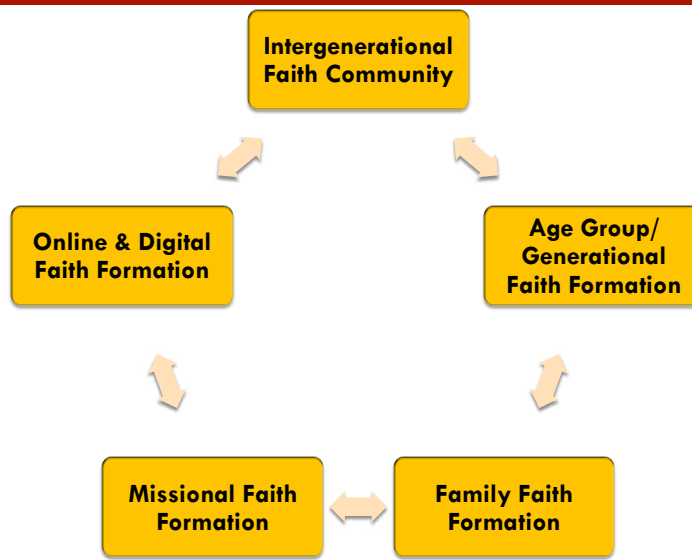




## INTERGENERATIONAL CHURCH CULTURE

John Roberto (jroberto@lifelongfaith.com)

## A New Faith Forming Ecosystem



## Eight Faith Forming Processes

Faith formation is developed around the eight faith forming processes—providing both a *framework* for a comprehensive curriculum with age groups, generations, and families; and the *content*—knowledge and practices—of the Christian faith.

## Eight Faith Forming Processes



*Throughout Scripture there is a pervasive sense that all generations were typically present when faith communities gathered for worship, for celebration, for feasting, for praise, for encouragement, for reading of Scripture, in times of danger, and for support and service. . . . To experience authentic Christian community and reap the unique blessings of intergenerationality, the generations must be together regularly and often—infants to octogenarians.*

(Allen and Ross, 84)

## Intergenerational Community

Intergenerational faith formation and whole community faith experiences are at the center of all faith formation, engaging all ages and generations in the life and events of church life and the Christian faith and participation in intergenerational faith experiences.

## Intergenerational Community

We invite people into the way of life that embodies God's love, justice, compassion, and reconciliation, by being, doing, and thinking about it together. The best curriculum for forming children, youth, and anyone else in Christian faith is guided participation in a community of practice where people are vibrantly, passionately risking themselves together in lives of faith in a world crying out for the love of Christ.

(Joyce Mercer)

## Intergenerational Community

Guided participation in a community of practice puts a premium on both participation and practice. . . . We become Christian, taking on the identity of one who is a disciple of Jesus, by acting the way Christians act, and by talking the way Christians talk. Over time through practice, even our hearts and minds are formed in this way of life.

(Joyce Mercer)

## Benefits

- 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.

## Benefits

- 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.

## Intergenerational Community

1. **Caring:** Community building activities, storytelling, mentoring, social events
2. **Celebrating:** Sunday Worship, whole community sacramental celebrations, milestones celebrations, church year feasts and seasons
3. **Learning:** Intergenerational learning programs (weekly, monthly, small group); incorporating intergenerational learning into age group programming
4. **Praying:** Community prayer experiences, intergenerational prayer groups, spiritual guides/mentors
5. **Serving:** Intergenerational service projects and mission trips, church-wide service days

## Intergenerational Church Life

- ***The feasts and seasons of the church year*** provide a natural rhythm and calendar to the curriculum: Advent and Christmas Seasons, Epiphany, Baptism of the Lord, Call of the Disciples, Ash Wednesday, Lenten Season, Holy Week, Easter, Easter Season, Pentecost, All Saints and All Souls, and remembrances of saints and holy people throughout the year
- The ***Revised Common and Catholic Lectionaries*** provide a rich curriculum for the whole community with its three-year cycle of weekly readings from the Old Testament, Psalms, Epistles, and Gospels built around the seasons of the church year. The *Narrative Lectionary* is a four-year cycle of readings from September through following the biblical story, from Creation through the early Christian church.

