Family Faith Formation
John Roberto Vibrant Faith Leadership Team

FAMILIES & FAITH
Forming Faith: Family

- Primary Influence on transmission of religious faith and practice: Parents & Family
- 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
- Secondary Influence: The Congregation and Significant Adults

Family Religious Transmission

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.

(Burtkus and Smith)
Family Religious Transmission

- Parents by the power of their personality, practices, and way of being, model and generate the culture of the household (both explicitly and implicitly).
- Parents produce, induce, and interpret the household’s experiences of Christian faith.
- Parents are one influence among others - they are nevertheless the dominant influence which orders and shapes the way children experience other influences, i.e. they constellate children’s experiences of various cultural currents, including religion.

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)
Parental Influence

Gatekeeper of the Faith
control over how much and what sorts of religious content their children encounter

Sponsor of the Faith
point of access between church and home

Interpreter of the Faith
meaningful embodiment of the Christian faith in the lives of children

Parent Role

Family Religious 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
Practices that Make a Difference

1. Reading the Bible as a family and encouraging young people to read the Bible regularly
2. Praying together as a family and encouraging young people to pray personally
3. Serving people in need as a family and supporting service activities by young people
4. Participating regularly in Sunday worship as a family
5. Being involved in a faith community and serving in church as a family and as young people
6. Eating together as a family
7. Celebrating rituals and holidays at home
8. Having family conversations
9. Talking about faith, religious issues, and questions and doubts
10. Ritualizing important family moments and milestone experiences
11. Celebrating holidays and church year seasons at home
12. Providing moral instruction

Parent Practices

1. Parents participated in mission trips as a family as their kids were growing up.
2. Parents participated in service projects with their kids as they were growing up.
3. Parents frequently shared Christ with unbelievers as their kids were growing up.
4. Parents personally read the Bible several times a week or more as their kids were growing up.
5. Parents encouraged their teen to serve in the church.
6. Parents typically asked for forgiveness when they messed up as their children were growing up.
7. Parents encouraged their children’s own unique talents and interests as they grew up.
8. Parents attended churches that emphasized what the Bible says as their kids were growing up.
9. Parents taught their children to tithe as their kids were growing up.
Fundamental Shift
What if we fashioned faith formation around the family?

What do we believe?

- 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.
Family Faith Formation Strategies

Family Life & Parent Formation

Family Faith at Home

Family Engagement in the Intergenerational Faith Community

Wesley Playhouse UK
Family Faith Formation Strategies

1. Faith Practices @ Home
2. Milestones
3. Seasonal Events
4. Bible through the Year
5. Family & Intergenerational Programming
6. Parents & Grandparents as Faith Formers

Family Formation Plan
Age Appropriate Programming

0-5 Young Children
- Faith Practices
- Bible, Prayer, Service, Learning
- Milestones
- Seasons
- Bible

6-10 Older Children
- Faith Practices
- Bible, Prayer, Service, Learning
- Milestones
- Seasons
- Bible

10-14 Young Adolescents
- Faith Practices
- Bible, Prayer, Service, Learning
- Milestones
- Seasons
- Bible

14-19 Older Adolescents
- Faith Practices
- Bible, Prayer, Service, Learning
- Milestones
- Seasons
- Bible
How to Create a Habit

1. The Cue
2. The Reward
3. The Routine

When _(cue)_ I will _(routine)_ because it provides me with _(reward)_.
Family Faith Formation @ Home & Church

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

Discovering God in Everyday Life

**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.
Parent Faith Formation @ Home & Church

Key Content

Faith Forming Skills & Practices

Knowledge & Skills for Parenting

Parental Faith Formation

Milestones throughout Life

1. Ritual and blessing
2. Home celebration/blessing
3. Learning program –
4. Symbol
5. Supporting continued growth
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

1. a ritual celebration or a blessing marking the milestone with the whole church community
2. a home ritual celebration or blessing marking the milestone
3. a learning program, often for the whole family or intergenerational, that prepares the individual and the whole family for the milestone and for faith practice at home
4. a tangible, visible reminder or symbol of the occasion being marked
5. resources to support continuing faith growth and practice after the milestone
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 through Milestones

First Year - Baptismal Remembrance (A Gathering for newly baptized)
1st Grade - Lord’s Prayer (Lives a prayer)
2nd Grade - First Communion (Share in the Lord’s Supper)
3rd Grade - Bible (Receives an age-appropriate Bible)
4th Grade - Baptism (Learn about Lutheran baptism)
5th Grade - Ten Commandments (What do they really mean?)
6th Grade - Apostle’s Creed (What do Lutheran’s believe?)
7th Grade - Bible (Receive a Bible with commentary & questions)
8th Grade - Elder Wisdom (Faith through the generations)
9th Grade - Sexuality (Loving and serving our neighbor)
10th Grade - Affirmation of Baptism (Public affirmation of promises)
11th Grade - Vocation (Live among God’s people with care)
12th Grade - Real World (Tools for living on your own, importance of faith)
### Celebrating 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)

### 40-Day Lent Curriculum

#### Church
- Ash Wednesday
- Lenten Sunday liturgies
- Stations of the Cross
- Lenten prayer
- Lenten retreat
- Lenten service
- Lenten soup suppers

#### Daily & Home
- Fasting
- Praying
- Service/Almsgiving
- Lectionary reflection
- Family Lenten activities

#### Online
- Lenten learning resources
- Lenten calendar
- Daily Lenten prayer
- Weekly table prayer
- Video resources
- Online retreat experience
Earth Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Home</th>
</tr>
</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>
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Encountering God in the Bible

