mainstream American culture, we found that those parents who embraced the three roles listed above were the ones who succeeded in transmission. They understood religious transmission to be a holistic, foundational household commitment of high priority rather than simply as one aspect of life alongside others. Successful parents were more likely to express how unimaginable and untenable family life would be without religion; their homes were more replete with visible religious art, and they had little difficulty reporting meaningful conversations and common experiences among the family that

related to religion. By contrast, those parents who were less successful in transmission described households with a thinner religious atmosphere. It is not that these parents did not intend or desire to transmit their Catholicism, but rather that their aspirations did not translate into the establishment of a vivid Catholic culture in the home.

Ultimately, the decisive question our interviews suggested to us was this: had children been initiated into a cultural worldview where they perceived that being Catholic *mattered*, where faith had been so thoroughly and convincingly modeled, lived and shared that children either perceived no alternative to embracing Catholicism, or far preferred being Catholic to any other path? Had children been initiated into a lived template for carrying on a Catholic way of life, for navigating the twists and turns of growing up with their faith as a guiding resource?

One of the most basic suggestions of our findings is that young adults arrive at a sense of their fundamental identity and worldview not by weighing all possible intellectual arguments for and against a proposed way of life, but rather by roughly adopting the worldview of those mentors who left the deepest impression upon them—and who loved them and cared for them the most. It should come as no surprise, then, that the emergence of the new generation of dedicated young Catholics will rise and fall with the choices of their parents.

Unaffiliated Parents Raising their Children Religiously

In her book *Losing Our Religion: How Unaffiliated Parents Are Raising their Children* Christel Manning presents her research into the worldviews that are included within the term “None” and how those beliefs are reflected or not reflected in the way parents raise their children. She identifies four distinct worldviews among unaffiliated parents: *Secular* (believes there is no God that influences the world or human life), *Seeker Spirituality* (believes there is no God but there is a higher power or life force), *Unchurched Believer* (believes in a personal God who listens and can intervene in human affairs; and prays or attends services), and *Indifferent* (no beliefs or practices). She identifies five different strategies that parents use to incorporate religion in the lives of their children.

1. **Nonprovision:** These are parents who do not incorporate religion into their children’s lives. They do not intentionally include religion or spirituality in the home life (no “God talk,” religious books, meditation or prayer; holidays are cultural; religious meaning is not explained); do not enroll the child in institutional religious or alternative worldview education programs; and remain unaffiliated.
2. **Outsourcing:** These are parents who rely on other people to incorporate religion into their children’s life. They do not intentionally incorporate religion or spirituality in the home, enroll the child in formal program like CCD or Hebrew school or Sunday school, and decline to become members of that religious institution. There was a common theme: they felt a duty as a parent to provide religion, regardless of their personal ambivalence about it, because their child “had a right” to this information. Sometimes this was because religion (usually Judaism or Catholicism) was a family heritage; sometimes because it reflected an interest/inclination of their child.
3. **Self-provision:** These are parents who try to incorporate religion into their children’s upbringing without institutional support. They remain unaffiliated, do not enroll their child in formal religious education program, and intentionally incorporate religion or spirituality into home (talk to child

about God or higher power; pray or meditate with child, read religious stories; incorporates religious or spiritual explanations into holidays).

