

May 2011 Workshop

Designing Innovations & Initiatives

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Workshop Topics

1. Envisioning Your Parish in 2016
2. Reviewing the Innovation Design Process
3. Exploring Innovations in Parish Life
4. Applying the Design Process in Your Parish
5. Finding Resources & Building Capacity-Building for Parish Innovations
6. Introducing Innovations: Facilitating a Change Initiative
7. Pathways Project Development

Online Resources

Building Faith: Online Christian Ed Community: www.buildfaith.org
Congregational Resource Guide: www.congregationalresources.org
Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership: www.emergingmodels.org
Faith Formation 2020: www.faithformation2020.net
Faith Formation Learning Exchange: www.faithformationlearningexchange.net
Faith & Leadership: <http://faithandleadership.com>
Fresh Expressions: www.freshexpressions.org.uk
LifelongFaith: www.lifelongfaith.com
Ministry Matters: www.ministrymatters.com
Vibrant Faith Ministries: www.vibrantfaith.org

Activity: Envisioning Your Parish in 2016

Develop headlines that describe in a phrase or sentence what innovations your parish will have implemented by 2016 to: 1) strengthen parish culture and vitality, and/or 2) target the religious and spiritual needs of people in your community that you are not adequately serving at this time.

Headline #1:

Headline #2:

Headline #3:

Headline #4:

Headline #5:

Headline #6:

Process: Designing an Innovation

Step 1. Select an area for innovation in parish culture and vitality or a target group with a particular and their spiritual/religious needs.

- What did you learn from the inventory of parish vitality and your examination of parish culture? What areas are in need of improvement, enhancement, or expansion?
- What did you learning from your interpretation of the religious and spiritual needs of people today using the four scenarios of Faith Formation 2020?

Step 2. Consult strategies and innovations that are already addressing your need.

- Consult the 16 Faith Formation 2020 Strategies (in the book or online at: www.faithformation2020.net)
- Conduct you own research: What is already being done in this area? Are there churches and synagogues that you can learn from? Are their nonprofit or for profit organizations that you can learn from?

Step 3. Generate ideas for your parish community.

- Generate ideas for innovative programs, activities, and/or strategies: Defer judgment. Encourage wild ideas. Build on the ideas of others. Stay focused on topic. One conversation at a time. Go for quantity.

Step 4. Evaluate the ideas.

- Evaluate your ideas and select one or more programs, activities, and/or strategies for the target audience.

Step 5. Design an implementation plan.

- Describe, in detail, each of your new initiatives (strategy, program, activity, or resource). Develop a plan for each initiative by developing the actions that you will need to take to move from idea to implementation.
 - What are the dates and times?
 - What is the location: physical/facility and/or online/website?
 - What are the implementation steps and target dates (timeline) for completing each step.
 - What resources will you need to implement the initiative.
 - How much will the initiative cost?
 - How many leaders will you need to implement the initiative, how you will find them, and how you will prepare them?

Step 6. Implement the initiative through small scale prototyping.

- Consider a version 1.0 pilot effort (prototyping) of the program, activity, strategy or resource with a small group of your target audience before scaling-up the initiative to reach a wider audience. Through prototyping, you can test the initiative and the implementation plan, get feedback from your target audience, improve the initiative, and then develop plans to reach a wide audience.
 - How you can conduct a small scale pilot effort of your innovation?

Step 7. Implement the initiative with a wider audience and continue evaluation and improvements.

- After making adjustments based on the pilot, develop version 2.0 and implement the plan with wider audience. Continue to improve the initiative. Communicate the stories and examples of the benefits and blessings that are coming to individuals, groups, families and to your whole church community. Continue to reach new audiences.

