Faith Formation for All the Seasons of Life
Archdiocese of Toronto Parish Ministry Conference 2019

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Presentation: Go to Workshops
Resources: Go to Practices
• Learn practices, approaches, and strategies for forming disciples at every stage of life and designing and teaching faith formation programs that are more holistic and engaging.
• Learn how to use the newest educational methods in our catechetical programs to engage people more fully in faith forming experiences.
• Discover how to integrate intergenerational relationships and faith experiences into faith formation for all ages; and how to make families and family faith formation part of everything we do.
• Discover how to incorporate digital methods and media into faith formation with all ages.
The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ. Starting with the “initial” conversion of a person to the Lord, moved by the Holy Spirit through the primary proclamation of the Gospel, catechesis seeks to solidify and mature this first adherence. It proposes to help those who have just converted “to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know his 'mystery', the kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and comments contained in his Gospel message, and the paths that he has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow him.” (General Directory for Catechesis, 80)

The catechetical documents of the Church call us to develop faith formation that engages the whole person: heart, mind, and hands. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Mt 22:37-39) Jesus presented faith and discipleship as a whole way of life. How do we form people – children, youth, adults, and families – in this way of life today?
A Holistic Faith

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.

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.

A way of the hands (transform) demands a discipleship of love, justice, peace-making, simplicity, integrity, healing, and repentance.

Lifelong Faith Formation

Promotes maturity in faith through the ages and stages of life

Addresses the diverse spiritual and religious lives, engagements, and practices of children, adolescents, adults, and families

Thrives in a vital and vibrant faith forming Christian community

Is holistic—integrating three primary faith forming environments: the church community, the family, and life stages
Lifelong Faith Formation

- Offers a variety of content, programs, activities, and resources in multiple settings, aided by the use of digital platforms, media, and methods.

- Guides people in discerning their spiritual and religious journeys and life stage needs, and giving people an active role in shaping their own personal trajectories of faith growth.

- Engages in missional outreach to the spiritual-religious needs and journeys of the “spiritual but not religious” and the “unaffiliated”

- Incorporates digital methods and media to enhance and expand the ways people of all ages grow in faith.

Maturing in Faith

- Children 0-10
- Teens 11-19
- Young Adults 20s-30s
- Midlife Adults 40s-50s
- Mature Adults 60s-70s
- Older Adults 80+

What are the age-appropriate experiences, programs, activities, resources, etc. that promote faith maturing at each life stage?
Maturing in Faith

Developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ

Living as a disciple of Jesus Christ and making the Christian faith a way of life

Reading and studying the Bible—its message, meaning, and application to life today

Learning the Christian story and foundational teachings of the Christian faith and integrating its meaning into one’s life

Praying—together and by ourselves, and seeking spiritual growth through spiritual disciplines

Maturing in Faith

Living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values

Living the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace.

Worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship, ritual celebrations, and the seasons of the church year

Being actively engaged in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community

Practicing faith in Jesus Christ by using one’s gifts and talents within the Christian community and in the world
Maturing in Faith

- What vision of the Christian life are we seeking to develop in people of all ages?
- What are the particular characteristics of a maturing Christian faith that we are promoting at each stage of life?
- How are all our efforts directed toward this vision of the Christian life?

Are we working toward....
- Developing a relationship with Jesus
- Living as a disciple
- Reading and studying the Bible
- Learning and integrating the Story
- Developing a prayer life
- Living with moral integrity
- Living the mission in the world
- Worshipping God
- Being active in the faith community
- Practicing faith by using one’s gifts
Whole-Life Approach

Religious Lives

**Actives:** Faith & Engagement at the Center of Life

**Occasionals:** Faith & Engagement – one among many priorities

**Uninvolved:** Spiritual but Not Religious

**Unaffiliateds:** Not Spiritual, Not Religious
Shift in Emphasis

“One Size First All” Approach

“One Sizes Fits One” Approach

• How are we addressing the four religious-spiritual profiles of people today?
• How do we personalize faith formation around people’s faith journeys within our programming and ministries?
• Do we design programming and resources specifically for each religious-spiritual profile?

