

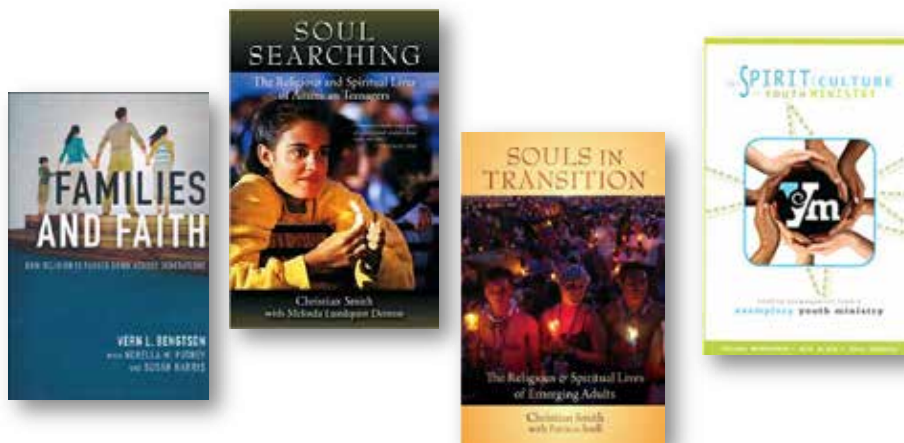
SESSION 2. THE *FAMILIES AT THE CENTER*  
APPROACH TO FAITH FORMATION



2016 Symposium: Families at the Center of Faith Formation  
LifelongFaith Associates

WHAT PRACTICES MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE IN  
FAMILY FAITH FORMATION

## WHAT ARE THE PRACTICES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



## WHAT ARE THE PRACTICES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN FAITH TRANSMISSION?

1. Parents' personal faith and practice
2. Parent-child relationship: close, warm
3. Parents' modeling and teaching a religious faith
4. Parents' involvement in church life and Sunday worship
5. Grandparents' religious influence & relationship
6. Religious tradition a child is born into
7. Parents of the same faith
8. Family conversations about faith
9. Family religious practices: prayer, reading the Bible, service to others, celebrating holidays/rituals

## WHAT ARE THE PRACTICES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

*“Emerging adults who grew up with seriously religious parents are through socialization more likely (1) to have internalized their parents religious worldview, (2) to possess the practical religious know-how needed to live more highly religious lives, and (3) to embody the identity orientations and behavioral tendencies toward continuing to practice what they have been taught religiously.”*

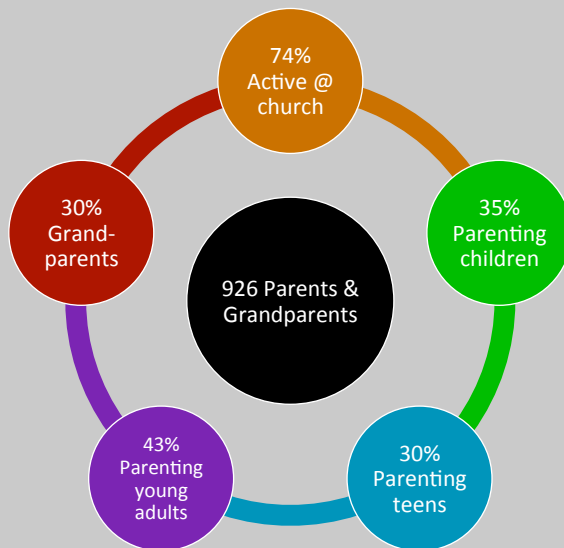
(Christian Smith & Patricia Snell)

## WHAT ARE THE PRACTICES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

“Effective religious socialization comes about through embedded practices; that is, through specific, deliberate religious activities that are firmly intertwined with the daily habits of family routines, of eating and sleeping, of having conversations, of adorning spaces in which people live, of celebrating the holidays, and of being part of a community. Compared with these practices, the formal teachings of religious leaders often pale in significance. Yet when such practices are present, formal teachings also become more important.”

(Robert Wuthnow, *Growing Up Religious*).

## WHAT ARE THE PRACTICES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE? - SURVEY



## PRACTICES



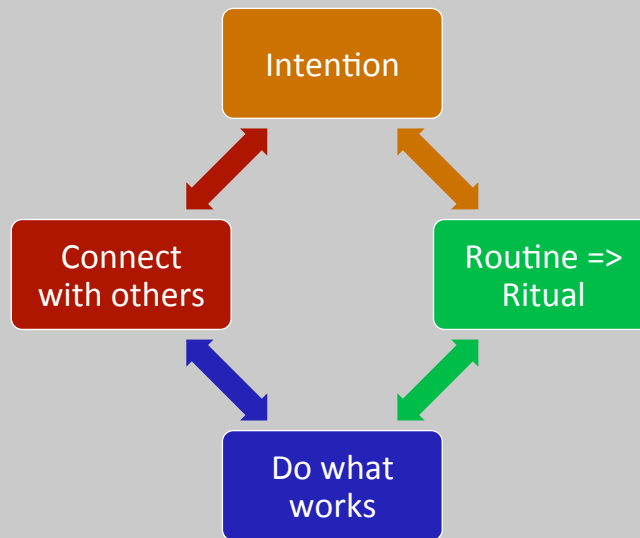
## REFLECT ON YOUR RESEARCH

- ▶ What did you learn from your research on family faith practices?
- ▶ What was similar in your findings to our research?
- ▶ What was different?