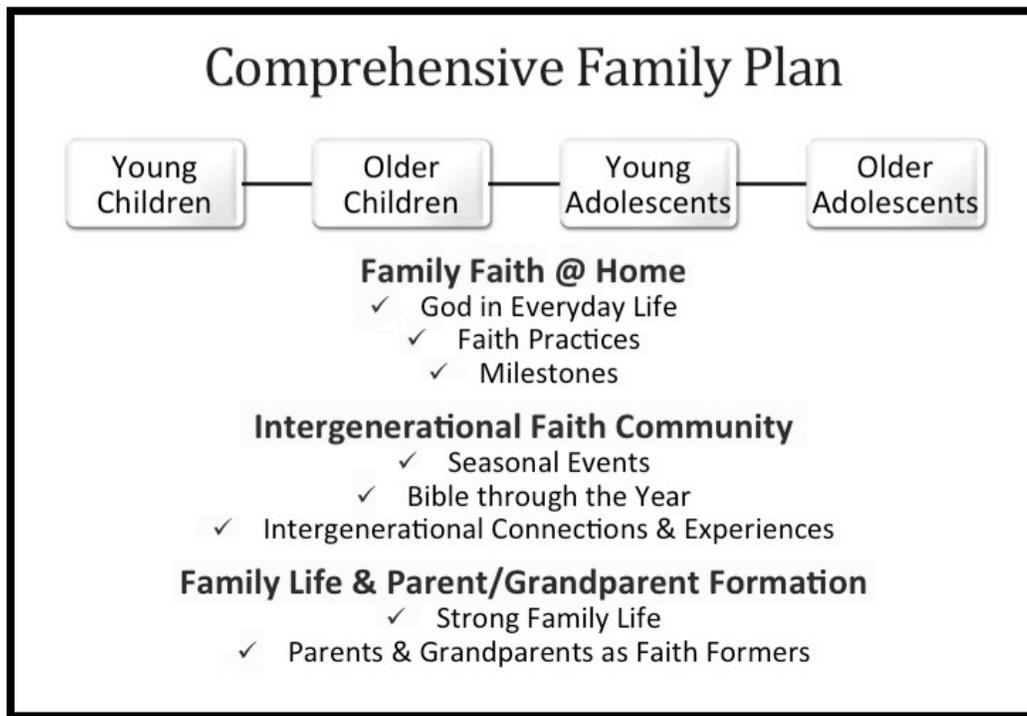
4. **Alternative:** These are parents who were unaffiliated before they had children and reported searching for and eventually affiliating with an organization that welcomes doubters and the nonreligious such as the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) or the American Humanist Association (AHA). They enroll their child in a “worldview education” program, which typically teaches children about many different religions, rather than socializing them into one of them; intentionally incorporate religion/spirituality in the home but do so in consciously pluralistic way, for example, by combining imagery from both Buddhism or Judaism, or celebrating the holidays of various religions; or, over time, is led by having children to affiliate with a community that they perceive as tolerant of being nonreligious.
5. **Traditional:** Some unaffiliated parents decided to return to the religion they were raised in and enroll their child in a conventional religious education program (CCD, Sunday school, or Hebrew school). Parents are Traditional if having children leads them to return to the community they were raised in and re-affiliate, a child is enrolled in conventional religious education program, and they incorporate religion in the home.

Manning found that in most cases, there was a great deal of consistency between the parent’s religious or secular identity and how they raised their children. She observes, “the fact that most parents in the study took steps to incorporate religion into the lives of their children is surprising only if we take None to mean the absence of any religious, spiritual, or philosophical worldview. Once we discover the more substantive dimensions of unaffiliated parents’ worldviews, we see that they transmit those beliefs and practices to their children much as affiliated parents do.”

2. Family Faith Formation Strategies

1. **Discovering God in Everyday Life:** guiding families to reflect on God’s presence in their daily life
2. **Forming Faith at Home through the Life Cycle:** equipping and resourcing families to practice their faith at home through prayer, devotions, reading the Bible, rituals, milestone celebrations, service, learning, and more (with activities and resources delivered online)
3. **Forming Faith through Milestones:** celebrating one-time milestones and annual milestones through experiences at home and in the congregation that activities of *naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing* (with activities and resources delivered online)
4. **Celebrating Seasonal Events through the Year:** celebrating church year seasons and calendar seasons at home, at church, and in the community (with activities and resources delivered online)
5. **Encountering God in the Bible through the Year:** reading and studying the Bible through Sunday worship and the lectionary, learning experiences, and at-home devotions and reading (with activities and resources delivered online)
6. **Connecting Families Intergenerationally:** developing intergenerational programs and experiences that engage families with other generations through learning, service, community life.
7. **Developing a Strong Family Life:** cultivating a strong family life and strengthening developmental relationships through parent programs, whole family programs, family mentors, life cycle support groups, and online activities and resources.

8. **Empowering Parents and Grandparents:** developing parenting competencies and skills, promoting the faith growth of parents, and developing the faith forming skills of parents.