Generating Ideas

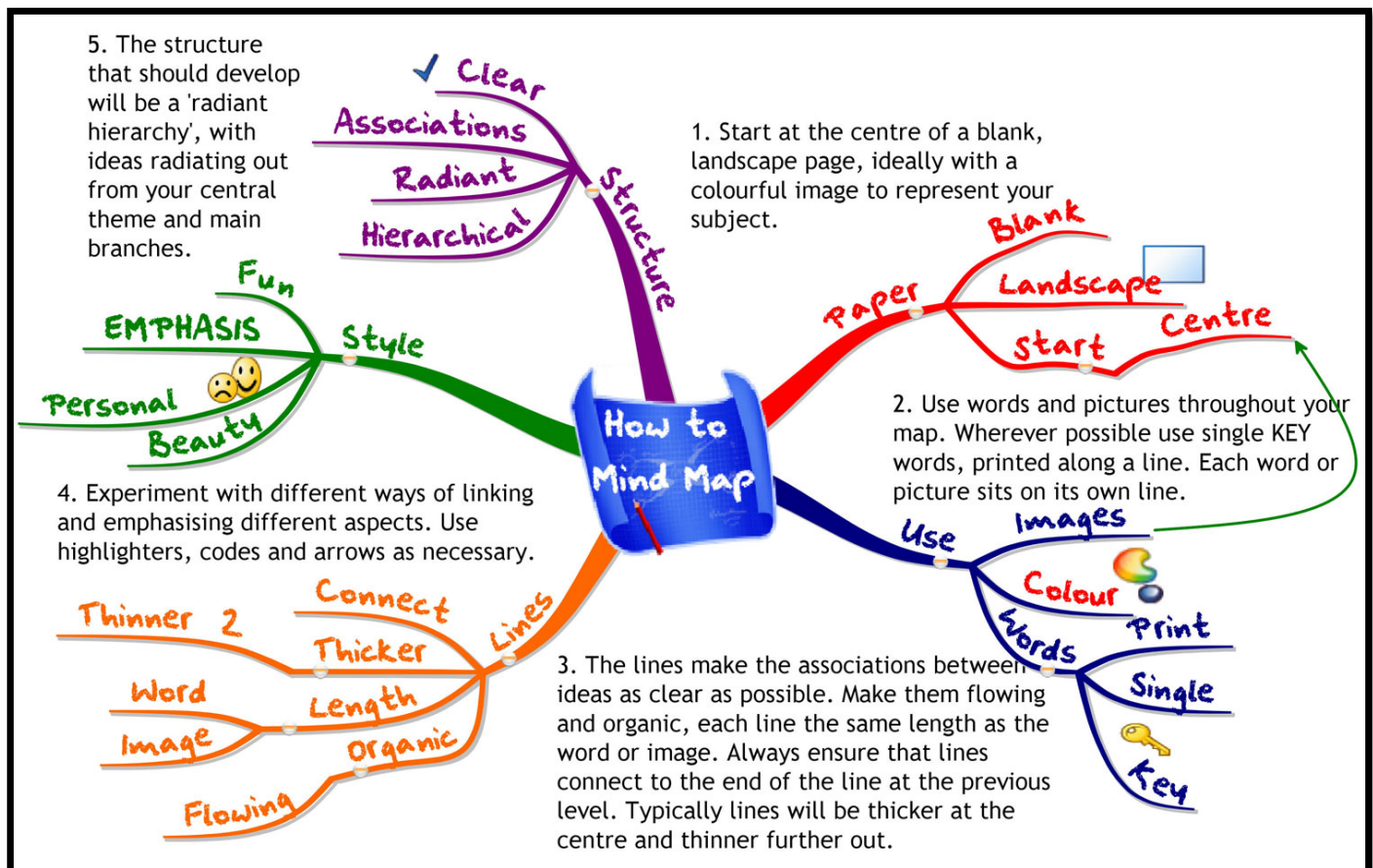
Activity: "How Might We?"

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 to "HMW." Go for quantity, not quality at this point. Post all of the ideas on sheets of easel paper. Together as a group select three to five HMW opportunity statements through discussion or the use of voting. You might want to cluster HMW statements before discussion and voting. After selecting the three to five HMW statements, write each of the selected statements on a separate sheet of easel paper and brainstorm ideas for turning the opportunity into a practical project. Cluster similar ideas and select the best ideas for each HMW statement.

Activity: "What If" You Used Your Imagination

Begin by saying: "I need fresh and novel ideas to solve my challenge. I will suspend all judgment and see what free and easy ideas I can think up. It doesn't matter how weird or offbeat they are." Allow your team the freedom to conceptualize without judging ideas in terms of the real world. Ask team members to list as many "what if" statements as they can on post-it notes (e.g., "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. When ideas are grouped based on common themes, an organization begins to arise from the information. More ideas are generated as people begin to see the structure and fill in the gaps.

Mindmapping



Worksheet: Designing an Innovation

Priority for Action _____
(area for improvement, target group, spiritual/religious need)

Target Audience: _____

Initiative: _____

Dates and Times _____

Location (physical/facility and/or online/website) _____

Implementation Steps and Timeline

	What	When	Who
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

Resources Needed to Implement the Initiative

Leaders Needed to Implement the Initiative

Costs to Implement the Initiative

Worksheet: Finding Resources & Building Capacity

Innovation: _____

1. What will it require of the parish community?

(1) **Parish Leadership** (competencies, skills, processes and procedures), (2) **People Resources** (committees, ministries, parish organizations, parishioners), (3) **Material Resources** (facilities, technologies, print/digital), (4) **Financial Resources**, (5) **Collaborating and Partnering Possibilities?**

2. What resources (capacity) can the parish community bring to the innovation?

(1) **People Resources**, (2) **Organizational Resources**, (3) **Print and Media Resources**, (4) **Web and Social Media Technologies**, and **Digital Media**, (5) **Material Resources**, (6) **Financial Resources**.

