FAMILIES AT THE CENTER OF FAITH FORMATION

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LifelongFaith Associates

Join a Community of Practice

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Book
Transforming Our Practice

Family Life & Parent Formation

Family Engagement in the Intergenerational Faith Community

Family Faith at Home

Transforming Our Practice: Strategies

**Family Faith @ Home**
- God in Everyday Life
- Faith Practices
- Milestones

**Faith Community**
- Seasonal Events
- Bible through the Year
- Intergenerational Connection

**Family Life & Parents**
- Strong Family Life
- Parents & Grandparents as Faith Formers
Transforming Our Practice

Use Current Programming Connect to Families

Build Families of Faith @ Home

Transform Programming to Engage Families

Develop New Strategies

Where Will You Start?
Transforming Our Role

**Current Roles**

- Developing religious content
- Designing programming
- Managing programming
- Teaching/Facilitating programming

**Emerging Roles**

- **Designing** faith forming environments — *architecture*
  - Designing Digital Platforms for faith forming content
  - **Curating** faith forming content & experiences

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MazelTot.org

*Connecting Young Families to Local Jewish Life*

- **What's New**
  - MazelTot.org offers easy access to information about Jewish activities for young families in Greater Denver and Boulder and big discounts on many local Jewish experiences. We partner with many local organizations and together offer hundreds of programs and events. MazelTot.org also helps Jewish families connect with each other.

- **Upcoming Events**
  - *Mazel Age Mitzvah*
  
- **Organizations**
  - MazelTot.org partners with dozens of local Jewish organizations.
Transforming Our Practice

- Family Life & Parent Formation
- Family Faith at Home
- Family Engagement in the Intergenerational Faith Community
Forming Faith @ Home

A Family Curriculum

1. Home: What are families doing to grow in faith and discipleship?
2. Intergenerational: How are families connected to the other generations at church?
3. Church: How are churches empowering, resourcing, and supporting families to grow as disciples & practice their faith?
4. Parents: How are churches empowering, resourcing, and supporting parents as faith formers?

Faith Forming @ Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage:</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Intergenerational</th>
<th>Church</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrating Seasons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrating Rituals &amp; Milestones</td>
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<td>Learning the Christian Tradition</td>
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<td>Praying &amp; Spiritual Formation</td>
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<td>Reading the Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serving/Working for Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worshipping God Together</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Forming Faith @ Home

Developmentally Appropriate activities for . . .

1. Seasons of the year
2. Rituals and milestones
3. Learning the tradition
4. Prayer and spiritual formation
5. Reading the Bible
6. Service, justice, care for creation
"Its the Best Time of Your Life"

I visit a lot of older people in my line of work and one of the things they tell me over and over is, “This is the best time of your life. Enjoy it.” As they look back on their lives, they absolutely treasure the time when their children were growing up. They know that I’m busy and sometimes frazzled tending to work and family. And so, they remind me to slow down and savor the time with my kids because it won’t come again. It is really hard to remember this in the chaos of getting everyone fed, homework done, shuttling kids to practice, activities, and doctor’s appointments. So, I am grateful for these older, wiser parents that remind me to slow down, breathe deep, and savor the moments. I wish the same for you. -Keith

Collect Rocks, Spread the Love

Collecting rocks must be one of the most low-tech summer activities there is, but The Kindness Rocks project turns it into something beautiful. It is a simple act of collecting rocks and using it to spread the love. It
Forming Faith @ Home: Discovering God

Examen for Children
1. Quiet the children before bedtime.
2. Ask them what made them happy over the past day.
3. Ask them what made them sad over the past day.
4. Ask them what they look forward to tomorrow.
5. Remind them to thank God for what made them happy, ask for God’s help when they are sad, and pray for God’s presence in the coming day.

Discovering God in Everyday Life

1. Embed and Equip
   - Worship, learning, sacraments, retreats, and more
2. Create and Sponsor
   - Family/intergenerational programs
   - Small group experiences
3. Equip and Resource
   - Print, audio, and video resources for discovering God and for living practices in everyday life
4. Connect and Engage
   - New settings for spiritual conversations
Forming Faith @ Home: Milestones

- Birth / Baptism
- Baptism anniversaries
- First prayers
- First Bible stories
- Starting school year
- Receiving a first Bible
- First Communion
- Confirmation
- Graduation

1. Church ritual/blessing
2. Home celebration/blessing
3. Learning program – at church or home
4. Symbol
5. Supporting continued growth

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?
Milestone: Baptism

**Church**
- Mentors/Coaches
- Parent preparation
- Family gathering
- Ritual
- Intergenerational connection
- Celebration of Baptism
- Reunion
- Baptismal anniversaries

**Home**
- Caring conversations and storytelling
- Celebrating rituals
- Learning
- Praying
- Reading the Bible
- Serving
- Worshipping together

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Forming Faith @ Home: Seasons

**Calendar Year**
- New Year’s Eve and Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Valentine’s Day
- St. Patrick’s Day
- Earth Day
- Mother’s Day
- Memorial Day
- Father’s Day
- July 4 – Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Start of School
- Halloween
- Thanksgiving

**Church Year**
- Advent
- Christmas
- Epiphany
- Ash Wednesday
- Lent
- Holy Week
- Easter
- Pentecost
- St. Francis Day—Blessing the Animals (October 4)
- All Saints and Souls (Nov 1-2)
Extend a Church Event

