



Digital Faith Formation Innovation Lab

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Program

1. The Digital Transformation of Faith Formation
2. Blended Models of Faith Formation
3. Online Models of Faith Formation
4. Designing Digital Platforms for Faith Formation
5. Curating Faith Formation

Resources

Handouts/Resources/PowerPoint Presentations: <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/digital-faith-formation.html>

Roberto, John. *Reimagining Faith Formation for the 21st Century*. Naugatuck: LifelongFaith Associates, 2015. (available at www.LifelongFaith.com)

Roberto, John, editor. *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation*. Naugatuck: LifelongFaith Associates, 2015. (available at www.LifelongFaith.com)

Roberto, John, editor. *Families at the Center of Faith Formation*. Naugatuck: LifelongFaith Associates, 2016. (available at www.LifelongFaith.com)

Families at the Center of Faith Formation website: <http://www.FamiliesattheCenter.com>

Seasons of Adult Faith Formation website: www.SeasonsofAdultFaith.com.

What is the Digital Transformation Making Possible?

The digital transformation of society is making possible new ways of learning and faith formation.

1. Learning and faith formation are now mobile— anytime, anyplace, 24x7. People have the digital devices to stay connected and to access learning and faith formation on the go.
2. There is abundance of high quality digital content for faith formation—audio, video, print, websites, apps, online learning platforms, and more.
3. New digital media and learning methods mean that we can provide multiple ways to learn and grow— activities and experiences that reflect different learning styles and multiple intelligences.
4. Digital media and online activities, especially videos, mean that we can develop content in smaller units (micro-learning) that better suit today’s learners who have shorter attention spans.
5. A faith formation website can serve as an online learning center, a portal to activities and resources, and a connecting point for people.
6. Online classrooms, like Edmodo, Schoology, and Google Classroom, provide safe spaces for young people, parents, and adult leaders to engage in faith forming experiences and interaction.

Characteristics of 21st Century Learning

We know today’s younger generations learn best in environments that are interactive, participatory, experiential, visual, and multi-sensory. Among today’s most promising educational innovations are *personalizing learning*, *blended learning* and *flipped learning*, *micro-learning*, and *immersive learning*. We can dramatically improve our effectiveness in promoting faith growth and learning by using these new practices. All of these new approaches and methods are enhanced by the use of digital technologies, methods, and media. Here are ten practices of twenty-first century learning that can guide us in designing and conducting faith formation programming for a new generation.

1. *Blended learning* integrates learning in physical and online settings where a person has some control over time, place, path, and/or pace of the learning experience. One form of blended learning is *Flipped Learning* in which the content moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space (usually online), and the group space is transformed into an interactive learning environment for discussion and application. Congregations are already flipping confirmation preparation (learning online plus interactive group activities in gathered settings), extending gathered events with online content for continued learning, and providing online faith formation or live webinars for individuals or groups.
2. *Micro-learning* experiences are short-form—5, 10, 15 minute—learning experiences designed for anywhere, anytime learning that be combined into multi-part learning programs. Micro-learning experiences are one response to short attention spans and mobile learning. We can curate a series of micro-learning experiences (on a digital platform) to engage people in all types of faith formation content. Breaking content into small learning units, micro learning, will enhance comprehension and retention of knowledge, skills and practices. Generation Z loves videos and YouTube, especially short pieces of content that run from a minute to 90 seconds.
3. *Immersive learning environments* involve faith-forming experiences that are interactive, participatory, experiential, visual, and multi-sensory. With the rise of anytime, anywhere faith formation content we need to ask: “What is the role of gathering people for faith formation?” Today children (and their parents), youth, and adults can access online most of the content that we teach at church. We have already been offering these types of experiences. We can expand our immersive learning opportunities (VBS, retreats, mission trips, and more) and focused our gathered settings on

immersive faith formation in extended settings (half-day, full day, weekend, weeklong) offered throughout the year (but not weekly).