Process: Facilitating Change

(From *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard* by Chip and Dan Heath)

Innovation: _____

Direct the Rider (the conscious mind): eliminating what looks like resistance but is more often a lack of clarity by providing crystal-clear direction.	
	Ways to use this in your project
1. Following the bright spots: investigate what's working and clone it.	
2. Script the critical moves: don't think big picture, think in terms of specific behaviors.	
3. Point to the destination: change is easier when you know where you're going and why it's worth it.	
Motivate the Elephant (the subconscious): eliminating what looks like laziness but is more often exhaustion by engaging emotions to get people on the same path as you.	
	Ways to use this in your project
4. Find the feeling: knowing something isn't enough to cause change. Make people feel something.	
5. Shrink the change: break down the change until it no longer spooks the Elephant.	
6. Grow your people: cultivate a sense of identity and instill the growth mindset.	
Shape the Path (the situation): eliminating what looks like a people problem but is more often a situation problem, by making the environment more conducive to the change you seek.	
	Ways to use this in your project
7. Tweak the environment: when the situation changes, the behavior changes. So change the situation.	
8. Build habits: when behavior is habitual, it's "free"—it doesn't tax the Rider. Look for ways to encourage habits.	
9. Rally the herd: behavior is contagious. Help it spread.	

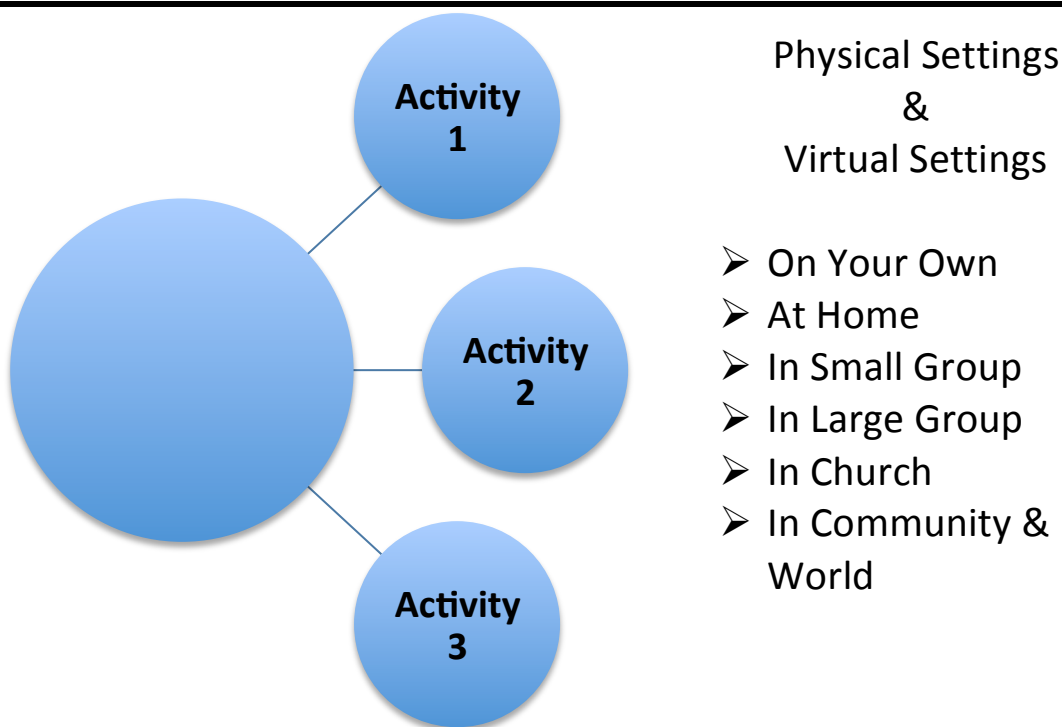
Illustrations of Innovations for Parish Communities

Illustration #1. The Bible for All Ages

Approach: Utilize a variety of faith formation models to address the diverse life tasks and situations, religious and spiritual needs, and interests of people. Blend face-to-face, gathered faith formation in physical settings with virtual, online faith formation.