Family Faith Practices

- ✓ Praying as a family (meal time, bedtime)
- ✓ Praying as a family during times of struggle or crisis
- ✓ Encouraging teens to pray alone or with peers
- ✓ Reading the Bible as a family
- ✓ Encouraging teens to read the Bible alone or with their peers
- ✓ Celebrating rituals and holidays at home
- ✓ Serving people in need as a family
- ✓ Serving people in need as individuals (parents, teens)
- ✓ Eating together as a family
- ✓ Having family conversations
- ✓ Talking about faith as a family
- ✓ Watching videos, movies, or TV shows with religious content or themes
- ✓ Encouraging teens to talk about their doubts and questions about faith
- ✓ Talking about faith and your religious tradition with your children and teens
- ✓ Asking your teenager's perspectives on faith, religion, social issues, etc.
- ✓ Providing moral instruction
- ✓ Demonstrating a warm and affirming parenting approach
- ✓ Taking time to growing in your own faith as a parent
- ✓ Engaging in positive communication with children and teens
- ✓ Encouraging children and teens to pursue their talents and interests
- ✓ Spending one-on-one time with children and teens
- ✓ Participating in Sunday Worship as a family
- ✓ Inviting friends of your teen to join in family practices (Sunday worship, service, prayer)

- ✓ Celebrating the church year seasons at church (Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter)
- ✓ Celebrating rituals and sacraments at church as a family
- ✓ Participating in church life activities as a family
- ✓ Encouraging and supporting your teen to participate in church activities with peers

Parent Practices and Skills

- ✓ Expressing care, love, affection, and support for children
- ✓ Balancing time and commitments, managing stress
- ✓ Practicing healthy relationships
- ✓ Disciplining children and learning discipline practices
- ✓ Creating a warm, caring supportive family.
- ✓ Set boundaries and high expectations for children
- ✓ Managing technology and media use
- ✓ Challenging children to grow and continuously improve
- ✓ Providing support to help children complete tasks and achieve goals
- ✓ Sharing power with children so that their voice is heard and they share in making decisions.
- ✓ Expanding possibilities and connecting children to opportunities for growth
- ✓ Developing emotional communication skills
- ✓ Developing positive parent-child interaction skills
- ✓ Learning to respond consistently to their child

Family Life Practices

- ✓ Communicating effectively
- ✓ Establishing family routines: family meals, shared activities, daily commitments
- ✓ Celebrating meaningful traditions and rituals
- ✓ Discussing tough topics
- ✓ Making decisions and solving problems as a family
- ✓ Learning how to build strong relationships and express care for each other
- ✓ Developing the strengths & potential of children & youth
- ✓ Supporting each other: encouraging and praising, giving feedback, standing up for each other
- ✓ Treating each with respect and dignity

Developing Family Faith Formation

Part 1. Family Faith at Home

Strategy: Discovering God in Everyday Life

Guiding families to reflect on God's presence in their daily life

- What ideas or activities would you develop to implement this strategy?
- How would you reach and engage families in activities for Discovering God in Everyday Life?

Strategy: Forming Faith at Home through the Life Cycle

Equipping and resourcing families to practice their faith at home through prayer, devotions, reading the Bible, rituals, milestone celebrations, service, learning, and more

- What ideas or activities would you develop to implement this strategy?
 - Celebrating the liturgical seasons
 - Celebrating rituals and milestones
 - Learning the Christian story and vision
 - Praying and spiritual formation
 - Reading and studying the Bible
 - Serving and working for justice
- How would you reach and engage families in activities for Forming Faith at Home?

Strategy: Forming Faith through Milestones

Celebrating one-time milestones and annual milestones through experiences at home and in the congregation that activities of naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing

- What ideas or activities would you develop to implement this strategy?
- How would you reach and engage families in activities for Milestones Faith Formation?

Part 2. Family Life and Parent Formation

Developing a Strong Family Life

Cultivating a strong family life and strengthening developmental relationships through parent programs, whole family programs, family mentors, life cycle support groups, and online activities and resources.

- What ideas or activities would you develop to implement this strategy?
- How would you reach and engage families in activities for Developing a Strong Family Life?

Empowering Parents and Grandparents

Developing parenting competencies and skills, promoting the faith growth of parents, and developing the faith forming skills of parents

- What ideas or activities would you develop to implement this strategy?
- How would you reach and engage parents in activities for Empowering Parents & Grandparents?

Part 3. Families in the Congregation

Celebrating Seasonal Events through the Year

Celebrating church year seasons and calendar seasons at home, at church, and in the community

- What ideas or activities would you develop to implement this strategy?
- How would you reach and engage families in activities for Celebrating Seasonal Events?

Encountering God in the Bible through the Year

Reading and studying the Bible through Sunday worship and the lectionary, learning experiences, and at-home devotions and reading

- What ideas or activities would you develop to implement this strategy?
- How would you reach and engage families in activities for Encountering God in the Bible?

Connecting Families Intergenerationally

Developing intergenerational programs and experiences that engage families with other generations through learning, service, community life, etc.

