

Developing a Faith Formation Plan

Integrating the Eight Faith Formation Processes

These eight essential processes of forming faith – informed by Scripture, theology, research, and contemporary reflection – promote faith growth and discipleship with age groups, families, and the whole faith community. These eight processes provide both a framework for comprehensive faith formation and the content—knowledge and practices—of the Christian faith.

- ☑ Caring relationships
- ☑ 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 justice
- ☑ Worshipping God with the faith community

Using Multiple Environments

The seven environments provide a way to offer a diversity of programs in different learning environments, as well as to offer the same program content in multiple learning environments—all of which provides people with more options to participate in faith formation and broadens the scope of faith formation offerings.

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

Designing with Digital Strategies

Faith formation is digitally-enabled—blending gathered community settings with online learning environments and utilizing the abundance of digital media and tools for learning and faith formation; and digitally-connected—linking intergenerational faith community experiences, peer experiences and programs, and daily/home life using online and digital media and/or reaching people at home and in daily life with online faith formation content and experiences that connect to church life and events.

- ☑ *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, gathered learning settings

Connecting Intergenerationally

To become becoming more intentionally intergenerational in your lifelong faith formation plan utilize one or more of these strategies:

- ☑ 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.
- ☑ Make 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
 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.
- ☑ 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.

Engaging Families

To engage families in your lifelong faith formation plan utilize one or more of these eight strategies that make families the center of faith formation and provide the building blocks for developing a comprehensive plan for family faith formation. (See Chapter 6 in *Families at the Center of Faith Formation*)

- ☑ *Discovering God in Everyday Life*: guiding families to reflect on God’s presence in their daily life
- ☑ *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)

- ☑ *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)
- ☑ *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)
- ☑ *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)
- ☑ *Connecting Families Intergenerationally*: developing intergenerational programs and experiences that engage families with other generations through learning, service, community life, etc.
- ☑ *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.
- ☑ *Empowering Parents and Grandparents*: developing parenting competencies and skills, promoting the faith growth of parents, and developing the faith forming skills of parents

Developing Missional Faith Formation

The first element involves expanding and extending the church’s presence through outreach, connection, relationship building, and engagement with people where they live—engaging with people around their life situation (needs, interests, concerns), their quest for meaning and purpose in life, their drive to make a difference in world and in lives of others, and more. Developing community settings for church ministries and faith formation by celebrating weekly worship in a community center, offering courses and workshops in a school or community center or coffee shop, and more.

- ☑ Creating a vibrant and inviting website and social media to connect with people.
- ☑ Connecting with people’s life issues and situations through programs, services, mentoring, etc.
- ☑ Connecting with people during transitions/milestone moments: marriage, births, funerals, etc.
- ☑ Developing high quality, relationship-building events designed to draw people from the wider community and congregation into relationships: social events, concerts, movies, service, etc.
- ☑ Organizing small groups on a variety of themes from life-centered to faith-centered that meet in a variety of locations (homes, coffee shops, community centers), for example: life situation groups (moms, dads), interest or activity groups, discipleship groups, spiritual sharing groups, Bible study groups, service groups, prayer or spiritual disciplines groups, support groups, and study-action groups.
- ☑ Sponsoring community-wide service days, service projects, and mission trips that are open to everyone so that people from the wider community can participate, interact with church members, and come into contact with the Christian faith in action.
- ☑ Creating digital initiatives that reach everyone such as conducting parenting webinars that are offered online.

The second element provides pathways for people to consider or reconsider the Christian faith, to encounter Jesus and the Good News, and to live as disciples in a supportive faith community. Missional faith formation guides people as they move from discovery to exploration to commitment. Programs like *The Alpha Course* covers the basics of Christianity in a multi-session course in a supportive small group environment.

Worksheet

Use this worksheet as a guide for creating your plan. You may want to use a large sheet of newsprint/easel paper to record your responses. This will allow you to see the whole picture of faith formation in your congregation.

Intergenerational Faith Forming Experiences

Intergenerational faith forming events and experiences (relationships, community life, worship, learning, service, prayer, etc.) that will be included in your plan.

Family Faith Formation

Family faith forming experiences, events, programs, and activities at church and for the home that will be included in your plan; parent education and formation programs and activities that will be included in your plan.

Life Cycle Faith Formation

Developmentally-appropriate experiences, programs, and activities for children, adolescents, and adults that will be included in your plan. Programs or activities can address one or more of the eight faith forming processes, be offered in one or more environments, and employ one or more of the digital strategies.

Content

Developmental Need or Interest	Program or Activity	Family Connection	Intergenerational Connection

Programming

Eight Faith Forming Processes	Multiple Environments	Digital Strategies
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caring relationships <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Celebrating the liturgical seasons <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Celebrating rituals and milestones <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learning the Christian story and vision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Praying and spiritual formation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading and studying the Bible <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Serving and working for justice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Worshipping God with the faith community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independent/Individualized <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mentored <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family / At Home <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small Group <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Large Group <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whole Church Community <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community and World	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gathered using Online Content <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gathered with Online Content <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online and Gathered Content <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mostly Online Content <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Online Content

Missional Faith Formation

Developing outreach and relationship with the uninvolved and unaffiliated, and developing pathways for discipleship and engagement in the faith community.