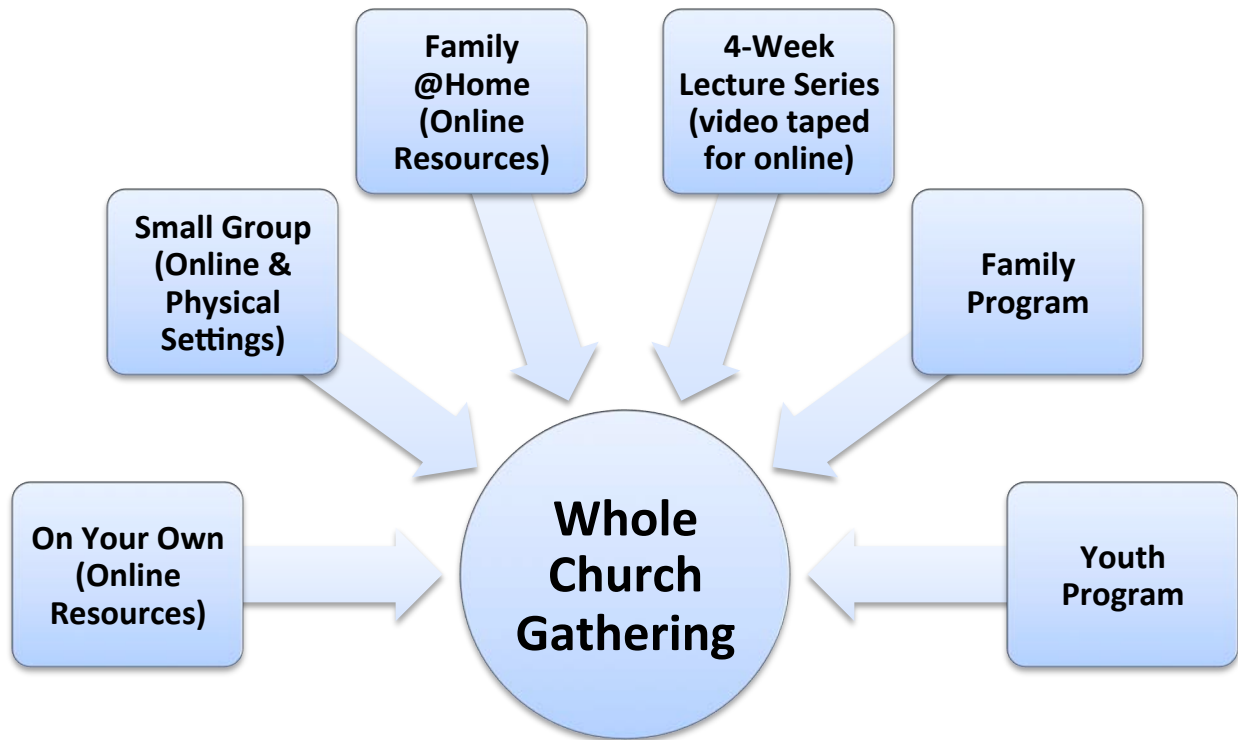
- **Faith Formation on Your Own:** through reading, online courses, audio and video programs, movies, television programs
- **Faith Formation at Home:** through Bible reading, storytelling and caring conversation, prayer and devotions, rituals and traditions, service
- **Faith Formation in Small Groups:** through Bible and theology study groups, social issues study groups, faith sharing groups, lectionary-based groups, service/mission action groups, support groups, special interest groups
- **Faith Formation in Large Groups;** through courses, speaker series, workshops, film festivals, retreats, conferences, intergenerational programs
- **Faith Formation in the Congregation:** through Sunday worship, church year events and celebrations, service/mission activities, ministry and leadership in the church and community
- **Faith Formation in the Community and World:** through programs, courses, clinics, workshops, and presentations at universities, retreat centers, YMCAs, libraries, bookstores, regional church programs; through engagement in community/political action, local and global service and justice projects

Websites, social media, and digital technologies (an iPod Touch, smart cell phones, iPad) mean that churches can deliver faith formation experiences and resources anytime and anywhere, reaching people wherever they go online (home, work, school, vacation, coffee house). The interplay between learning in physical places and virtual online spaces can revolutionize faith formation in a church.