- What ideas or activities would you develop to implement this strategy?
- How would you reach and engage families in activities for Connecting Families Intergenerationally?

Faith Formation with Peers/Life Stages

1. Key Features of Life-Stage Faith Formation

1. Address diverse life tasks and situations for each stage of life
2. Address diverse religious-spiritual identities: vibrants, occasionals, spirituals, unaffiliateds
3. Become person-centered, not content- or program-centered
4. Provide a variety of content, methods, formats, etc. targeted and tailored to life stages
5. Build on people's motivation for learning and faith growth
6. Personalize and customize faith formation
7. Use digitally enabled and connected methods and strategies
8. Nurture communities of learning and practice
9. Design networks of rich content, relationships, experiences, and resources on digital platforms
10. Become a curator of faith formation content and experiences

2. Motivation: Why Participate in Learning

Drawing on decades of scientific research on human motivation, Daniel Pink in his book *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us* exposes the mismatch between what research shows and how we motivate people. While carrots and sticks (policies and requirements) worked somewhat successfully in the twentieth-century, assembly-line model, that's precisely the wrong way to motivate people today. He describes three types of motivation: Motivation 1.0 presumed that humans were biological creatures, struggling for survival. Motivation 2.0 presumed that humans responded to reward and punishments in their environment.

Motivation 3.0 presumes that humans have a third drive—to learn, to create, and to better the world. Motivation 3.0 has three essential elements.

- *Autonomy*: the desire to direct our own lives with autonomy over task (what they do), time (when they do it), team (who they do it with), and technique (how they do it).
- *Mastery*: the urge to get better and better at something that matters—to be engaged deliberate practice to produce mastery.
- *Purpose*: the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves, to seek purpose—a cause greater and more enduring than ourselves.

Daniel Pink writes, “The secret to high performance and satisfaction—at work, at school, and at home—is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by ourselves and our world” (145).

The key motivation in adult learning is that adults are motivated to learn and grow as they experience needs and interests that adult learning activities will satisfy. Adults are motivated. . . .

- when *facing life transitions*. They seek learning and support to cope with changes in their lives that give rise to new developmental tasks, e.g., raising children, aging parents, financial matters, job changes, divorce, etc.

- when there is a *gap* between their present level of understanding, skill, performance and/or growth and the desired level or goal that they set for themselves or that their organization or community expects of them
- by appealing to personal and spiritual growth and/or personal benefits.
- when they identify they have a need to learn
- when the benefits of a learning experience outweigh their resistance
- when programs are enjoyable and enriching
- when they have the opportunity to do something they could not do before
- by settings that have a natural, interactive, communal feel
- when programs are sensitive to their time constraints by keeping commitments short in terms of duration and offering choices of times for participation

Studies of motivation show that adults bring diverse attitudes and expectations to their learning experiences. We can identify at least four different orientations for learning:

- a *goal-orientation* in which learning is seen as leading to a change in work or personal status
- an *activity-orientation* in which participants' social interactions are especially valued,
- a *learning-orientation* in which a love of learning underlies the learner's engagement and participation,
- a *spiritual-orientation* in which learners seek new meaning and perceive education as the starting point for thinking in new ways. (Schuster and Grant)

3. Developing a Pathways Model for Discipleship and Faith Growth

Personalized learning is tailoring learning (faith formation) around each person's strengths, needs and interests—including enabling choice in what, how, when and where people learn (grow in faith and discipleship).

A Pathway is a process for helping people discern where they are in their faith journey and to chart a path for faith growth—to get from where they are to a closer relationship with Jesus and a deeper practice of the Christian faith.. People should be able to clearly understand where they are in their faith journey and their next steps in faith growth. They don't have to do everything, they just need to do the one next thing..

A Pathway is life-centered, reaching into every area of a person's life: relationships, family life, life transitions, marriage, parenting, financial stewardship, spiritual formation, professional and work life, service to others, and more.

A Pathway is holistic incorporating the whole person: head, heart, and hands.

- *A way of the head* (inform) demands a discipleship of faith seeking understanding and belief with personal conviction, sustained by study, reflecting, discerning and deciding, all toward spiritual wisdom for life. This requires that we educate people to know, understand, and embrace with personal conviction Christianity's core belief and values.
- *A way of the heart* (form) demands a discipleship of right relationships and right desires, community building, hospitality and inclusion, trust in God's love, and prayer and worship. This requires that we foster growth in people's identity through formation and the intentional socialization of Christian family and community.