## Intergenerational Church Life

- ***Ritual, milestone, and sacramental celebrations*** provide events rich in theological meaning and faith practice that celebrate the faith journey throughout life: baptism, confirmation, first Bible, first communion, graduation, marriage, funerals, and much more.
- ***Acts of service and justice***—locally and globally—provide a focus on mission to the world and put in action biblical and church teachings on service, justice, care for the earth.

## Caring

*Cultivating caring relationships across generations in the congregation and community, becoming a life-giving spiritual community of faith, hope, and love.*

1. Intergenerational Caring Conversations
2. Intergenerational Community Building
3. Intergenerational Relationships in Existing Programs
4. Intergenerational Storytelling
5. Intergenerational Relationships through Mentoring

## Celebrating

*Worshiping God together through Sunday worship, rituals, sacraments, and the liturgical seasons that involves all of the ages and generations.*

1. Intergenerational Sunday Worship
2. Whole Community Sacramental Celebrations
3. Milestones throughout Life
4. Church Year Feasts & Seasons

## Praying

*Nurturing the spiritual life of the whole community through the congregation's prayer services, rituals, and blessings throughout the year.*

1. Intergenerational Formation in Spiritual Practices
2. Intergenerational Prayer Stations
3. Intergenerational Prayer Partners & Spiritual Guides
4. Intergenerational Prayer Groups



## Serving

*Involving all ages and generations in service and mission to the world, especially to the poor and vulnerable, and in the works of justice and advocacy.*

1. Intergenerational Mission Trips
2. Churchwide Service Day
3. Intergenerational Monthly Project
4. Intergenerational Service Nights
5. Intergenerational Service Projects

## Learning

*Engaging all ages and generations together in learning experiences that teach scripture and the Christian tradition, informing and forming disciples of all ages in Christian identity.*

### Intergenerational Learning

1. Weekly
2. Bi-Weekly
3. Monthly
4. Small Group & Large Group

## Learning

### Incorporating Intergenerational Learning in Church Life

1. Age Group Programming
2. Sacramental and Milestone Celebrations
3. Church Year Feasts & Seasons
4. Vacation Bible School
5. Mission Trips & Service Projects
6. Retreat and Camp Experiences

## Intergenerational Learning

*Engaging all ages and generations together in learning experiences that teach scripture and the Christian tradition, informing and forming disciples of all ages in Christian identity.*

- Intergenerational Learning
  1. In-Common All Ages Experiences
  2. Parallel Learning
  3. Contributive Occasions
  4. Interactive Sharing
- Weekly, Bi-Weekly, and Monthly Models
- Small Group & Large Group Models

## HI-life Gatherings...

Our sixth year of whole community catechesis focuses on Living a Moral Life. Our theme is *Scripting Life with GPS - God's Proven System*. Christian moral life can be summed up as the recognition of the awesome gift of God's loving presence in our lives and our continuing effort to respond to that love. During this year we will explore the guidelines that God has given us to live lives of love and faithfulness, including the ten commandments and the beatitudes. We encourage parishioners of all ages to participate in our HI-life Gatherings - our intergenerational learning assemblies that are the foundation of our lifelong faith formation process. Our monthly Gatherings are a time of fellowship, faith formation, and fun.

### ➤ Sharing a Simple Meal Together

No cooking - just come and enjoy!

At a typical Gathering you are welcomed by greeters in the Hospitality Room and escorted to a table in the Fellowship Hall to enjoy a meal with fellow parishioners of all ages. At your table there might be a single adult, a family of four, a retired person, or an empty-nest couple. There will be a couple of questions on the table to focus our table talk.

### ➤ Whole Group Opening Experience

Introduction of the topic to be experienced by all ages.

After the meal, everyone moves to the church for an opening prayer and an activity to set the tone for the evening, such as a story or video segment. Each household receives a HI-life Home Kit and learns to use it throughout the evening.