Maturing in Faith
Holistic Faith Formation

Intergenerational

Family

Peers or Life Stage

Holistic Faith Formation

Children
- Intergen
- Family @ Home
- Peers

Adolescents
- Intergen
- Family @ Home
- Peers

Adults
- Intergen
- Family @ Home
- Peers
A Holistic Approach

Intergenerational

- Participate in several celebrations of Church year feasts & seasons
- Join the community in a service service project
- Participate in a leadership role or church ministry

Family

- Develop a faith practice each season: prayer, Bible reading, etc.
- Celebrate particular church year seasons (Lent, All Saints/Souls)
- Participate in two whole family programs at church
- Participate in two service projects as a family

Life Stage Specific

- Select one’s participation in courses, workshops, retreats, vacation Bible school, service projects and mission trips, etc.

Styles of Learning: Builders

- lecture and expert presentations
- activities that take into account their age-related abilities to hear, see, and move
- connect their experience to the topic
- structure and predictability (no surprises); low-risk learning environment
- independent skill practice time
- still like printed resources and books for study
Styles of Learning: Boomers

- group interactions and discussions
- storytelling
- chances to try new skills independently
- stable, risk-free environment but want to interact with others
- experiential, practical, and fun activities that allow for team exercises
- use technology as means for learning
- blend of people who prefer printed books and those who learn online

Styles of Learning: Gen Xers

- experiential with lots of direct experience activities
- shorter, episodic learning experiences
- visual learning (images, videos)
- practical and relevant (What will I do with this learning?)
- discretion to complete tasks their own way
- use technology where possible, including online learning, video, etc.
Styles of Learning: Millennials

- Microlearning and episodic learning experiences
- Lots of activity-based group work
- Fast-moving, interactive activities
- Visual learning (images, videos)
- Technology enabled learning using their own devices for learning
- Collaborative learning environments with peer interaction
- Entertainment and learning at the same time

Styles of Learning: Gen Z

- Authentic and meaningful experiences
- More independent in how they learn; self-reliant; self-directed learners
- Adept at using the new digital tools and methods to learn
- Value face-to-face interaction and collaboration and co-creating
- Project-based learning, active learning, and creative-production activities
- Videos and YouTube, especially short pieces that run from 60-90 seconds
Generation Z Learners

Students and teachers agree that Gen Z learns best by creating, yet the current curriculum is more focused around lectures, writing and reading.

Effectiveness of Gen Z Teaching Methods

Frequency of Gen Z Teaching Methods (Shown: % All of the Time)

Q5: In which of the following ways do [you / Gen Z student] generally learn best when it comes to classroom? [MULTI-SELECT]
Q6: How often do [you / Gen Z student] get to learn by... [ASKED FOR EACH METHOD SELECTED IN Q5]

Generation Z Learners

Teaching priorities today are more about interactive tools and less about memorizing facts.

Educational Priorities for Gen Z and Past Generations (Shown: % Somewhat / Very Important, Teachers):

Q7: Below is a list of different educational priorities. How important were each of the following in educating previous generations of students?
Q8: Today how important are each of the following in educating Gen Z students?
21st Century Learning

- Blended Learning
- Micro-Learning
- Immersive Learning Environments
- Multiple Ways of Learning
- Multisensory Learning
- Project-Based Learning
- Collaborative Learning
- Visual Learning
- Practice-Oriented Learning
- Storytelling

Virtual Learning Academy

VLACS provides full-time and part-time online virtual learning opportunities for both Middle & High School students. Our new online Adult Education program will be available in 2016.

Choose Your Path

- Middle School & High School
- Adult Education

VLACS is an online public middle and high school offering students the opportunity to learn at their own pace, full or part-time.
Programming Ideas
A Variety of Settings for Faith Formation

- Independent
- Mentored
- Small Group
- Large Group
- Church Community (intergenerational)
- Community and World

Large Group Methods

- Worship
- Prayer experiences
- Service: local-global
- Justice: education-action-advocacy
- Multi-session learning programs
- Single-session topical programs
- Workshops on life issues/life skills
- Film festivals / music
- Trips and events
- Retreat experiences
- Intergenerational programs
- Leadership development
Small Group Methods

- Discipleship or faith sharing groups or study groups
  - Bible study groups
  - Theological formation study groups,
  - Theme or issue oriented study groups
  - Book groups

- Practice-focused groups
  - Prayer/spiritual formation
  - Service/faith in action

- Support/affinity groups
  - Life transition groups
  - Men / women groups
  - Married couples / parent groups

Digital Methods

- Gathered using Online Content: A gathered event or program that uses online content as part of the design of the event or program

- Gathered with Online Content: A gathered event or program that provides online content and activities to extend and expand the learning from the gathered program

- Online and Gathered Content: Online learning focused on presenting the content of the program combined with face-to-face, gathered sessions using active learning methods to discuss, practice and apply the content.