- *A way of the hands* (transform) demands a discipleship of love, justice, peace-making, simplicity, integrity, healing, and repentance. This requires that we foster in people an openness to a lifelong journey of conversion toward holiness and fullness of life for themselves and for the life of the world.
(See *Will There Be Faith: A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples*. Thomas Groome, HarperOne, 2011, pages 111-119).

A Pathway focuses on faith maturing. The goal of a Pathway is to develop disciples and promote faith growth. A Pathway is created around the church's vision of discipleship and mature faith—identifying characteristics of faith maturing that can be used for people to discern their faith journey and chart a path for growth.

Designing a Pathways Model for Discipleship & Faith Growth

1. Identify a target audience(s)
2. Describe the life stage and religious-spiritual characteristics of your target audience.
3. Identify how you will use the Pathways model, for example:
 - Sacraments/milestones: Marriage, Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation
 - Parent/family gatherings
 - New member formation, RCIA, evangelization
 - Gathered faith formation programming
 - Affinity groups
 - On-ramps where people in your church might start the discipleship journey
4. Develop the content for the Pathways
 - Life and faith characteristics of the target audience
 - Characteristics of maturing faith
5. Develop a 'discernment continuum' that gives people a way to reflect on their current growth, e.g.,
 - Inquiring---Getting Started---Making Progress---Going Deeper
 - How true is each statement for you: 1 = not true from me, 3 = somewhat true for me, 5 = very true for me

Characteristics of Faith Maturing

1. Sustaining a personal relationship with Jesus Christ supported through regular prayer, faith sharing and Bible reading.
2. Making the Christian faith a way of life by integrating their beliefs into the conversation, decisions, and actions of daily life.
3. Possessing a vital faith and being aware of God present and active in their own life, the lives of others, and the life of the world.
4. Seeking spiritual growth by actively pursuing questions of faith, learning what it means to believe in God, and what it's like to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.
5. Living a life of service by caring for others, reaching out those in need, and addressing injustice in the world.
6. Sharing the Good News through words and actions, through Christian stewardship and working for peace, justice and human dignity.
7. Participating fully, consciously, actively and regularly in the ritual and worship life of the faith community.

8. Articulating the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith and demonstrating a commitment to learning and growing in this faith.
9. Exercising moral responsibility by applying Christian ethics, virtues, principles, values, and social teaching to moral decision-making, life situations, and in interactions with the larger culture.
10. Practicing faith in Jesus Christ, privately and publicly, through participation in the congregation's worship, ministries, and leadership.
11. Discerning and using their gifts to actively belong to and participate in the life and mission of the Christian community.
12. Exploring God's call to vocation through prayer, reflection, and discernment.
13. Possessing a positive spirit with loving and hopeful attitudes toward others and life, convinced that they can make the world a better place.

4. Developing Playlists of Content & Experiences

A learning playlist is a curated group of digital and local learning experiences and resources (e.g. videos, websites, books, games, articles, etc.). A playlist weaves together these learning experiences into a sequenced pathway centered on a common theme. Playlists create a rich network of experiences for learners.

Pathway-Specific

- Content and experiences are selected to address each pathway, for example resources for Inquiring, Getting Started, Making Progress, Going Deeper

Settings

- Independent/Individualized
- Mentored
- Family / At Home
- Small Group
- Large Group
- Intergenerational /Whole Church Community
- Community and World

Multiple Intelligences

- Verbal-linguistic (word / book smart)
- Logical-mathematical (number / logic smart)
- Visual-spatial (art / picture smart),
- Bodily-kinesthetic (body / movement smart)
- Musical-rhythmic (music / sound smart)
- Naturalist (nature / environment smart)
- Interpersonal (people / group smart),
- Intrapersonal (self / introspection smart)

Methods

- Learn alone or with a group
- Read
- Write
- Engage in storytelling and create stories

- TV shows
- Feature films
- Watch or create a video
- Converse with others
- Create a media project or video
- View or create art
- View or take photographs
- Watch or engage in drama
- Listen to or create a podcast
- Listen to or create music
- Conduct a demonstration
- Experience games, simulations, video games
- Analyze or create a case study
- Develop an apprenticeship or internship
- Create an exhibit
- Experience prayer and rituals
- Take a field trip (e.g., churches, museums)
- Participate in a mission trip
- Engage in or create a service / action project
- Keep a journal
- Develop a mentor relationship
- Experience events in the congregation

Opportunities in the Church

- Sunday worship
- Sacramental celebrations
- Gathering programming
- Intergenerational programming
- Service and justice ministries
- Pastoral care
- Church events

5. Publishing Playlists

Publish the Playlists on a digital platform and use social media for connection, interaction, and sharing learning reflections. You can add the playlists to your existing church website or create a website just for faith formation and link it to your church website. Example of an adult faith formation website: www.SeasonsofAdultFaith.com. Example of a family website: www.FamiliesattheCenter.com.