4. *Multiple ways of learning* addresses the eight multiple intelligences into learning experiences, providing a greater variety of ways for young people to learn: verbal-linguistic (word smart, book smart), logical-mathematical (number smart, logic smart), visual-spatial (art smart, picture smart), bodily-kinesthetic (body smart, movement smart), musical-rhythmic (music smart, sound smart), naturalist (nature smart, environment smart), interpersonal (people smart, group smart), and intrapersonal (self smart, introspection smart). While not every program can incorporate activities for all eight intelligences, having a greater variety of ways to learn promotes more effective learning and engages teens more fully in the learning experience.
5. *Multisensory learning* means utilizing all of the senses in a learning experience where young people can taste, smell, touch, and hear things related to the topic of the session. Gen Z thinks of the world as a canvas to paint with words, sights, sounds, video, music, web pages, and anything they can create. Multimedia means using multiple modalities to engage young people. They are also a generation of “content creators” who live to create, and given the chance to do so they will merge multiple media into one complex but comprehensive whole.
6. *Project-based learning* involves completing complex tasks that typically result in a realistic product, event, or presentation. Project-based learning is 1) organized around driving questions that lead young people to encounter central concepts or principles; 2) focused on a constructive investigation that involves inquiry and knowledge building; 3) learner-driven, in that the young people are responsible for making choices and for designing and managing their work; and 4) authentic, by posing problems that occur in the real world and that people care about.
7. *Collaborative learning* involves young people in small, non-competitive groups where they can discuss and process together what they are learning, work together on projects and activities, and practice and present what they are learning. Learning spaces are organized for learners’ participation in a “learning community” – recognizing that learning takes place in a social context and relies on communication and interaction with others. Gen Z learns best in an environment where they can share with and co-create their education with their peers. Collaborative learning requires creating an environment that is safe, caring, accepting, and trustworthy so that young people feel free to share, discuss, question, and apply.
8. *Visual learning* guides young people in learning to “read” or interpret visual images and how to use visual images to communicate. Visual literacy includes: 1) interpreting, understanding, and appreciating the meaning of visual images, 2) communicating more effectively by applying the basic principles and concepts of visual design, 3) producing visual images using computers and other technologies, and 4) using visual thinking to conceptualize solutions to problems.
9. *Practice-oriented learning* means incorporating real-life application activities into the learning experience. Practice is a part of the learning process, not the result of it. Research is demonstrating that young people learn more deeply when they apply knowledge to real-world problems and when they take part in projects that require sustained engagement and collaboration.
10. *Storytelling* makes learning stick. Tell relevant stories, present case studies and show examples. Talk about your own mistakes and your own successes. Allow young people to respond to stories and case studies. Let them exchange stories with each other.

Adopting New Learning Practices in Faith Formation

Examine your current faith formation programming using the worksheet below. How often do you use these ten practices in faith formation programming (1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Almost always, 5 = Always)? How do you use the new practices?

Blended learning How do you do this?	1 2 3 4 5
Micro-learning How do you do this?	1 2 3 4 5
Immersive learning environments How do you do this?	1 2 3 4 5
Multiple ways of learning How do you do this?	1 2 3 4 5
Multisensory learning How do you do this?	1 2 3 4 5
Project-based learning How do you do this?	1 2 3 4 5
Collaborative learning How do you do this?	1 2 3 4 5
Visual learning How do you do this?	1 2 3 4 5
Practice-oriented learning How do you do this?	1 2 3 4 5
Storytelling How do you do this?	1 2 3 4 5

Reflect on the results of your review. Which practices do you need to improve? How could you use these practices in designing and conducting faith formation programming with children and adolescents? How could you transform a program to incorporate one or more of these practices?

Digitally Enabled Strategies in Faith Formation

We need to design faith formation with digital strategies embedded in them. We need to design faith formation that is mobile; that takes advantage of the abundance of content so we can personalize faith formation; that provides an activity or program in multiple formats so that people can learn in the way they learn best; that utilizes a website as a hub for faith formation and online classrooms for programming; and that provides micro-faith forming activities/experiences that connect together into a seamless faith formation program.