Preparing for the New Lectionary Year

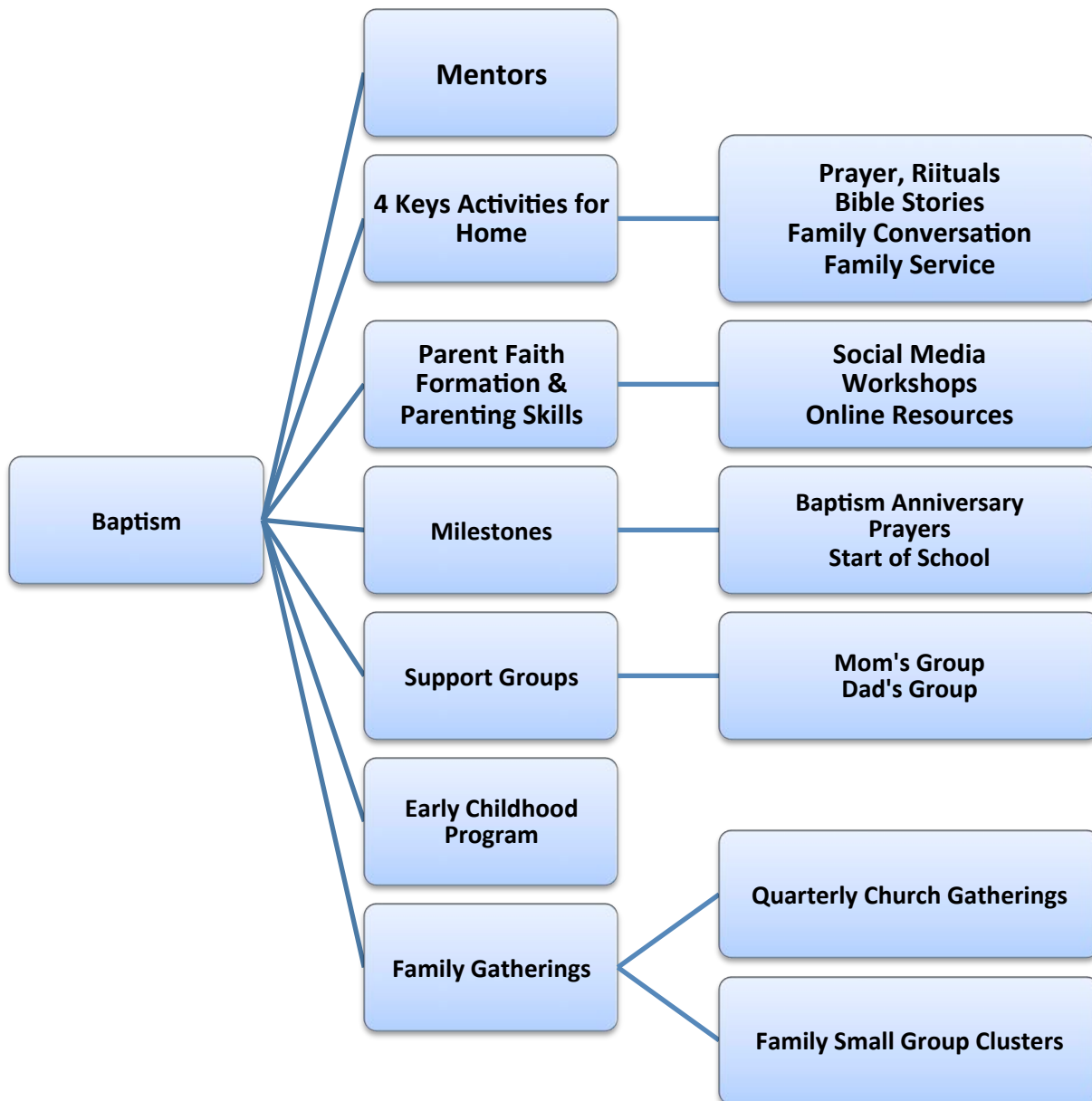
Bible study taking place across the whole congregation—on you own, family @home, small group, lecture series, family/intergenerational program—*culminating* in a whole-church, intergenerational gathering (meal, sharing, prayer, Bible learning experiences) for all ages who participated in the Bible study.



Extending Sunday Worship into Everyday Life



Illustration #2. Family Faith Practices



Four Keys for Practicing Faith (Vibrant Faith Ministries, www.vibrantfaith.org)

- **Caring Conversation.** Christian values and faith are passed on to the next generation through supportive conversation.
- **Family Devotions and Prayer.** The Christian faith shapes the whole of our lives and involves a lifetime of study, reflection, and prayer. Family devotions provide a way to learn more about the Bible and Christian tradition as a family, and apply the teachings to daily life as a follower of Jesus Christ.
- **Family Rituals and Traditions.** Family rituals can take many forms from daily rituals such as mealtime, bedtime, leaving and returning; celebrations such as birthdays, anniversaries, and special achievements; church year rituals at home such as Advent and Lent; milestones such as births and deaths, first day of school and graduations, and so on..
- **Family Service.** Engaging in service with one's family is a powerful opportunity for growing in faith.