Building a website is made much easier today by the availability of online website builders that provide predesigned website templates, drag-and-drop features to create webpages, and hosting for the website. Three popular website builders to explore are *Weebly* (www.weebly.com), *Wix* (www.wix.com), and *Squarespace* (www.squarespace.com). All three have easy to use features and very reasonable subscription fees. For advanced users *WordPress* (<http://wordpress.org>) provides thousands of predesigned templates, lots of customization features, and ready-to-use apps. *WordPress* does require an understanding of web design and some programming ability.

Here are several suggestions for web usability to keep in mind as you design (from Steve Krug’s excellent and easy-to-use book *Don’t Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability*, Third Edition, Berkeley: New Riders, 2014).

1. Don’t make the user think—make web pages self-explanatory so the user hardly has any perceived effort to understand them, or example, clear choice of labels, clearly “clickable” items, simple search.
2. People generally don’t read web pages closely; they scan, so design for scanning rather than reading.
3. Create a clear visual hierarchy and menu system (main menu, submenus).
4. Make it very clear how to navigate the site, with clear “signposts” on all pages.
5. Omit needless words.
6. The home page needs the greatest design care to convey site identity and mission.
7. Promote user goodwill by making the typical tasks easy to do, make it easy to recover from errors, and avoid anything likely to irritate users.

Digital Strategies

Blended Faith Formation

Online			Face-to-Face	
<p>Fully Online An online program with all learning done online and limited face-to-face, gathered learning settings</p>	<p>Mostly Online A mostly online program with opportunities for regular interaction in face-to-face, gathered settings</p>	<p>Online and Gathered Online learning focused on presenting the content of the program <i>combined with</i> face-to-face, gathered sessions using active learning methods to discuss, practice and apply the content.</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Gathered with Online Content A gathered event or program that uses online content as part of the design of the event or program</p>

1. **Extend a church event or program**
2. **Design one event or program, offer it in multiple platforms**
3. **Prepare for and follow-up an event or experience**
4. **Flip a gathered program**
5. **Integrate online and gathered**
6. **Create online only experiences**
7. **Use webinars, Facebook live, podcasts, etc. to deliver programming directly to people**

Worksheet: Designing a Pathways Model

1. **Identify a target audience(s):**

2. **Describe the life stage & religious-spiritual characteristics of your target audience.**
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.
 - 8.
 - 9.
 - 10.

3. **Identify how you will use the Pathways model.** For example:
 - ✓ Sacraments/milestones: Marriage, Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation
 - ✓ Parent/family gatherings
 - ✓ New member formation, RCIA, evangelization
 - ✓ Gathered faith formation programming
 - ✓ Affinity groups
 - ✓ On-ramps where people in your church might start the discipleship journey

4. **Develop the content of the Pathways model.** For example:
 - ✓ Life and faith characteristics of the target audience
 - ✓ Characteristics of maturing faith, etc.

5. **Develop a ‘discernment continuum’ that gives people a way to reflect on their current growth.** For example:
 - ✓ Inquiring---Getting Started---Making Progress---Going Deeper
 - ✓ How true is each statement for you: 1 = not true from me , 3 = somewhat true for me, 5 = very true for me

Example: Family Faith Growth Pathway Model

We believe God dwells in every family and that family life is sacred. The profound and the ordinary moments of daily life—mealtimes, workdays, vacations, expressions of love and intimacy, household chores, caring for a sick child or elderly parent, and even conflicts over things like how to celebrate holidays, discipline children, or spend money—all are the threads from which families can discover God and weave a pattern of family faith.

We believe that parents are the most important religious influence on their children, and it is our responsibility as a church to support and encourage you. We know that faith is formed when there is a substantial investment of thought, time, and intimacy by parents. Our church is here to support you as a parent in developing a strong, healthy, faith-filled family life.

To help you discover areas for growth and to help us serve you better, please take a few minutes to complete the Family Faith Growth Pathway. It will help you identify strengths and areas of growth in your own life and in your family's life by identifying how frequently you (or your family) engage in particular faith practices and parenting practices.