Here are several possibilities for using digitally enabled strategies in faith formation.

1. *Extend Programming:* We can extend gathered events and programs into people's daily lives by providing online content that helps people to go deeper. For example, we can extend Sunday worship into the home and daily life with daily Bible readings, prayer activities, learning activities, faith conversations, and more.

We can extend an age group program with online activities that deepen knowledge and provide application activities or projects. We can extend intensive programs like VBS or camp or retreats with regular online content and activities.

2. *Flip Programming:* We can “flip the classroom or program” by creating a digital platform to provide the content that people would learn in the gathered setting in an online learning space using print, audio, video, and more. And then transform the gathered program using interactive activities, discussion, project-based learning, and practice and demonstration.

We can redesign children's faith formation so that children and their parents are learning online at home and doing activities together, and then refocusing “class time” to engage children in creating projects and activities that demonstrate their learning.

We can design a high school confirmation program that provides the content that used to be taught in the weekly sessions in an online platform for individual learning—watching videos, reading short materials, and writing a reflection journals; engages the young people in small groups during the month to discuss their online learning; and then meets monthly in a large group gathered session for discussion, interactive activities, and application of the content to living as a Christian today. During the year retreats, worship, and service projects offer additional gathered sessions. One example of the type of video content for adolescents is the Video Catechism, produced by the Catholic Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, WV (vcat.org), that provides short videos for the major teachings in the Catholic Catechism. There are similar types of video program in all Christian traditions.

3. *Online Programming:* We can develop a complete online faith formation experience with faith forming content and experiences. For example we can build an online “forty-day Lenten curriculum” that connects the Lent events at church with online content for experiencing and practicing Lent in daily and home life. We can include prayer activities, daily Bible readings, daily devotions, Lent study resources, videos, service activities, and more.

We can use video conferencing with services like Zoom.us to create webinar programming for adolescents, parents, and the whole family. For example we can create a monthly one-hour parent formation webinar program delivered to parents at home using a video conferencing program like Zoom. We can build the program around the knowledge, skills, and practices for effective parenting and for parent as faith formers. Invite a guest presenter and invite parents to participate online.

Sponsor two or three parent dinners during the year (with babysitting) for parents to gather in-person to meet each other, discuss the webinars, etc.

We can also set up online faith formation centers with resources for people to access 24x7. For example, we can providing an online prayer and spirituality center where people can access daily prayer reflections and devotions, offer prayer intentions, pray for others, learn about spiritual practices, download prayer activities for the home, and more.

4. *Multiple-format Programming:* We can develop multiple formats for gathered programs by video and/or audio recording programs and then developing small group and independent programming using the video or audio content. Produce a webpage with the video or audio content and the programming for small groups and independent learning. Use social media (like a Facebook group) or an online classroom to facilitate online interaction and discussion. This provides a great way to offer other ways for people who cannot participate in the fixed time program to access the content and engage in learning at a time that works best for them.
5. *Prepare and Follow-Up Programming:* We can utilize online formats to prepare people for an event or program, such as the celebration of a sacrament or milestone, or participation in a mission trip. This is an especially helpful process when it is difficult to gather people for the preparation and/or follow-up. Use the online platform to *prepare* people for the event with the appropriate content (experiences, activities, video/audio, and resources). *Engage* people in the event or program. Use the online platform to *sustain and apply* the learning and growth with appropriate content (experiences, activities, video/audio, and resources). Use social media (like a Facebook group) or an online classroom (like Edmodo or Google Classroom) to facilitate online interaction and discussion.