Illustration #3. Evangelization & Outreach: Empowering the Community (*Unbinding the Gospel*, GraceNet: www.gracenet.info)

The process and integrated set of resources from *Unbinding the Gospel Project* empower the faith community—people of vibrant faith and active engagement—to share their faith with those are not engaged in the church community and/or not growing in faith. This process and the accompanying resources help the whole church change its habits to reflect practices of members and leaders of highly effective churches. They begin to pray daily, to talk about their faith with each other, and to take steps toward significant faith conversations with friends without a faith/church relationship. The process moves through the following steps:

- **Step One. Church Leader’s Study:** *Unbinding the Gospel*. Designed for pastors, key congregational leaders and evangelism teams *Unbinding the Gospel* helps committed leaders deepen and start sharing their own faith, understand their cultural context, and begin to plan for authentic congregational faith-sharing. It works best as a seven- to ten-week small group study. Each chapter concludes with questions, scripture suggestions and group exercises.
- **Step Two: All-Church Saturation Study:** *Unbinding Your Heart: Forty Days of Prayer & Faith Sharing*. This is a six-week, church-wide, small group E-vent! that can be conducted during Lent, summer or fall study for all established classes and small groups, and new ones formed just for the E-vent. The purpose of an all-congregation is to help people strengthen their own faith and to learn to talk about it with each other first, and then others outside the community. Each week, for forty days, people will (1) pray each day’s scripture and prayer exercise and work with a prayer partner; (2) study a chapter of the book with their small group, and (3) worship with sermons, music, and prayers centered on the week’s chapter. *Unbinding Your Heart* enriches the church’s community life. It helps individuals risk face-to-face encounters with God. The entire congregation begins to talk about their faith. The E-vent creates momentum in the church.
- **Step Three: An Experiment in Prayer and Community:** *Unbinding Your Soul*. Many people who aren’t connected with a church would love to try a no-obligation experience of substantial spiritual discussion, prayer and community. *Unbinding Your Soul* prepares church members to invite their friends into a four-week small group experience with short study chapters, an individual prayer journal, prayer partner activities, and group exercises. Groups can choose an additional four-week segment: “Faith and Courage.”

Resources

- Reese, Martha Grace. *Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism*. Saint Louis: Chalice, 2006.
 _____. *Unbinding Your Heart: Forty Days of Prayer and Faith Sharing*. Saint Louis: Chalice, 2008.
 _____. *Unbinding Your Church*. Saint Louis: Chalice, 2008.
 _____. *Unbinding Your Soul: Your Experiment in Prayer and Community*. Saint Louis: Chalice, 2009.

Illustration #4. Reaching Seekers: Pathways to Vibrant Faith and Active Engagement

Mini-Retreats: Our Lady of Soledad Parish (www.soledad-coachella.org)

Our Lady of Soledad Parish provides a step-by-step process to help parishioners deepen their faith, so they don't just enter the front door only to drift quietly out the back door later. The discipleship program mirrors the process developed by Rick Warren (Saddleback Church). It consists of five mini-retreats. Each mini-retreat includes prayer, ice breakers, talks, faith sharing and food. Held on a Sunday when most parishioners are off work, the first session begins at 3 p.m., late enough to allow for both Sunday Mass and family time. Retreats end at 8 p.m., early enough for participants to be rested for the next day. The parish provides child care. Each mini-retreat is self-contained; no one must return to complete it. This practice eliminates absenteeism and distinguishes the retreat experience from a class. Lay teams lead the mini-retreats, which are offered in English and Spanish and repeated frequently throughout the year. Each mini-retreat focuses on a different aspect of spiritual growth:

- *Mini-Retreat 101: "Catholics Alive!"* begins with the question, "What does it mean to be a follower of Christ?" Retreatants discuss the difference between a relationship-centered faith and a rules-centered faith; consider the importance of church as a family, instead of a privatized, Lone-Ranger Christianity; and note similarities and differences between Catholic and non-Catholic Christians. The group discusses the importance of serious commitment to the Catholic faith, as well as the commitments asked of parish members. Participants are asked to sign a simple membership covenant if they wish to join the parish as registered members.
- *Mini-Retreat 201: "Alive and Growing Spiritually!"* focuses on maturation in the Catholic faith. Retreatants discuss prayer, Bible study and the importance of belonging to a small faith community. There is also a presentation of Catholic moral teachings.
- *Mini-Retreat 301: "Alive and Gifted!"* helps retreatants discern how to serve God in ministry. The activities follow the acronym Shape, as developed by Warren, where "S" is for spiritual gifts; "H" represents the "heart" or passion and desire to serve; "A" stands for natural abilities; "P" is personality; and "E" represents life experiences. This mini-retreat helps participants discover how God has uniquely shaped them for ministry. Parishioners take up a ministry based on their gifts, not just on parish needs.
- *Mini-Retreat 401: "Alive in the World!"* helps participants live as witnesses for Christ, as contagious Catholic Christians. The group discusses evangelization, as distinguished from proselytizing. Retreatants learn how to defend the Catholic faith. They also discuss Catholic social justice teachings and specifically how this parish is active in community organizing.
- *Mini-Retreat 501: "Alive to Praise God!"* focuses on Catholic worship and the sacraments. It begins with a Taizé-style prayer, followed by a guided tour of the church during which sacred spaces, vessels and vestments are explained. Next, retreatants rotate through four workshops on the sacraments, the liturgical year and church traditions. The retreat concludes with a shortened Seder-like meal that leads into an explanatory Mass.