Rate each item on the following scale: 1 = Never, 2= Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Regularly. After you complete the review, identify areas of strength in your life as a parent and in your family life. Then identify areas that you and/or your family need to develop.

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. We eating together as a family. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. We have family conversations about things that are important to us. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. We talk about faith as a family. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. We pray as a family (meal time, bedtime). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. We pray as a family during times of struggle or crisis. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I pray to God and take quiet time to reflect and listen to God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I encourage my children and teens to pray. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. We read the Bible as a family. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. We use the Bible as guidance for how we should think and act as a family. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I read and study the Bible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I use the Bible to discover how I should think and act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I encourage my children/teens to read the Bible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. We serve people in need as a family.. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. We work to overcome injustice in our world as a family. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. We engage in projects to care for the environment as a family. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I am engaged in service to people in need . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I work to overcome injustice in our world. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I am engaged in projects to care for the environment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. We encourage children/teens to talk about their doubts and questions about faith. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. We talk about faith and our religious tradition with our children and teens. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. We ask about out children/teenage perspectives on faith, religion, social issues, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. I provide moral instruction and how to decide right and wrong. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. I taking time to grow in my relationship with your own faith as a parent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. We participate in Sunday worship as a family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. We participate in church activities as a family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. We celebrate the church year seasons at church (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 27. We celebrate the seasons of the church year at home (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 28. We encourage and support our children/teens to participate in church activities. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 29. I demonstrate a warm and affirming parenting approach | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 30. We engage in positive communication as a family. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 31. I express care to my children/teens by listening to them, being dependable, encouraging them, and make them feel known and valued. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 32. I challenge my children/teens by expecting them to do their best and live up to their potential. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 33. I provide support for my children/teens by encouraging their efforts and achievements and guiding them to learn and grow. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 34. I treat my children/teens with respect, hearing their voice, and including them in decisions that affect them. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 35. I inspire my children/teens to see possibilities for their future, expose them to new experiences and places, and connect them to people who can help them grow. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Areas of Strength for Me as a Parent and for Our Family:

Areas for Growth for Me as a Parent and for Our Family:

Example: Adult Faith Growth Pathway Model

We believe that growth in our relationship with God and in following Jesus (discipleship) is a lifelong process. We are constantly trying to grow deeper in our relationship with God and in living the Christian way of life each day. Our church is committed to helping you grow wherever you may be in your faith journey. We are committed to helping you live the Christian way of life everyday.

To help you discover areas for growth and to help us serve you better, please take a few minutes to complete the Adult Faith Growth Pathway. It will help you identify strengths and areas of growth in your own life. Use these statements to assess where you are honestly and prayerfully. Rate “How true each statement is for you” using the rating scale: 1 = not true from me , 3 = somewhat true for me, and 5 = very true for me.

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. I am growing in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. My faith shapes how I think and act each and every day. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I make the Christian faith a way of life by integrating my beliefs into the conversation, decisions, and actions of daily life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. I am aware of God present and active in my own life, the lives of others, and the life of the world. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. I have a real sense that God is guiding me. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I seek spiritual growth by actively pursuing questions of faith, learning what it means to believe in God, and what it’s like to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I devote time to reading and studying the Bible. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. I use the Bible to discover how I should think and act. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. I pray to God and take quiet time to reflect and listen to God. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. I am growing spiritually through spiritual practices such as contemplation, <i>lectio divina</i> , praying Scripture, daily Examen (reflection), and meditation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. I can articulate the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. I am growing in my understanding of the Christian faith—beliefs, traditions, and practices. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. I exercise moral responsibility by applying Christian ethics, virtues, and values to making moral decisions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. My faith helps me know right from wrong. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. I live a life of service by caring for others and reaching out those in need. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. I am involved in ways to promote social justice and address injustice in the world. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. I am involved in actions to care for creation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. I share the Good News of Jesus through my words and actions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. I participate actively and regularly in the worship life of the church community. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. I participate in the life, ministries, and leadership of the church community. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Ways I Can Grow

- Areas Where I Need to “Get Started” (look at the numbers 1 and 2)
- Areas Where I Need to “Grow” (look at the numbers 2 and 3)
- Areas Where I Want to “Going Deeper” (look at the numbers 4 and 5)