## CORRELATION WITH RESEARCH

Research	Responders
<b>Talk</b>	Eating together as a family Having family conversations
<b>Pray</b>	Pray as a family
<b>Serve</b>	Serving people in need as a family
<b>Ritualize</b>	Celebrating rituals and holidays
<b>Bible</b>	Participate in Sunday worship
<b>Learn</b>	Grow in faith as a parent

## EMERGENT FACTORS



## CONGREGATION RESPONSE

- Raise awareness
- Be highly relational
- Facilitate like-to-like
- Create support networks
- Curate good resources
- Teach the basics of faith
- Leverage "gathered" => home practice

## FAMILIES AT THE CENTER OF FAITH FORMATION

### TRANSFORMING OUR NARRATIVE

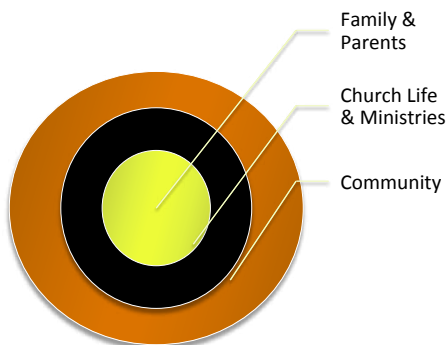
*How do we engage meaningfully with today's complex and diverse families?*

*How do families transmit faith at home to the next generation in today's world?*

*What does a vibrant family faith look like?*

## TRANSFORMING OUR NARRATIVE: FAMILIES AT THE CENTER

- ▶ Seeing the home as the essential & foundational environment for faith nurture, faith practice, and the healthy development of young people.
- ▶ Building faith formation around the lives of the today's families and parents, rather than having the congregation prescribe the programs and activities that families will participate in.



## TRANSFORMING OUR NARRATIVE: FAMILIES AT THE CENTER

The *Family-at-the Center Approach* recognizes that parents and the family are the most powerful influence for virtually every child and youth outcome —personal, academic, social, and spiritual-religious; and that parents are *the* most important influence on the social and religious lives of children, youth, and emerging adults. Given the central role of families in shaping the lives of children and youth, the value of engaging, supporting, and educating families should be self-evident to all of us.



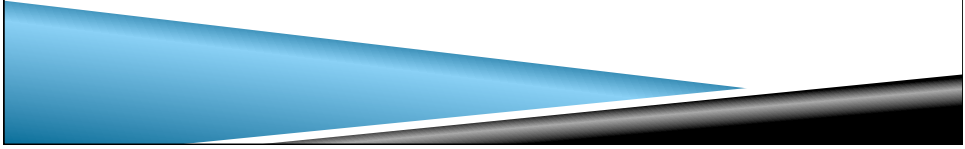
## TRANSFORMING OUR NARRATIVE: FAMILIES AT THE CENTER

- ▶ See the home as the essential and foundational environment for faith nurture, faith practice, and the healthy development of young people.
- ▶ Reinforce the family's central role in promoting healthy development and faith growth in children and youth, and enhancing the faith-forming capacity of parents and grandparents.

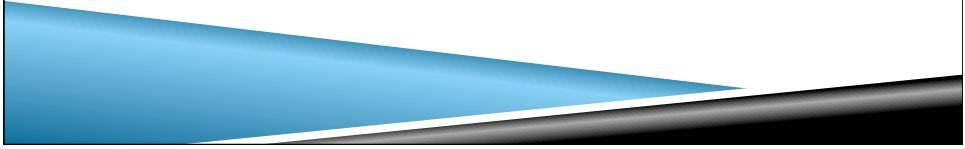
## TRANSFORMING OUR NARRATIVE: FAMILIES AT THE CENTER

- ▶ Build faith formation around the lives of the today's families and parents, rather than having the congregation prescribe the programs and activities that families will participate in.

## TRANSFORMING OUR NARRATIVE: FAMILIES AT THE CENTER

- ▶ Address the diversity of family life today by moving away from “one size fits all” programs and strategies toward a variety of programs and strategies tailored to the unique life tasks and situations, concerns and interest, and religious-spiritual journeys of parents and families.
- 

## TRANSFORMING OUR NARRATIVE: FAMILIES AT THE CENTER

- ▶ Overcome the age-segregated nature of church and its programming by engaging parents and the whole family in meaningful intergenerational relationships and faith formation that involves all ages and families.
- 

## TRANSFORMING OUR NARRATIVE: FAMILIES AT THE CENTER

- ▶ Build upon the assets, strengths, and capacities present in parents and families, rather than focusing on their deficits and solving problems.
- ▶ Partner with parents in working toward shared goals and aspirations for their young people by supporting, equipping, and resourcing them.

## FAMILIES AT THE CENTER: EIGHT STRATEGIES

1. Discovering God in Everyday Life
2. Forming Faith at Home through the Life Cycle
3. Forming Faith through Milestones
4. Celebrating Seasonal Events through the Year
5. Encountering God in the Bible through the Year
6. Connecting Families Intergenerationally
7. Developing a Strong Family Life
8. Empowering Parents and Grandparents