1. Scripture in Sunday Worship
   - Lectionary
   - Sermon Series

2. Exploring the Bible—Family or Intergenerational Programs
   - A Tour of the Old Testament
   - A Tour of the Gospels
   - Walking with Jesus
   - Journeys of Paul
Extend Worship into the Home

Church Event or Program

At Home & Daily Life

Encountering God in the Bible

Scripture in Sunday Worship
Intergenerational & Home Faith Formation

September: 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time
October: 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time
November: 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
December: 2nd Sunday of Advent
January: Baptism of the Lord Sunday
February: 1st Sunday of Lent
March: Palm Sunday
April: 4th Sunday of Easter
May: Holy Trinity Sunday
Family Worship

Family Learning
Family Camp

Imagine a powerful Bible-camp experience for all ages — from infants to seniors, and everyone in between, not just a camp for kids. We’ve been doing this for almost 50 years! This year we have seven camps to choose from, each one will you and your family with an authentic play and portion that comes only from experiencing the gospel of camp.

We gather together as a family, grandparents and staff, then around the nation and even world. Come play, study, and grow in this beautiful, spirit-filled place. Click on camp weeks to find out more information and to register. Tentative schedules subject to change. Note: ALL of our 2018 Family Camps will include elements of the "FAMILY BLAST" model we introduced last summer.

Family Mini-Camps

Family Mini-Camp #1
June 21-24 – Family Blast: Superhero
With Ryan Nolan, Jonathan & Jani Sweeney, Dan Baker
Special outdoor concert with Puddle Cide on Friday night.

Family Camp #2
June 29 – Family Blast: Wake Up! Head to Youth Ministry
with Kathy Hoff, Dave Holts
Special meal for Youth/Children

Family Camp #3
July 6-13
The Mission of God in the Old Testament
with Beth frenzy, Horan, Carl Stadberg, & Jill Jones

Family Service

Join us for an intergenerational ‘Adventure Anchored in Christ!’ This special camp provides grandparents and grandkids with adventure-filled days to pray and play together. Life-long memory-making adventures can be expected.

Grandparents and grandkids entering 1st – 4th grades will stay in the comfortable, adults-friendly accommodations of the Christian Center, but spend their days at Pickle Lake. Feel free to bring your nest home if you prefer.
Practical Strategies

1. Develop a family faith formation website.
2. Seasonal family festivals and gatherings.
3. Connect to Sunday worship.
4. Schedule a yearlong plan for milestones.
5. Make faith practices a seasonal focus.
6. Create family immersion experiences.
7. Develop a monthly seasonal event.

Equipping Parents & Grandparents
Parent Faith Formation

+ Tailored to the four spiritual-religious identities of parents—active, occasional, spiritual/uninvolved, and unaffiliated
+ Developed around the faith maturing characteristics:
  1. Developing a relationship and commitment to Jesus
  2. Experiencing the presence of God in daily life and relationships with others
  3. Praying and growing spiritually
  4. Using Christian moral and ethical values to decide what is right or wrong
  5. Serving those in need and applying faith in the world
  6. Reading and studying the Bible
  7. Developing a well-informed Christian faith
  8. And More

Faith Forming Practices

1. Reading the Bible as a family and encouraging young people to read the Bible regularly
2. Praying together as a family and encouraging young people to pray personally
3. Serving people in need as a family and supporting service activities by young people
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Parenting & Family Life Practices

1. Expressing care to young people by listening to them, being dependable, encouraging them, and make them feel known and valued
2. Challenging young people by expecting them to do their best and live up to their potential
3. Providing support for my young people by encouraging their efforts and achievements and guiding them to learn and grow
4. Treating young people with respect, hearing their voice, and including them in decisions that affect them
5. Inspiring young people to see possibilities for their future, expose them to new experiences and places, and connect them to people who can help them grow
6. Demonstrating a warm and affirming parenting approach
7. Creating a warm, caring supportive family environment.
8. Practicing effective communication skills
9. Managing “screen time” and social media use
10. Learning effective discipline practices
11. Creating a warm, caring supportive family

Three Parental Faith Roles

Gatekeeper of the Faith
control over how much and what sorts of religious content their children encounter

Sponsor of the Faith
point of access between church and home

Interpreter of the Faith
meaningful embodiment of the Christian faith in the lives of children

Parent Role
Parent Programming

1. Parent website
2. Parent programs: Progression of parent workshops, webinars, or courses for each life stage
3. Laboratory experiences
4. Parent mentors
5. Life cycle or affinity groups for parents
6. Have parents practice new skills with their own children during program sessions.
7. Design programs that engage parents in the learning experience.
8. Use a variety of environments and methods to engage all parents, anytime and anywhere.
9. Use online platforms and digitally enabled strategies.
10. Give parents a plan.

Family Formation Plan
Age Appropriate Programming

- Young Children
  - Faith Practices
  - Bible, Prayer, Service, Learning
  - Milestones
  - Seasons
  - Bible
  - Parenting

- Older Children
  - Faith Practices
  - Bible, Prayer, Service, Learning
  - Milestones
  - Seasons
  - Bible
  - Parenting

- Young Adolescents
  - Faith Practices
  - Bible, Prayer, Service, Learning
  - Milestones
  - Seasons
  - Bible
  - Parenting

- Older Adolescents
  - Faith Practices
  - Bible, Prayer, Service, Learning
  - Milestones
  - Seasons
  - Bible
  - Parenting