### ➤ Exploring the Topic through Age-Specific Learning Activities

Learning about the same topic according to one's age or stage in life.

Then the group divides into smaller groups for age-specific learning activities. A typical evening might have adults staying in the church for a speaker and group discussion, young adults in Meeting Room 4, YM youth in Meeting Room 3, YW youth in the Hospitality Room, and parents with young children (approximately ages 3-11) together in the Fellowship Hall. There are lead catechists for each group to teach and guide the learning activities of the evening and trained facilitators to assist the parents and children at each table.

### ➤ Whole Group Sharing Experience

Closing of the Gathering for all ages.

To conclude our evening, everyone reunites in the church to share what has been learned, to pray together, and to be sent forth to continue learning at home in preparation for the church event or season which is the focus of the month.



## Elements of LOGOS

In local churches, LOGOS teams build intergenerational relationships between young people and caring, Christian adults of all ages through a four-part weekly format:

**ACTS 2:42 (NRSV)**

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayers.



**Bible Study:** A time for each grade, or a combination of grades to study the Bible as the model for Christ-centered living. Churches can use non-denominational curriculum developed by GenOn for LOGOS (either "Walk for Life" or our high school Bible studies) or something of their own choosing.



**Family Time:** The shared meal is a time to gather regular "table families" of various ages who eat together each week for the entire program year. Kitchen teams prepare dishes that are served family style—with table settings and serving dishes, practicing the art of serving one another.



**Worship Skills:** Choir, drama, bells, or other arts are highlighted at LOGOS and then presented regularly in corporate worship. Each church decides the best fit with its own liturgy and worship style.



**Recreation:** All have great fun in a cooperative atmosphere, often drawing on the hobbies and interests of adults in the congregation willing to share their passion on a one-to-one or looped.

## Elements of LOGOS

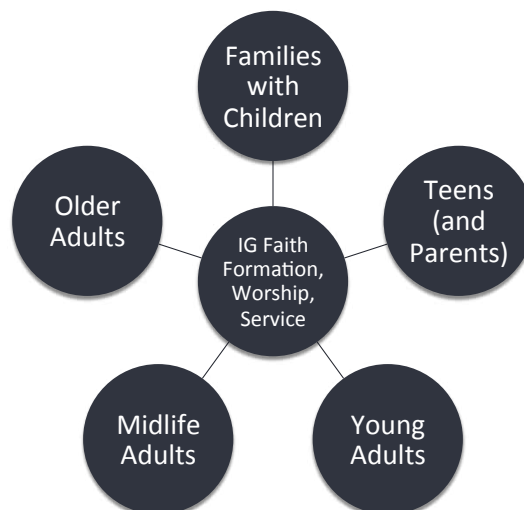
1. Bible Study
2. Family Time
3. Worship Skills
4. Recreation

GenOn Ministries  
[www.genonministries.org](http://www.genonministries.org)

## Examples of IG Learning

1. As the faith formation curriculum for the whole community
2. In Lectionary-based catechesis
3. In sacramental preparation
4. In Vacation Bible School
5. In parent-child and parent-teen programs
6. In milestone celebrations
7. In intergenerational service projects
8. In liturgical season celebrations
9. In a retreat experience or parish mission

## Curriculum for the Whole Church



## Curriculum for the Whole Church

### Potential Themes

1. Church Year & Scripture
2. Creed
3. Sacraments
4. Morality
5. Justice
6. Prayer
7. Christian Practices
8. Bible
9. Mission & Ministry

## Curriculum for the Whole Church



## Topical

Advent	Jesus the Messiah
Christmas – Epiphany	Divinity of Jesus
Lent	Journey with Jesus
Good Friday	Death of Jesus
Easter Season	Resurrection
Pentecost	Mission of the Christian
Sunday Readings	Ministry of Jesus
Sunday Readings	Identity of Christ