How can you design or redesign faith formation with children, adolescents, and their parents using digitally enabled strategies:

1. extending programming online
2. flipping program using online content
3. creating online programming
4. using multi-format programming
5. design online preparation and follow-up for an event or program

Blended Faith Formation Continuum

Online

Face-to-Face

Fully Online An online program with all learning done online and limited face-to-face, gathered learning settings	Mostly Online A mostly online program with opportunities for regular interaction in face-to-face, gathered settings	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.	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	Gathered with Online Content A gathered event or program that uses online content as part of the design of the event or program

Personalizing Faith Formation

(Adapted from *Faith Formation with a New Generation*. John Roberto. LifelongFaith Associates, 2018)

We are proposing to form disciples and promote faith growth through ten essential characteristics of Christian faith and discipleship that incorporate knowing and believing, relating and belonging, practicing and living. These ten characteristics—drawn from the Christian faith tradition and from research on what makes a difference in people’s lives—can form the basis of helping people discern their faith journey and needs, and help the congregation accompany people through relationships, programs, activities, and resources.

1. Developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ
2. Living as a disciple of Jesus Christ and making the Christian faith a way of life
3. Reading and studying the Bible—its message, meaning, and application to life today
4. Learning the Christian story and foundational teachings of the Christian faith and integrating its meaning into ones life
5. Praying—together and by ourselves, and seeking spiritual growth through spiritual disciplines
6. Living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values
7. Living the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace.
8. Worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship, ritual celebrations, and the seasons of the church year
9. Being actively engaged in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community
10. Practicing faith in Jesus Christ by using one’s gifts and talents within the Christian community and in the world

We are proposing personalizing faith formation as a way to address the increasingly diverse spiritual-religious identifies of people today. Personalizing learning, one of the latest educational innovations, seeks to address the diverse learning needs of young people in educational settings. We can bring this innovation into faith formation. We personalize faith formation in order to address the greater diversity in religious practice and engagement among our people. Personalizing faith formation provides a way to address the diverse faith growth needs of people by tailoring the faith forming environment—the what, when, how and where people learn and grow—to address the spiritual and religious interests and needs of children, adolescents, and parents. It means providing variety and choice in faith formation programming, activities, and resources around the lives of people.

We know from research and experience that children, adolescents, and their families represent at least four religious-spiritual identities:

- *People with a vibrant faith and relationship with God who are engaged in the faith community.*
- *People who participate occasionally in the faith community and whose faith is not central to their lives.*
- *People who uninvolved in a church but spiritual.*
- *People who unaffiliated and have left involvement in organized religion.*

We can see three and even four of these identities reflected in our current faith formation programming. Parents who bring their children for baptism can reflect the whole spectrum from parents with a vibrant faith to parents who are unaffiliated but whose parents and grandparents are active in a faith community. Children participating in vacation Bible school come from families who reflect several of these religious-spiritual identities. Adolescents participating in a confirmation program often reflect

three or four of these identities. We know that our current one-size-fits-all approach to curriculum and programming is not addressing the diverse faith growth needs of people.

We need to tailor faith formation to address these four identities at each stage of life. The days of a one-size-fits-all program are gone. No one program, class, or resource can address the diverse faith growth needs of people today. We can create personalized approaches that use the faith maturing characteristics to guide people in discerning their faith growth needs, and providing content, experiences, and activities that help them to grow from where they are

We can take each characteristic and develop a *Pathways Guide* to help people discover where they are in their faith journey using a continuum from “getting started” to “growing” to “going deeper” with short illustrations for each one. Then we can develop a personalized faith growth plan—or what educators are now calling *Playlists*—of content (print, audio, video, online) and direct experiences to address their needs.

There are two ways to design a personalized plan for faith formation. The first utilizes a *Pathways Guide* to help people discern their faith growth needs and then provides *Playlists* of content, experiences, and activities to address those needs. The second approach personalizes a congregation’s faith formation offerings by tailoring them to distinct faith growth needs through a variety of *Playlists* and inviting people to select the activities that best address their spiritual and religious journey.

Approach One: Personalize the Faith Pathways for People

A *Pathways Guide* 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* 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 maturing faith—identifying characteristics of faith maturing that can be used for people to discern their faith journey and chart a path for growth.