- Mostly Online Content: A mostly online program with opportunities for regular interaction in face-to-face, gathered settings

- Fully Online Content: An online program with all learning done online and limited face-to-face experiences
1. Extend a church event or program
2. Design a program, offer it in multiple platforms
3. Prepare for and follow-up an a program
4. Flip a gathered program
5. Integrate online & gathered
6. Create online only
7. Use webinars, podcasts, etc. to deliver programming directly to people

One Program in Multiple Formats

- Gathered
- Small Group
- Independent
- Online

- Digital Content to Extend & Provide New Ways to Experience

- Interaction
- Connection
- Communication
- Demonstration
# One Program in Multiple Formats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@ Church</td>
<td>1. Presentation @ Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>@ Home</td>
<td>2. Live Streaming and Video Recording</td>
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<tr>
<td>@ Coffee Shop</td>
<td>3. Small Group using Video and Study Guide (content online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>@ Online: Video Meeting</td>
<td>4. Independent Study using Video and Article (content online)</td>
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<tr>
<td>@ Online: Facebook Group</td>
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<td>@ Twitter</td>
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## Build on an Event/Experience

- **Preparing**
  - What types of experiences, programming, activities, and resources will you develop to prepare people for the event?

- **Experiencing**
  - How will you design the event?
  - How will you engage age groups, families, and the faith community?

- **Living**
  - How will you sustain/extend the event?
  - What types of experiences, programs, activities, and resources will you offer people?
Extend the Event

Church or School Event or Program

At Home & Daily Life

Sunday Worship

• Learning
• Praying
• Reading the Bible: Daily Readings
• Living

OPENING THE WORD
4th Sunday of Easter
The Good Shepherd
Our Confirmation preparation program has two components: Once a month in-person classes and an online study. The online study is a place for students to develop their faith weekly by completing multi-media lessons which include videos, reading, Saint reflections, multiple-choice questions and online small group discussions. Each small group has their own online space to discuss faith topics, ask questions, and pray for one another.

- **Class Sessions**: Once a month (7 in total for each year)
- **Online Sessions**: Three per month
- **“Insight” Youth Group Meetings**: Attend Three Per Year
- **Service Projects**: Two per year
- **Retreat**:
  - Year 1: Weekend Retreat
  - Year 2: Attend 2 “Sponsor Nights” (A total of 4 will be offered)
Family Ideas

Family Programming

- **Connect Home & Church**: Provide activities/resources to expand faith forming
- **Infuse and Enhance**: Add a family strategy/activity into an existing program
- **Redesign and Relaunch**: Take an existing program and redesign it into a family program
- **Design New Programming**: Introduce a new family or parent program
Reaching Families

- **Through the day**: meal times, car times, morning and bedtime, exits and entries, family sharing times, waiting for... times
- **Through key family moments**: good times and hard times, times of joy and sorrow
- **Through the year**: church year seasons, holidays, rituals and celebrations—birthdays, anniversaries, etc.
- **Through the lifecycle**: milestones and rites of passage
- **Finding the spaces and times in family life**

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Family Methods & Media

- **Print**
- **Audio / Podcasts (created / curated)**
- **Video (created and curated)**
- **TV and Movies and YouTube**
- **Online: website, social media**
- **Families Together Experiences**
- **Church or Community-wide Projects**
Practical Strategies

Family Experiments
Faith Practice of the Month
Connect to Sunday worship
Seasons @Home and @Church
Whole Family Programs
Sacraments & Milestones
Family Life Skills
Parent Programming
Family faith formation website

7-Day or 30-Day Family Experiments

• Add a faith practice(s) or a family life skill into a family’s daily routine.

• Learn together with resources provided by the church (print, video, audio, etc.) .

• What if there was a daily text, email, video?