## Topical

Baptism	Celebrations of Baptism, Baptism of the Lord, Easter Season
Confirmation	Celebration of Confirmation, Pentecost
Eucharist	Sunday, First Eucharist, Holy Thursday, Corpus Christi
Reconciliation	Lent, Reconciliation Services
Anointing of the Sick	Celebration of Sacrament, February Lectionary Readings (Cycle B)
Marriage	World Marriage Day, Holy Family Sunday
Orders	Vocations Day

## Liturgical

### *Connecting Faith, Worship, and Life*

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish uses a liturgy-centered, lifelong, and intergenerational approach to Catholic faith formation. The goal is to help and support everyone who wishes to become a better disciple by integrating faith, worship, and life in light of the Gospel. Since this is an ongoing, lifelong task, we invite EVERYONE in the parish to participate. All are welcome!

## Liturgical

**September:** Mass for the 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**October:** Mass for the 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**November:** Mass for the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

**December:** Mass for the 2nd Sunday of Advent

**January:** Mass for the Baptism of the Lord

**February:** Mass for the 1st Sunday of Lent

**March:** Mass for Palm Sunday

**April:** Mass for the 4th Sunday of Easter

**May:** Mass for Holy Trinity Sunday

## Milestones

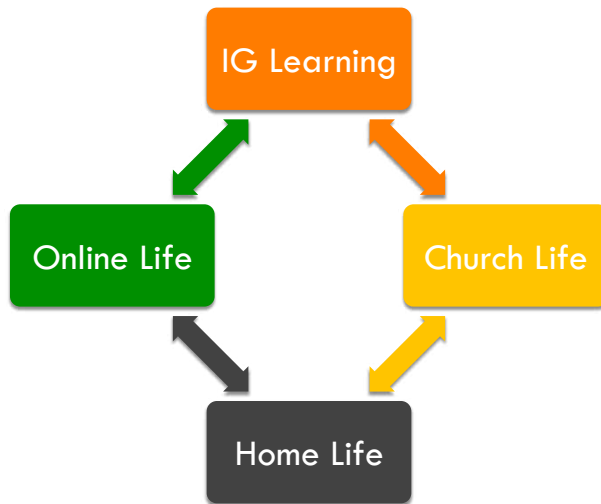
- ❑ Birth / Baptism
- ❑ Starting School Year / Blessing Backpacks
- ❑ First Communion
- ❑ Receiving a first Bible
- ❑ Confirmation
- ❑ Graduation (HS, College)
- ❑ Engagement
- ❑ Wedding
- ❑ Retirement
- ❑ Death / Funeral

## Christian Practices

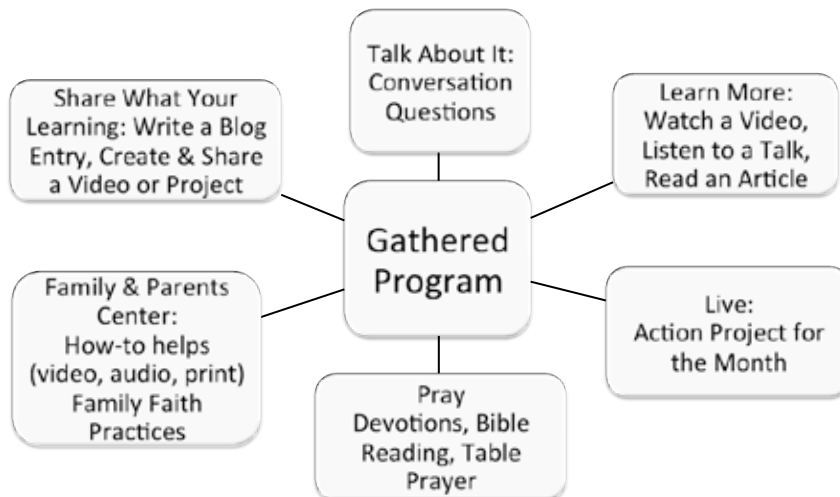
- ❑ Caring for the Body
- ❑ Celebrating Life
- ❑ Discernment
- ❑ Dying Well
- ❑ Eating Well
- ❑ Forgiving
- ❑ Hospitality
- ❑ Keeping Sabbath
- ❑ Managing Household Life
- ❑ Participating in Community
- ❑ Praying
- ❑ Reading the Bible
- ❑ Transforming the World.