Approach One uses the ten faith maturing characteristics (or similar characteristics from your Christian tradition) to create a *Pathways Guide* to help people discern their faith growth needs, and then design *Playlists* of content and experiences that address each characteristic. The *Pathways Guide* incorporates a rating scale for discerning faith growth needs, for example: Getting Started, Growing, Going Deeper.

Playlists of content and experiences are developed for each characteristic with activities targeted to each rating on the discernment continuum (getting started, growing, going deeper). There are *Playlists* for each “level” on the continuum. *Playlists* incorporate a variety of programming including gathered programs at church, small groups, online learning and resources, mentoring, and more. The *Playlists* are published on a digital platform to make it easy for people to access them. They can also be connected to an online classroom like Google Classroom or Edmodo.

Approach One works well around major milestones and sacrament preparation, providing a way to connect with people where they are in their faith journey and personalizing their preparation experience. Create a *Pathways Guide* for Christian initiation and new member formation, marriage, baptism, first communion, confirmation. A *Pathways Guide* can be used at the beginning of a new year of gathered faith formation programming to provide a more personalized experience for people. A *Pathways Guide* can be used with parents to discern the growth needs of parents and the whole family at parent

meetings and family-centered programming. It works best in an environment where you can guide people in discerning their faith growth needs and connecting them to *Playlist* that is designed for them.

Design Process

1. Identify a target audience(s): children, adolescents, parents, and/or the whole family.
2. Identify how and where you will use the *Pathways Guide*.
3. Develop the characteristics of faith growth you want to use in your *Pathways Guide*. Use the ten characteristics of maturing faith or use characteristics of faith growth specific to the content of the event or program (such as preparing for confirmation).
4. Develop a ‘discernment continuum’ that gives people a way to reflect on their current growth. Use a faith growth continuum: Getting Started, Growing or Making Progress, Going Deeper; or a rating scale: How true is each statement for you: 1= not true from me , 3=somewhat true for me, 5=very true for me.

Approach Two: Personalize the Faith Formation Offerings

A second approach to personalizing faith formation, when you cannot use a *Pathways Guide* with people, is to offer a variety of content, experiences, and activities developed around the ten characteristics or the program’s content, and tailored to the different faith growth needs of people (getting started, growing, going deeper). In Approach Two the *Playlists* provide the way to personalize faith formation. For example, to help children, adolescents, parents, or the whole family read and study the Bible, we can offer three different types of Bible content and experiences for those who are getting started, growing, and going deeper. These activities can be online, gathered, small group, family-centered, and more. All of the content and experiences are published on a digital platform for people to access.

For two examples of websites designed as playlists go to www.FamiliesattheCenter.com and www.SeasonsofAdultFaith.com. For a list of curation resources go to the “Curating” section of www.LifelongFaith.com.

Faith Formation Playlists

A faith formation playlist is a curated group of digital (online, video, audio, print) and gathered (church, home, small groups, etc.) faith forming experiences and resources that are tailored to the specific faith growth needs of people around a particular characteristic of faith maturing or theme/topic. Playlists are developed for each “stage” on the discernment continuum, such as Getting Started, Growing, Going Deeper. Each playlist provides a variety of ways for people to learn and grow in faith.

Playlists incorporate intergenerational, family, age group, and online/digital faith forming content, experiences, and activities. In Chapters Two through Four you identified an abundance of current and new programming that can be utilized in creating *Playlists* of content, experiences, programs, and activities for children, adolescents, parents, and the whole family. Here’s a checklist for designing *Playlists*.

Design Process

1. Develop *Playlists* for a target audience: children, adolescents, parents, or the whole family.
2. Select content and experiences to address each faith maturing characteristic with activities for each “level” of discernment, e.g., Getting Started, Growing, Going Deeper. Use the four types of content and experiences in your *Playlists* as appropriate: intergenerational, family age-specific, and online and digital. Some of the resources and programming will apply to multiple “levels” of faith growth needs. Review the “Curating Resources” section to develop

a process for finding, reviewing, and using resources, especially digital resources, in designing your *Playlists*.