Additional Adult Faith Formation Topics

Bible

- ✓ Study and read the Old Testament: The Pentateuch –to discover its message and meaning for life today
- ✓ Study and read the Old Testament: The Prophets – to discover the message and meaning of the prophets for our world today
- ✓ Study and pray the Psalms as a spiritual practice
- ✓ Study and read the four Gospels to discover the life, ministry, and message of Jesus and how it applies to our lives today
- ✓ Study and read the Letters of Paul to discover how his message to the first Christians applies to us today

Relationship with Jesus

- ✓ Discover how to begin (or begin again) my faith journey by exploring the heart of Christianity: Jesus, the Gospels, the church, and spiritual life
- ✓ Learn how to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ and explore what it means to be a disciple today in daily life – at home, at work, in the world

Christian Faith and Tradition

- ✓ Learn more about what we believe as _____ (religious tradition) today and why
- ✓ Explore how contemporary theologians present what it means to be a Christian in today's world, and how that can inform our experience of the God in our daily lives
- ✓ Become familiar with the great teachings of Christianity (its creeds and doctrines)
- ✓ Learn the richness of the Church's tradition, explore the theological and cultural heritage in which faith is expressed, and gain perspective on contemporary events and trends through an understanding of church history
- ✓ Learn the Church's teaching on the nature and mission of the Church,.

Worship

- ✓ Understand, live, and bear witness to the paschal mystery, celebrated and communicated through the sacramental life of the Church.
- ✓ Acquire the spirituality, skills, and habits of full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy, especially the eucharistic liturgy.
- ✓ Appreciate and appropriately participate in the Church's daily prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours, and learn to pray the psalms, "an essential and permanent element of the prayer of the Church."

Prayer & Spirituality

- ✓ Develop spiritual practices to sustain my life as a Christian
- ✓ Learn the stages of spiritual growth and experience spiritual practices to deepen my spiritual life
- ✓ Explore a spirituality for the second half of life and how to sustain and deepen the spiritual life after 50
- ✓ Learn and practice ways to pray and meditate as part of daily life
- ✓ Get away for a retreat experience to reflect and deepen my spiritual life
- ✓ Receive spiritual guidance from trained spiritual directors who will help me on my faith journey

- ✓ Explore the history and meaning of Christian worship and how to get the most out of Sunday morning worship.
- ✓ Become familiar with the diverse forms and expressions of Christian prayer.
- ✓ Experience and appreciate the richness of the Catholic ascetical-mystical tradition as it has taken form across the centuries in diverse historical and cultural settings.
- ✓ Develop a regular pattern of personal prayer and spiritual reflection, recognizing vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer as basic and fruitful practices in the life of a disciple of Jesus.

Moral Living

- ✓ Study the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the moral catechesis of the apostolic teachings, and live in accord with them.
- ✓ Study the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person in its social doctrine, including its respect-life teaching
- ✓ Appreciate the dignity, destiny, freedom, and responsibility of the human person, together with the reality of sin and the power of God's grace to overcome it.
- ✓ Learn how to acquire and follow a well-formed conscience in personal and social life, clarifying current religious and moral questions in the light of faith, and cultivating a Christian discernment of the ethical implications of developments in the socio-cultural order.
- ✓ Live a lifestyle reflecting scriptural values of holiness, simplicity, and compassion.

Service & Justice

- ✓ Explore major social issues and the responsibility of Christians to transform the world
- ✓ Engage in projects and actions of service to those in need in our community and region
- ✓ Engage in projects and actions of service to those in need in our world
- ✓ Participate in mission trips to serve those in need in our country and around the world

Life Issues

- ✓ Discover my strengths as a person (gifts and talents) and how to utilize them to develop my “calling” in life
- ✓ Figure out how to balance the many commitments in my life: relationships, family, work, and more
- ✓ Develop life skills such as coping with stress, communicating effectively, managing my time, dealing with anger and sadness,
- ✓ handling conflict, and more
- ✓ Develop a financial “plan” by learning the skills and tools for creating savings, develop a personal/family budget, planning for the
- ✓ future (college, retirement), investing wisely, reducing debt, and more
- ✓ Discern my purpose in life as an adult: what am I committed to, where I am spending my time, what are my goals for the future,
- ✓ and more.
- ✓ Learn how to develop healthy relationships and let go of unhealthy ones
- ✓ Learn how to plan for life after retirement—relationships, finances, spiritual life, contributing to the church and the community, and
- ✓ more
- ✓ Join with a group of single adults for support, storytelling, and faith sharing
- ✓ Participate in a support group with those recovering from an addiction