S.T.E.P.S: Impact Catholic Ministry (<http://impactcatholic.com/steps.html>)

S.T.E.P.S. is the "Formation for Life Process" of Impact Catholic Ministry. These steps are designed to lead people towards greater maturity in their Christian life and equip them for rewarding involvement in the life of this Church community. The S.T.E.P.S course is designed to help people grow in understanding and experience of faith and the Christian life. As people discover their own faith through these steps, they can also find their place in this community where they can grow and enjoy life.

- *STEP 100: All about Christ.* This is a first look at who Jesus is and how He can impact our lives. The course covers the basics of the message of Christ. If people are interested in investigating the Christian faith for the first time or looking to rediscover the foundation of faith, this course is for them.

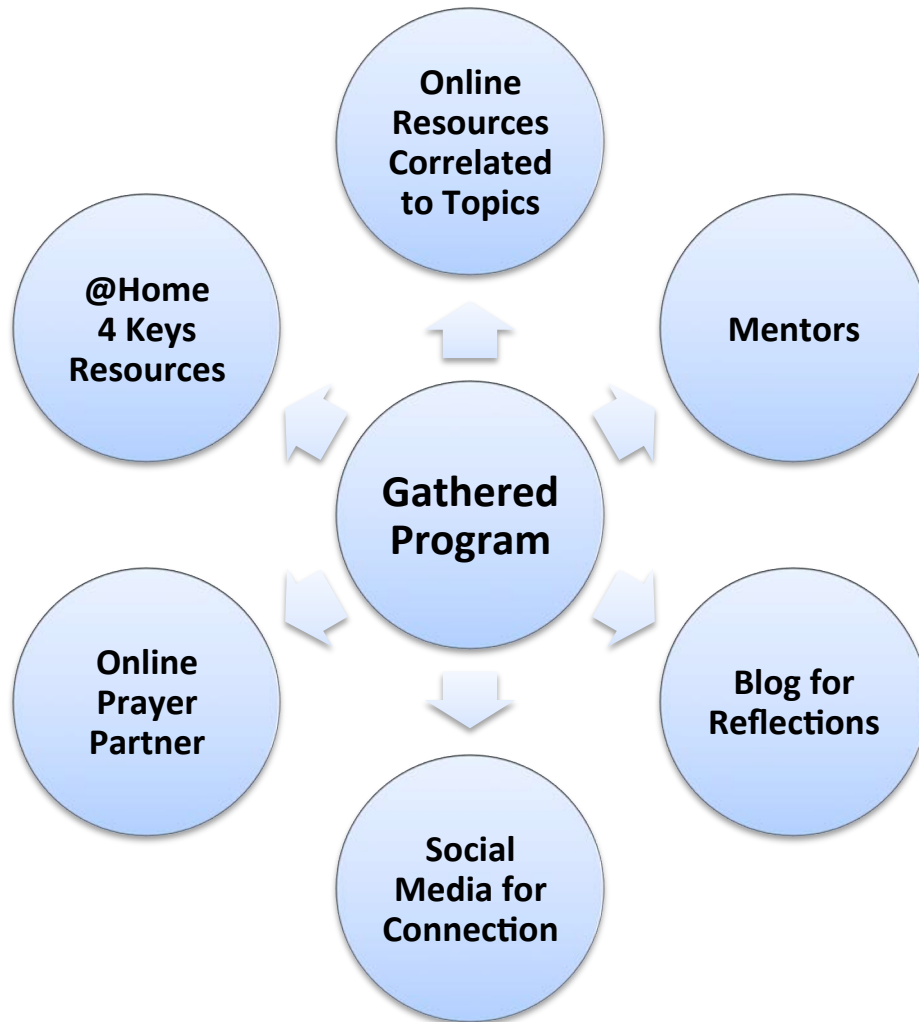
- *STEP 200: All about Church.* The Christian life is never lived alone; people are designed to support one another. Church is that gathering of people who walk together in faith. This course focuses on the Impact church family. Here people find out about the statements, strategies and structure of Impact Catholic Ministry.
- *STEP 300: All about my Character.* Personal growth occurs when people make a deliberate and informed decision to put certain practices into action. This is a discipleship course that examines some of the key practices of the Christian life. People learn practical, everyday ways to grow in maturity in your faith.
- *STEP 400: All about my Capacity.* People are gifted in unique ways. This course takes people through a process of self discovery as they identify their unique gifts and abilities, dreams and desires, temperament and personality. Finding their gifts allows people to better understand their place in the community of faith.
- *STEP 500: All about the Cause.* The message of Jesus has a transforming power. Individual lives, communities and nations have been radically changed by that message. As followers of Jesus each person can be part of that cause. This course looks at how Jesus is working in our world and how his followers can be part of what he is doing.
- *STEP 600: All about our Commission.* Jesus' last instruction to His followers before he returned to his Father was that they should share what they have received from Him with others. His followers today share the same task as those first followers. This course covers how people can share what they have experienced in a loving and respectful way.
- *STEP 700: All about the Cross.* This final step is really the beginning of a whole new life. At the cross, Christians find an invitation to commit themselves to God in a deeper way. Here people will learn how to live intimately with God. They embark on a daring adventure into the life God has always dreamed they would live.