3. Using a variety of settings or environments for faith growth: independent, mentored, at home, small group, large group, intergenerational /whole church, and world.
4. Address the ways people learn through a variety of activities: 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).
5. Use a variety of methods: reading; writing/keeping a journal; storytelling and creating stories; watching feature films, TV shows, videos; creating a media project or video; viewing or creating art; viewing or taking photographs; watching drama or acting; listening to or creating a podcast; listening to or creating music; conducting a demonstration or exhibit; experiencing games, simulations, video games; analyzing or creating a case study; developing an apprenticeship or internship; experiencing prayer and rituals; creating prayer experiences; taking a field trip; participating in a mission trip; engaging in or creating a service/action project; developing a mentor relationship; and more.
6. 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. 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*, *Wix*, and *Squarespace*. All three have easy to use features and very reasonable subscription fees. For advanced users *WordPress* 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.

Curating Resources for Faith Formation

One of the essential skills for developing Playlists of rich content and experiences is learning how to *curate* high quality faith formation content in all forms and media that can engage people in learning and growing in developmentally appropriate ways targeted to their faith growth needs.

Curation may be a new word for many, but it has a long history. The term *curator* comes from the Latin word *curare* meaning “to care for.” Every time we visit a museum we experience the work of museum curators who acquire, care for, develop, display, and interpret a collection of artifacts or works of art in order to inform, educate, and entertain us. Museum curators are subject-matter experts who guide a museum’s overall art collection. Librarians have a similar curation task—they curate books and media in a variety of forms, including digital—to inform, educate, and entertain us. Like museum curators, librarians have done this for centuries. The Library of Alexandria (Egypt) in the ancient world have had curators over two thousand years ago!

A content curator is someone who continually finds, groups, organizes, and shares the best and most relevant content on a specific subject to match the needs of a specific audience. Content curators provide a personalized, high-quality selection of the best and most relevant content and resources available. They do not create more content, but make sense of all the content that others are creating.

How does curation apply to faith formation? When faith formation was a matter of selecting the right print resource or program from the right religious publisher, there was little need for curation. Leaders simply selected the right resource. But even in the era of “the resource is the curriculum,” many faith

formation leaders were curators. To design home-grown programming they would search through print resource, films, and music to design a retreat or a youth meeting or an adult topical series or a parent workshop. They never thought of themselves as curators, but that is what they were doing—searching through a variety of resources, selecting the most appropriate resources to match with the needs of the people and the program, and then using the resource in the program design.

We now live in a era where there is an abundance of religious content in digital form—audio, video, apps, e-books, websites—and in print form. We are benefiting from the rise of online resource centers with freely accessible, high quality religious content and experiences that congregations, families, and individuals can access. In the new digital world of abundant resources, the role of the faith-formation leader is shifting from *providing* religious content and programming to *curating* religious content and experiences for all ages.

So what is a faith formation curator? A faith formation curator is a trusted guide who continually finds, groups, organizes, and connects the best and most relevant content and resources on a specific subject to match the needs of a specific audience. The resources can come in many forms: people resources, programs at church and in the community, and media resources (print, audio, video, online, digital). Curation is the way that faith formation leaders connect programming with high quality resources.

We can identify three steps in the process of curating faith formation: 1) research and organize resources, 2) evaluate resources, and 3) connect the resources to programming. The research and organize phase of the process is continuous. Good curators are always searching for new resources and organizing them for future use.

Step 1. Research and Organize the Resources

The first step in the curation process is researching and reviewing resources. This is the collection phase. There's no need to select or evaluate resources at this stage—the key is to collect as many high-quality resources for faith formation for children, adolescents, parents, and families.

It is helpful to develop a list of trusted expert curators to assist you in researching and evaluating resources. We all know people in faith formation who make it part of their work to stay current with the best resources. Make a list of these people and invite them to be part of the curation support system.