## Connected Faith Formation



## Extend an IG Program



## Intergenerational Learning: Practice

### Learning Process

Meal and Community Building (30 minutes)

Part 1. Gathering and Prayer (10-15)

Part 2. All Ages Learning Experience (20-30)

Part 3. In-Depth Learning Experience (75-90)

- Option 1. Whole Group (together)
- Option 2. Age Group (parallel)
- Option 3. Activity Center

Part 4. Sharing Learning Experiences and Home Application (15-20)

Part 5. Closing Prayer (5-10)



## Meal & Community Building



## Part 1. Gathering



## Part 2. All Ages Learning



## Part 2. All Ages Learning



## Part 3. Whole Group Format

The Whole Group Format provides. . .

- Learning activities for everyone using small groups or table groups
- Intergenerational learning activities and age-appropriate learning activities for families with children, teens, young adults, and adults
- Lead facilitator or team guides the entire group through the learning program—giving presentations and leading activities



## Part 3. Age Group Format

The Age Group Format provides parallel, age-appropriate learning activities on the same theme for...

1. young children (4 and 5 year olds)
2. families with children (grades 1-5)
3. adolescents (middle school and high school)
4. young adults
5. adults







## Part 3. Learning Center Format

The Learning Activity Center Format provides. . .

- Learning stations or centers with structured learning activities on a common theme
- Age-specific or intergenerational
- Facilitated by leaders





## Part 4. Sharing & Application



## Part 4. Sharing & Application



## Closing Prayer



## Example: Called to Pray

1. Gathering and Opening Prayer
2. All Ages Learning: I'm Ready God, Where Are You? (Drama)
3. In-Depth Learning: Paths of Prayer
  - Activity 1: Creating a Space for Prayer
  - Activity 2: Praying with Scripture
  - Activity 3: Praying with the Psalms
  - Activity 4: Intercessory Prayer
  - Activity 5: The Jesus Prayer
4. Part 4. Sharing Learning Experiences and Home Application
5. Part 5. Closing Prayer

## Example: Identity of Christ

1. Gathering and Opening Prayer
2. All Ages Learning: Gospel Portraits of Jesus (multimedia experience)
3. Age-Appropriate Learning: Exploring the Gospel Portraits of Jesus Christ
  - Families with Children Learning Plan
  - Adolescent Learning Plan
  - Adult Learning Plan
4. Part 4. Sharing Learning Experiences and Home Application
5. Part 5. Closing Prayer

## Example: Jesus Son of God

What is Jesus saying/doing?

What is Jesus teaching us about the qualities of God?

### Activity Centers

1. Jesus is Born (Infancy Narratives)
2. Jesus Is God 's Beloved Son (Baptism and Transfiguration)
3. Jesus Teaches Parables of the Kingdom of God
4. Jesus Heals People
5. Jesus Forgives Sin
6. Jesus Raises People from the Dead
7. Jesus Feeds People

## Example: Jesus Son of God

### **Methods for Exploring Gospel Stories**

- ✓ Presenting the Gospel story: proclamation, reading, media
- ✓ Dramatic presentations & role plays
- ✓ Creative art activities
- ✓ Storytelling & Scripture imagination activities
- ✓ Music
- ✓ Prayer and ritual
- ✓ Group discussion & family conversations

## Example: Jesus Son of God

1. Jesus is Born: Creative Activity & Discussion
2. Jesus Is God's Beloved Son (Baptism and Transfiguration): Ritual/Prayer Activity
3. Jesus Teaches Parables of the Kingdom of God: Rewriting Parables for Today; Creative Art Activity
4. Jesus Heals People: Role Play/Dramatic Reading, Praying for the Sick
5. Jesus Forgives Sin: Drama and Reflection Activity
6. Jesus Raises People from the Dead: Dramatic Re-enactment; Creative Activity
7. Jesus Feeds People: Imagination Activity and Prayer Activity