Church Event or Program

At Home & Daily Life

Example: 40-Day Lent Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church Life</th>
<th>Daily &amp; Home Life</th>
<th>Online Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Ash Wednesday  
  • Lenten Sunday liturgies  
  • Stations of the Cross  
  • Lenten prayer  
  • Lenten retreat  
  • Lenten service  
  • Lenten soup suppers | • Fasting  
  • Praying  
  • Service/Almsgiving  
  • Lectionary reflection  
  • Family activities | • Lenten learning resources  
  • Lenten calendar  
  • Daily Lenten prayer  
  • Weekly table prayer  
  • Video resources  
  • Online retreat experience |
Example: Earth Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Home</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community cleanup</td>
<td>Ecumenical prayer service</td>
<td>Recycling activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting a community garden</td>
<td>Intergenerational program on theology of caring for creation</td>
<td>Planting a family garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All ages workshop on caring for creation</td>
<td>Church audit</td>
<td>Meal time creation prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story time at the library on environmental awareness</td>
<td>Global project for whole community</td>
<td>Daily Bible verses for April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Children’s activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Storybooks and videos</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Home audit</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sunday Worship

- Learning
- Praying
- Reading the Bible: Daily Readings
- Living
Family Life & Parents

Family faith formation strengthens *family life* by developing the assets/strengths and skills for healthy family life and providing a supportive context for forming faith, living the Christian faith, and promoting positive development in children and youth.

- Developing family assets or strengths
- Promoting character strengths in young people through developmental relationships.
Family Life & Parents
Developmental Relationships – Search Institute

Express Care | Challenge Growth | Provide Support

Share Power | Expand Possibilities

Family Life & Parents

Family Life Programming

1. Communicating effectively
2. Establishing family routines: family meals, shared activities, daily commitments
3. Celebrating meaningful traditions and rituals
4. Discussing tough topics
5. Making decisions and solving problems as a family
6. Learning how to build strong relationships and express care for each other
7. Developing the strengths & 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
Create a Family Life Plan for Each Stage
Using the Family Assets and Developmental Relationships, curate and create developmentally-appropriate programs, activities, and resources for families at each stage.

1. Family website
2. Parent programs
3. Family programs
4. Family mentors
5. Life cycle support groups for parents
Parents & Grandparents

**Twin Tasks**
1. Promoting the faith growth of parents
2. Developing the faith forming skills of parents

**Content**
- Theological and spiritual formation of parents
- Skills for parenting for faith growth
- Knowledge and skills for parenting
Parents & Grandparents

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

Parents & Grandparents

Parent Programming

1. Parent website
2. Parent programs—a progression of workshops, webinars, and/or courses for each stage of the lifecycle
3. Laboratory experiences—immersion/hands-on experiences through church events or family/intergenerational programs
4. Parent mentors
5. Lifecycle support groups for parents
6. A parent catechumenate—around key milestone experiences and “moments of return”
Flip the Model of Parent Formation

@ Home / Daily Life
Exploring the Content
- print, audio, video, activities

@ The Program
Applying the Content:
Create – Practice - Perform - Participate

Transforming Our Practice

Family Faith @ Home

Family Engagement in the Intergenerational Faith Community

Family Life & Parent Formation
Families & Intergenerational Relationships

1. Becoming Intentionally Intergenerational
   - Identify ways families are current connected and engaged intergenerationally in the faith community
   - Develop ways to strengthen IG connection and engagement
   - Create new ways to connect and engage families

2. Intergenerational and Family Learning

3. Intergenerational Family Service

Connecting Families Intergenerationally: Learning
Connecting Families Intergenerationally: Learning

- A flexible, relaxed arrival time with drinks and snacks
- Creative exploration of a Bible story/theme through creative experiences for people of different learning styles and of all ages. Children and adults are not separated and are encouraged to explore the story/theme together
- A short but explicit time of worship with story, music and prayers that builds on the creative exploration.
- A generous welcome and hospitality is expressed through a delicious home-cooked, sit-down meal with others

What happens at a ReCreation event?

**First**
We Share a Meal - A real meal, the cooking done for you. Just serve, set and enjoy.

**Next**
We Gather - We share an opening experience to prepare our hearts and minds.

**Then**
We Grow - We participate in hands-on learning activities in small groups that foster discussion and build strong relationships with each other and with Christ.

**Finally**
We Go Forth - We revisit to share our experiences and receive materials to take home to help us live out what we’ve learned.
Intergenerational Learning Process

Part 1. Meal, Community Building, Prayer
Part 2. GATHER: All Ages Learning
Part 3. GROW: In-Depth Learning Experience
  • Formats: Whole Group, Age Group, or Activity Center
Part 4. GO FORTH:
  • Sharing Learning Experiences
  • Home Application
  • Closing Prayer

Connecting Families Intergenerationally: Learning

Preparation: knowledge & practices for participating fully

Reflection: on the experience and living its meaning in daily life

Guided Participation: in the events of church life & the Christian Faith
One Event/ Program, Multiple Formats

- Gathered
- Small Group
- Independent
- Online

- Digital Content to Extend & Provide New Ways to Experience

- Interaction
- Connection
- Communication
- Demonstration