It is also helpful to develop a list of high-quality online resource centers with high-quality content. Be selective—this does not have to be a long list of websites. Select resource centers with well-produced content. Review websites from national and regional denominational agencies, religious publishers, churches, and religious organizations online faith formation content for children, adolescents, parents, and families. For a list of online resources for faith formation go to the “Curation” section of the LifelongFaith.com website.

Be sure to subscribe to faith formation blogs and newsletters that review faith formation resources to make it easier for you to keep up-to-date on what's new. Blogs and newsletters are produced by individuals, denominational offices, seminaries, religious organizations, and religious publishers. A good example of a faith formation blog (and online resource center) is *Building Faith* (www.buildfaith.org) from Virginia Theological Seminary.

Here is a checklist of the types of resources to research:

- People: teachers, mentors/guides, program leaders, small group leaders, guest presenters
- Community programs: churches, agencies, organizations,
- Educational institutions: colleges, seminaries, educational organizations

- Retreat and spiritual life centers, monasteries
- Regional and national denominational programs, events, and websites
- Museums
- Books (with study guides)
- E-books
- Apps
- Audio podcasts
- Audio learning programs
- Videos, feature films, and TV shows
- Video learning programs
- Online courses
- Online activities

One of the easiest ways to develop a library of faith formation resources is to create homegrown resources by saving and archiving church programming. Develop a plan for recording presentations and programs at church in audio/and or video format. Think of all of the opportunities throughout the year for recording program that can be used in other learning formats such as self-study or small group study. Consider weekly sermons, presentations, special events, concerts, and more. Develop a YouTube channel for the congregation to store and categorize all of the video recordings.

Step 2. Evaluate Resources

Every faith formation curator needs standards for evaluating faith formation resources that reflect their Christian tradition and the needs of their congregation. A set of evaluation standards needs to be developed locally. Consult denominational resources for evaluating curriculum resources. Most denominations have evaluation standards for assessing educational resources or textbooks. This can serve as a basis for developing the congregation’s evaluation standards.

Here are ten categories for developing a resource evaluation checklist. Add one or more focusing questions to each category. Try to keep the checklist short so that it is easy to use. Use the evaluation criteria to review potential resources.

1. Biblical content and interpretation
2. Theological content and emphasis
3. Developmental appropriateness
4. Ethnic-cultural appropriateness
5. Inclusive of diversity
6. Respect for diverse ways of learning
7. Appearance and visual appeal
8. Ease-of-use
9. Quality of experience
10. Ability to be incorporated into daily and home life

Step 3. Select Resources for Playlists

Select the best resources for your target audience—children, adolescents, parents, and the whole family to match with each faith maturing characteristic on your *Pathways Guide* and with the different “levels” of faith growth. Select content and experiences for your *Playlists* that include intergenerational, family age-specific, and online and digital.

Example: Parent Faith Growth Pathway

Here is an example of a *Parent Pathways Guide* to help them identify their strengths and areas of growth in their faith life, and as faith formers of their children and adolescents. All of the items are based on the ten characteristics of faith maturing. Parents respond by answering the question: “How true each statement is for you” using the rating scale: 1 = Rarely true of me, 2 = Sometimes true of me, 3 = Occasionally true of me , 4 = Almost always true of me, 5 = Always true of 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, praying Scripture, daily 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 Christian 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 |

Areas Where I Need to “Get Started” (look at the 1 and 2 rating)

Areas Where I Need to “Grow” (look at the 2 and 3 ratings)

Areas Where I Want to “Go Deeper” (look at the 4 and 5 ratings)

Example: Family Practices Pathway

Here is an example of a *Family Pathways Guide* for parents to help identify their strengths and areas of growth as a family. All of the items are based on the ten characteristics of faith maturing. Parents respond by answering the question: “How true each statement is for you” using the rating scale: 1 = Rarely true of me, 2 = Sometimes true of me, 3 = Occasionally true of me , 4 = Almost always true of me, 5 = Always true of me.

