We are underinvesting in our families and therefore unable to support, empower, and equip families so that they can invest time, energy, and relational intimacy in forming the faith of children and teens at home and in daily life.

What are our priorities?
The Big Picture: Faith Forming Ecology

- Digitally Enabled and Connected
- Inter-generational
- Missional
- Family
- Life Cycle
- Digitally Enabled and Connected

Changing . . .

- Family structure, variety of living arrangements
- Work & $ – 70% of mothers work outside home
- Complexity of family life, managing/balancing
- Generations at home: Gen Xer & Millennial parents, iGen (Gen Z) children and teens
- Religious practice, participation, & affiliation
- Faith transmission and practice at home
Changing . . .

- **Unaffiliates** (Spiritual but Not Religious)
- **Spirituals** (Minimal Engagement with Faith and Community)
- **Occasionals** (Vibrant Faith & Active Engagement)
- **Actives**

Wondering. . . .

- What does a vibrant and vital family faith look like in a 21st century world?
- How do we meaningfully engage and connect with today’s families?
- How do we empower, equip, and resource families to transmit faith at home - to practice a vital and vibrant faith?
- How do we reach families who are not involved in a faith community or feel religion is not important?
Believing. . . .

- God is actively present in family life.
- Parents and the family are the most important religious influence on religious transmission.
- Faith is formed through the day-to-day religious practices of the family and the ways parents model their faith and share it.
- Faith is formed when there is a substantial investment of thought, time, and intimacy by parents in faith transmission.
- Faith is formed in relationships – at home and in the intergenerational faith community.
- Faith is formed in developmentally-appropriate ways over time.

Transmitting . . . .

- Primary Influence: Parents and the Family
- Secondary: The Congregation & Significant Adults

*The primary mechanisms by which Catholic identity becomes rooted in children’s lives are not Catholic schooling or sacramental preparation, but rather the day-to-day religious practices of the family and the ways parents model their faith and share it in conversation, collaboration, and exposure to outside religious opportunities.*

(American Catholic Religious Parenting, Burtkus and Smith)
Transmitting. . . .

- Sponsor of the Catholic Faith
- Gatekeeper of the Catholic Faith
- Interpreter of the Catholic Faith

As “sponsors,” “gatekeepers,” and “interpreters” of the Catholic faith for their children, parents give children a glimpse of what Catholicism seems to be all about and whether or not it can meaningfully inform one’s day-to-day life.

(American Catholic Religious Parenting, Burtkus and Smith)

One of the most basic suggestions of our findings is that young adults arrive at a sense of their fundamental identity and worldview not by weighing all possible intellectual arguments for and against a proposed way of life, but rather by roughly adopting the worldview of those mentors who left the deepest impression upon them—and who loved them and cared for them the most. It should come as no surprise, then, that the emergence of the new generation of dedicated young Catholics will rise and fall with the choices of their parents.

(American Catholic Religious Parenting, Burtkus and Smith)
Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*

The family is the primary setting for socialization, since it is where we first learn to relate to others, to listen and share, to be patient and show respect, to help one another and live as one. The task of education is to make us sense that the world and society are also our home; it trains us how to live together in this greater home. In the family, we learn closeness, care and respect for others. . . . Every day the family has to come up with new ways of appreciating and acknowledging its members (276)

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**Transforming Our Narrative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From a primary focus on . . .</th>
<th>Toward an emphasis on . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viewing the parish as the center of faith forming</td>
<td>Recognizing and equipping the family as the center of faith forming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming the faith of individuals</td>
<td>Forming the faith of the whole family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging individuals in church life</td>
<td>Engaging the whole family in church life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescribing programs and activities for the family and its members</td>
<td>Building faith formation around the lives and needs of families and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing things “to” of “for” families</td>
<td>Sharing power with families and treating them as partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transforming Our Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From a primary focus on...</th>
<th>Toward an emphasis on...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting with messaging to families</td>
<td>Start with listening to families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying into negative stereotypes of families</td>
<td>Highlight families’ strengths and resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving families expert advice about what to do</td>
<td>Encouraging families to experiment with new practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on parenting as a set of techniques</td>
<td>Emphasizing parenting as a relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating parents with policies and requirements</td>
<td>Informing parents of their role and empowering them to fulfill their role as faith formers of children and teens</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Transforming Our Practice
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

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**Transforming Our Practice**

Use Current Programming
Connect to Families

Build Families of Faith @ Home

Transform Programming to Engage Families

Develop New Strategies
Transforming Our Practice

Catholic Faith on Amazon Echo

- **Prayer Buddy**
  - How to use Amazon Echo:
    - “Hey, Amazon, open Prayer Buddy.”
  - Prayer Buddy is a free tool that provides daily prayers and Sunday readings directly through Alexa.

- **Daily Mass Readings or Catholic Daily**
  - How to use Amazon Echo:
    - “Hey, Amazon, open Daily Mass Readings or Catholic Daily.”
  - Catholic Daily and Daily Mass Readings are provided by Catholic News Agency.

- **Catholic Daily**
  - How to use Amazon Echo:
    - “Hey, Amazon, open Catholic Daily.”
  - Catholic Daily provides daily Mass readings and prayer intentions.
### 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
Family Faith at Home

Family Engagement in the Intergenerational Faith Community

Family Life & Parent Formation

Transforming Our Practice
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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring Relationships</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrating Seasons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrating Rituals &amp; Milestones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning the Christian Tradition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Praying &amp; Spiritual Formation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading the Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serving/Working for Justice</td>
<td></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

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.
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?
# 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>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Ash Wednesday</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lenten Sunday liturgies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Stations of the Cross</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lenten prayer</td>
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<td>- Lenten retreat</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lenten service</td>
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<td>- Lenten soup suppers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Transforming Our Practice

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

Expand Possibilities
Provide Support
Share Power
Challenge Growth
Express Care
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 there 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

Digitally Enabled & Digitally Connected Faith Formation
One Event/ Program, Multiple Formats

- Gathered
- Small Group
- Independent
- Online

- Website
  - Digital Content to Extend & Provide New Ways to Experience

- Social Media
  - Interaction
  - Connection
  - Communication
  - Demonstration

Lifelong Faith Books
www.LifelongFaith.com