• Instagram #, Facebook Group, etc. to share experiences, post photos
The **Family Faith Moments: 7-Day Start-Up Plan** will help you:

- add family faith moments into your daily routine
- learn new spiritual practices alongside your kids; no previous religious experience necessary
- teach your children to appreciate religious diversity with time-tested non-Christian and Christian spiritual practices

1. Get Ready: Create a Sacred Space
2. Imagination
3. Gratitude Cafe
4. Anxiety: Wash Away Worries
5. Bubble Prayers
6. Wind Prayers for the World
7. Daily Office: Morning & Evening Prayer

Select 12 of the most relevant and developmentally appropriate Bible stories for each age—from age 5 to 18.

Integrate the Bible teaching into one session or program each month; use videos to assist you

Then provide online resources for parents to reinforce the Bible story online: reading the story, watching the video, discussing the story.
Teach a different form of prayer, and/or experience a prayer practice each month during the class or program: contemplative, Scriptural, intercessory, praise (adoration), thanksgiving, etc.

Develop a short video of the children or teens praying so that parents can see prayer in action.

Provide prayer activities and resources online for parents to continue the “prayer of the month” at home.

Incorporate faith practices throughout the year by teaching the practices through experiential activities in children and youth programs, for example:

- Eating Well
- Forgiving
- Generosity
- Hospitality
- Keeping Sabbath
- Praying
- Reading the Bible
- Stewardship / Care for Creation
- Transforming the World

Then invite parents to reinforce the practice through continued at-home experiences that you provide online for easy access.
Ideas Connect Sunday Worship

Incorporate preparation and/or reflection for Sunday in children and teen programs, and then deepen the Sunday worship experience at home through activities, practices, and resources from a variety of age-appropriate and whole-family digital content on the website.

- family conversation questions,
- weekly table ritual
- podcast or video of the sermon with a study guide for the parents,
- children’s creative Bible activities
- storybooks
- videos presenting the Bible story,
- daily prayer
- weekly family devotion

Ideas Celebrate the Seasons

Identify a monthly seasonal event and publish the activities on the family website. Incorporate Scripture, prayer, learning, service/action, ritual, and family conversation into each seasonal event. Highlight a Christian practice that will be communicated and experienced through the event.

- Jan: ML King Jr. (working for justice and peace, serving)
- Feb: Valentine’s Day (loving)
- March: Lent (praying, serving/almsgiving, forgiving)
- April: Earth Day (caring for creation)
- May: Mother’s Day (honoring parents, loving caring)
- June: Father’s Day (honoring parents, loving, caring)
- July: Independence Day (working for justice)
- August: Back to school (celebrating new beginnings)
- Sept: Fall harvest (grateful, generosity, care for the earth)
- Oct: St. Francis (caring for creation, caring for animals)
- Nov: Thanksgiving (grateful, serving, living hospitality)
- Dec: Advent and Christmas

Seasonal family festivals and gatherings to support the seasonal plan using the four seasons—fall, winter, spring, and summer—or the church year seasons—Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost.
**Idea Whole Family Programs**

**Incorporate** family programs throughout the year – on seasonal themes, family life themes, etc.

**Substitute** an age group program for a family program: Weeks 1-4 - Age Groups + Week 5 – Family Program.

**Redesign** VBS as a family program or with family components

Design extended time (half-day, full day) **immersion** experiences—at church or in the community—where families can experience the Christian faith firsthand, such as hospitality at a homeless shelter or serving a meal at a soup kitchen or caring for creation by planting a garden.

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**Family & Intergen. Programs**

1. **Part 1. Gathering and Prayer**
2. **Part 2. All Ages Learning Experience**
3. **Part 3. In-Depth Learning Experience**
4. **Part 4. Sharing Learning Experiences and Home Application**
5. **Part 5. Closing Prayer**

**Meal and Community Building**
Example: Called to Pray

Gathering and Opening Prayer

All Ages Learning: I’m Ready God, Where Are You? (Drama)

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

Part 4. Sharing Learning Experiences and Home Application

Part 5. Closing Prayer

Themes

Christian Beliefs
Christian Practices
Morality
Justice & Service
Prayer
Bible
Liturgy / Church Year
Family Life Practices & Skills
2018 FAMILY CAMPS

Family Faith Camp
Family Camp #1:
Family Camp #2:
Family Camp #3:
Family Camp #4:
Family Camp #5:
Family Camp #6:
Family Camp #7:
Family Camp #8:
Family Camp #9:
Family Camp #10:

Family Camp

Family Service
1. Birth / Baptism
2. Baptism anniversaries
3. First prayers
4. First Bible stories
5. Starting school year
6. Receiving a first Bible
7. First Communion
8. Confirmation
9. Graduation

Forming Faith through Milestones

Preparing
What types of experiences, programming, activities, and resources will you develop to prepare people for the event?