1. We eat together as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
2. We engage in positive communication as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
3. We have family conversations about things that are important to us.	1	2	3	4	5
4. We make decisions and solve problems as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
5. We treat each other with respect and dignity.	1	2	3	4	5
6. We support each other: encouraging, expressing care, standing up for each other.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I demonstrate a warm and affirming parenting approach.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I create a warm, caring supportive family environment.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I practice effective communication skills with my children/teens.					
10. We talk about faith as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
11. We pray as a family (meal time, bedtime).	1	2	3	4	5
12. We pray as a family during times of struggle or crisis.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I encourage my children/teens to pray.					
14. I provide moral instruction and how to decide right and wrong.	1	2	3	4	5
15. We celebrate meaningful traditions and rituals as a family (holidays, birthdays, accomplishments, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
16. We read the Bible as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
17. We use the Bible as guidance for how we should think and act as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I encourage my children/teens to read the Bible.					
19. We serve people in need as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
20. We work to overcome injustice in our world as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
21. We engage in projects to care for the environment as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I encourage my children/teens to talk about their doubts and questions about faith.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I talk about faith and our religious tradition with our children and teens.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I ask about out children/teens perspectives on faith, religion, moral issues, social issues, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
25. We participate in Sunday worship as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
26. We participate in church activities as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
27. We celebrate the church year seasons at church (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter).	1	2	3	4	5
28. We celebrate the seasons of the church year at home (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter).	1	2	3	4	5
29. I encourage and support our children/teens to participate in church activities.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I encourage our children and teens to pursue their talents and interests.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I work with my children/teens to manage “screen time” and social media use.	1	2	3	4	5
32. 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
33. I challenge my children/teens by expecting them to do their best and live up to their potential.	1	2	3	4	5
34. 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
35. I treat my children/teens with respect, hearing their voice, and including them in decisions that affect them.	1	2	3	4	5
36. 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 We Are Strong as a Family (Review ratings of 4 and 5)

Areas We Need to Grow as a Family (Review ratings 1, 2, and 3)

Example: Adolescent Faith Growth Pathway

Here is an example of an *Adolescent Pathways Guide* to help them identify their strengths and areas of growth in their faith life. All of the items are based on the ten characteristics of faith maturing. Young people respond by answering the question: “How true each statement is for you” using the rating scale: 1 = Rarely true of me, 2 = Sometimes true of me, 3 = Occasionally true of me , 4 = Almost always true of me, 5 = Always true of me.

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. God cares for me in a special way. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I am keenly aware of the presence of God in my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I try to live my life as a follower of Jesus. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I have a real sense that God is guiding me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. My religious faith is important in my life today. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. My life is committed to Jesus Christ. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I am developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I am discovering what Jesus’s teachings mean for my life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. My faith shapes how I think and act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I talk about my faith with others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I read and study the Bible and seek it’s meaning for my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I use the Bible to discover how I should think and act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I am growing in my understanding of the Christian faith—beliefs, traditions, and practices. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. I ask sincere and searching questions about the nature of a life of faith in God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I accept opportunities to learn how to speak naturally and intelligently about my faith. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I pray regularly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I feel God's presence in prayer. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I seek out opportunities to help me grow spiritually. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I live my life and make moral decisions guided by Christian moral values that tell me what is right or wrong behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. My Christian faith helps me know right from wrong. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. I am optimistic, trusting, and I am convinced that I can do much to make the world a better place. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. I am involved in actions to serve those in need. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. I am involved in actions to care for creation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. I speak out and act against specific social injustices. | | | | | |
| 25. I feel God’s presence when I serve people in need. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. I see evidence that God is active in the world. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. I worship God regularly at Sunday worship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. I feel God's presence when I worship on Sunday. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. I am actively engaged in activities of my church community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. I practice my faith in Jesus by using my gifts and talents at church and in the world. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Areas Where I Need to “Get Started” (look at the 1 and 2 rating)

Areas Where I Need to “Grow” (look at the 2 and 3 ratings)

Areas Where I Want to “Go Deeper” (look at the 4 and 5 ratings)