Awakening Faith and Seeking Christ (Paulist Evangelization Ministries, www.pncea.org)

Awakening Faith: Reconnecting with Your Catholic Faith, is a conversation-based, small group process that helps inactive Catholics return to the Church. The group meets once a week for six weeks of conversation and socializing. The conversations are based on short, easy to read essays about spirituality, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God's mercy, the Mass, and the Church. The meetings foster reflection, prayer, and honest sharing in a setting of hospitality and acceptance. A small community is formed and over the weeks that community becomes a bridge to the larger church community. Additional, optional essays allow the group to continue to meet if desirable for another four weeks to discuss faith, love, marriage and divorce, and money. The process is simple and inviting. A parish can offer *Awakening Faith* any time of the year and repeat it year after year.

Seeking Christ aims to solve the problem parishes face when people inquire about the Catholic Church, but the parish has no way to begin receiving them. *Seeking Christ* includes eight sessions that can be used in a variety of ways to welcome and engage people who are inquiring about becoming Catholics. After an initial interview, the program offers eight possible sessions dealing with human seeking, our words and the Word of God, faith, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the church as the community of Jesus, freedom, and conversion. Depending on inquirers' needs, a parish chooses which sessions would be most helpful. Each session involves a short DVD reflection, a scripture passage for discussion, and a take-home session which allows the inquirer to begin seeing Catholic approaches to various life issues. The inquirer receives a booklet for reflection and journaling.

Seeker Design: Physical and Virtual Settings & Multiple Models



Parish Website Checklist

Planning Checklist

- ✓ Who is the audience?
- ✓ Planning—visit other sites.
- ✓ Reflect on what you are: what are your core values and how do you want to say that?
- ✓ Define a reasonable scope and get buy-in from stake-holders in the congregation.
- ✓ Do an easy survey of your audience—what are they looking for, what do they expect?
- ✓ Decide on the types of content to include (including graphics).
- ✓ Map out your basic navigation (7 buckets is about all a person can digest).
- ✓ Pick the technology or platform.
- ✓ Create the design.
- ✓ Build your content .
- ✓ Release the site.

Potential Features

- ✓ a learning center with courses and webinars on topics such as faith themes, Bible studies, life issues, and Christian practices, self-paced and facilitated by church staff and church members at scheduled times
- ✓ audio and video podcasts of gathered learning programs at the church
- ✓ links to selected online learning programs and activities from Christian churches, seminaries, universities, and publishers; links to courses on iTunes University and other online course providers
- ✓ links to selected audio and video podcasts on iTunes, YouTube, and other providers
- ✓ links to free e-book libraries, such as Google Books, and online Bibles, such as Bible Gateway and Biblica
- ✓ a faith formation resource center with daily, weekly, and seasonal resources for all ages and families, including faith conversation activities, devotions and prayer, Bible reading activities and Bible studies, service projects, and rituals and traditions
- ✓ a milestones and life transitions center with sections for each milestone that include rituals, blessings, commentaries, personal stories, a “gathering space” for sharing stories and ideas
- ✓ a worship center sharing audio and video clips of some of the sermons and other worship experiences, and extending it through the daily posting of images, songs, meditations, inspirational stories, prayers of the people, and online worship exercises.
- ✓ an online parenting center with “how to” parenting articles and videos, faith enrichment resources, a “gathering space” for parents to interact, a blog staffed by parent mentors, parent-generated ideas and activities, and links to highly rated parent and family websites.
- ✓ themed “gathering spaces” for synchronous and asynchronous interaction, including live text-based chat and live audio/video conferences, threaded discussions, collected blog links, self-paced tutorials on a range of topics, and so on.
- ✓ a library pod with access to e-journals, e-books, archived streaming video of speakers and events, a clearinghouse-type collection of links to resources, and other Internet-mediated resources.
- ✓ a mission/service opportunity clearinghouse for local, national, and international internships, volunteer opportunities, and jobs
- ✓ small group gatherings online for faith sharing, Bible study, and book discussions
- ✓ a calendar of events with locations, times, and descriptions, with Web-streamed audio and video recordings of select offerings