Experiencing
How will you design the event? How will you engage age groups, families, and the faith community?

Living
How will you sustain/extend the event? What types of experiences, programs, activities, and resources will you offer people?
Focus on the types of skill-building that will strengthen family life, and parent-child/teen relationships, such as:
- communicating effectively
- discussing tough topics
- making decisions and solving problems as a family
- learning how to build strong relationships and express care for each other
- supporting each other
- treating each with respect and dignity

Many of these skills can be developed using movies selected for their positive messages. An example of a movie that provides a foundation for follow-up activities is Disney/Pixar’s *Inside Out* about the emotional life of a child growing up.
Developing Strong Family Life

1. Communicating effectively
2. Establishing family routines: family meals, shared activities, daily commitments
3. Celebrating meaningful traditions & rituals
4. Discussing tough topics
5. Making decisions and solving problems
6. Learning how to build strong relationships and express care for each other
7. Developing the strengths and potential of children & youth
8. Supporting each other: encouraging and praising, giving feedback, standing up for each other
9. Treating each with respect and dignity
Idea
Parent Programming

Content

Parental Faith Formation

Faith Forming Skills & Practices

Knowledge & Skills for Parenting

1. Develop a progression of parent workshops, webinars, or courses through the life cycle
2. Incorporate parent formation and education into church events
3. Add a parallel parent experience to the existing child/teen program
4. Add a parent component to VBS
5. Design laboratory experiences
6. Develop parent mentors
7. Create life cycle or affinity groups
8. Provide a website or online group
Parent Programming - Laboratory Experiences

- A family-centered worship experience can be an opportunity to teach parents about worship, reading the Bible, and how to do these things at home.
- A church-wide service day can be an opportunity to teach parents about the biblical basis of service and how to integrate service into family life.
- A church year seasonal celebration can be an opportunity to teach about ritual and how to celebrate rituals and church year seasons at home.
- These immersion experiences can be supported with online content for parents and for the whole family.

Parent Programming - A Plan

Reggie Joiner and the Think Orange team emphasize how important it is to give families a plan. “When parents show up at church, they are often asking silent questions that we must answer; questions they don’t even know they’re asking. To begin looking at parents through a different filter, imagine that every time a parent walks through the door, he or she is asking you to do three things:

- **Give me the plan.** They want a plan that will give them a system of support, consistent influence, and a steady flow of relevant information.
- **Show me how it works.**
- **Tell me what to do today.** We have to give them specific instructions or resources to use this week. Give parents a map and a schedule.
Parent Practices & Skills

- Expressing care, love, affection, and support
- Balancing time and commitments, managing stress
- Practicing healthy relationships
- Disciplining and learning discipline practices
- Creating a warm, caring supportive family.
- Setting boundaries and high expectations for children
- Managing technology and media use
- Challenging child to grow & continuously improve
- Providing support to help children complete tasks and achieve goals
- Sharing power with children so 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

Intergenerational Ideas
Intergenerational Strategies

Utilize  Infuse  Connect  Create

Infusing IG Learning

- Age Group Programming
- Sacramental and Milestone Celebrations
- Church Year Feasts & Seasons
- Vacation Bible School
- Mission Trips & Service Projects
- Retreat and Camp Experiences
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IG Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate intergenerational dialogues into programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop mentoring relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involve the community in praying for each generation,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organize social and recreational activities that build intergenerational relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Intergenerationalize” age-group programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrate intergenerational programming into an age-group program plan and calendar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer service projects and mission trips for all ages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer simple, one-time intergenerational experiences: arts, music/concerts, drama, social events, service projects, sports, educational experiences</td>
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