

# 2016 Symposium

## *Families at the Center of Faith Formation*

### Ideas and Projects Developed by Symposium Participants

This document presents some of the work that Symposium participants did throughout the program. The first section contains ideas generated from Session 1 on how to put families at the center of ministry. The second section contains project ideas, developed by the participants, through a mind mapping process to address significant adaptive challenges in family faith formation. The report contains the project areas and then ideas/activities/strategies for designing the project. The third section of the report contains ideas developed in the milestones workshop.

## Symposium Program Overview

Symposium presentations and handouts are available at: <http://www.lifelongfaith.com/2016-family-symposium-program.html>

Session 1.	Transforming Our Narratives about Families for the 21st Century
Session 2.	The Families at the Center Approach to Faith Formation
Session 3 and 4:	Strategies for the Families at the Center Approach to Faith Formation
	1. Discovering God in Everyday Life
	2. Forming Faith at Home with Children
	3. Forming Faith at Home with Adolescents
	4. Forming Faith through Milestones
	5. Forming Faith through the Intergenerational Faith Community: Seasonal Events, Scripture, Learning, and Service
	6. Developing a Strong Family Life
	7. Empowering Parents and Grandparents
Session 5:	Designing 21st Century Family Faith Formation – John Roberto
Session 6:	A Families at the Center Approach to Faith Formation in a Congregation: Designing Prototypes of Family Faith Formation Projects
Session 7.	Sharing Prototypes of Family Faith Formation Projects
Session 8:	Implementing New Approaches, Strategies, and Projects

## Part 1. “One Novel Idea for Putting Families at the Center of Your Ministry” (Session 1 Ideas)

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### Meal Ideas

1. **Meal:** Free family meal for families to connect without phones or electronics at church—monthly
2. **Meal:** Have family meal night: different families each month brought together (2-3 families) to get to know each other and church ministry leaders better
3. **Cooking:** Family cooking class: cook and share a meal; learn shopping/menu/budget, kid friendly meals

4. **Dinner:** Serve dinner before whole family faith formation nights—families sit and talk together
5. **Provision:** Provide a weeks worth of dinners to selected “exhausted and overwhelmed” families; provide house cleaning services to those same families
6. **Invite:** Invite a family for a meal; give a gift card with dinner
7. **Family suppers:** Provide low-cost, free-will family suppers one night a week; not program just family or social time
8. **Family cook-off:** Host a chili cook-off; friendly competition; families share recipes, a meal, and an evening together

## Prayer Ideas

9. **Prayer Bags:** Age-appropriate Prayer Bags with items based around encouraging prayer and faith conversations at home: stuffed Jesus doll, children’s Bible, crucifix, candle, prayer books, journal for reflection
10. **Devotional:** A simple small devotional for sports families so they can worship on Sundays in the car coming back from games.
11. **Prayer:** Teach simple ways to pray.
12. **Family prayer:** Meet with families individually and talk about what we can prayer together for them
13. **Vacation:** As a family on vacation, look for a labyrinth and together walk the labyrinth, discuss where you see/hear God
14. **Icon:** Experience an icon (Holy Family) in the homes of families in the church—host family prays daily together

## Celebration/Rituals/Worship

15. **Celebrate:** Help families “celebrate” what they are already doing as a means to live their faith, i.e., meals, sports, hobbies/activities (rituals, blessings, etc.)
16. **Epiphany:** Celebrate Epiphany every year with an intergenerational pancake breakfast—all the planning, cooking, serving, and cleanup done by families.
17. **Post-Baptism:** Meet with parents a few weeks/months after a baby is baptized and ask how we can help them keep the baptismal promises they made (raising a child in the faith), then brainstorm how to meet their needs.
18. **Sacraments:** Provide 3 options for families to prepare their children for sacraments: 1) home/family preparation, 2) small groups—family or neighborhood, 3) gathered sessions at parish
19. **Milestone:** Have a learning activity with parents and children during the Sunday school hour on the Sunday the child is being honored with a milestones presentation which includes a gift and blessing
20. **Worship:** Let children be involved in worship and liturgy—reading Scripture, helping with communion, etc.—not just during children’s sermon; let worship be noisy and sometimes messy so parents don’t feel they are not welcome because children are distracting
21. **Midweek worship:** Have a Wednesday night worship service and faith formation so that families can do everything on one night
22. **Seasons:** Invite families to an event to celebrate a season of the church year, e.g., celebrating a “live” advent wreath
23. **Worship class:** Invite a parent to come with their 2<sup>nd</sup> grader to the worship readiness classes—parents will continue to help their children participate in worship even after the class is over

24. **Family blessing Sunday:** Have a family blessing Sunday: bring family's names, lift up family's best/happiest gift to share with others; confess and burn the things that have gone wrong, ask for forgiveness; celebrate the new start
25. **Follow liturgy:** "Sticker spots" in bulletin—encourage even pre-readers to follow the liturgy; each child gets a strip of stickers

## Family Programming/Activities at Church

26. **Games:** "Game night" for families, involving family members of all ages to interact with each other.
27. **Family fun night:** No curriculum or agenda but nights for families to get together—eat and have fun
28. **Noticing:** When families are at a game or practice or an activity, have them look around and not what they see, smell, hear, touch, or taste that is sacred and holy.
29. **Space:** Remember that families want what's best for each other—create space for them to name and write their hopes and dreams for each other
30. **Gathering:** Intergenerational Sunday morning faith formation—bring the families together
31. **Family Day:** Have a family day at a local water park and remind them of their baptism (water); have an area where families can gather and talk about parts of their religious life and what brings them together; provide an information table where we can give ideas on how to do more sacred things together
32. **Family Nights:** Do family nights each month with a family friendly dinner and activity for families to engage in together, e.g., a Lego night, cooking, zoo programs, etc.
33. **Options:** Give options for gathered faith formation events to meet needs of busy families
34. **Options:** Add a home-based faith formation option in addition to class offerings
35. **Care night:** Care night at church with recovery, divorce, and grief groups meeting at the same time; begin with a free meal
36. **Sunday afternoon:** Offer a Sunday afternoon family activity and meal monthly from 4-6 pm—family worship time with activity, high school youth babysit during and after meal so adults can connect; teach faith practices to bring home
37. **Sunday morning schedule:** Move all faith formation programming for children and confirmation youth to Sunday between the Masses; provide coffee, juice, and donuts/fruit for parents to stay and socialize or sometimes attend sessions
38. **Sunday school:** Have a brief time at the end of Sunday school where parents and children discuss the lesson and how to apply it to daily life
39. **Family retreat:** Sponsor a 3-hour family retreat event—affirming the love and support they have to be nurturing toward each other's community
40. **Wishing box:** Have a "wishing box" in the church where parents and children can drop a list of their material/spiritual needs so they can be connected to the ministries that can help them
41. **Family forum:** Host a family forum for pastors and church leaders where families can explain their lives, challenges, and goals
42. **Scheduling:** Recruit parents to schedule faith formation sessions and activities—they would know when the best times in light of sports, activities, and school schedules
43. **Family strengths:** Conduct a family event where families do activities that show their strength and identity; highlight and affirm family strengths
44. **Family Strengths:** Facilitate a conversation with families that helps them identify their strengths; then help them identify ways to celebrate and live into those strengths

45. **Multiple ways to participate:** Offer multiple ways for a family to participate in the same activity—gathered, self-study, technology, etc.
46. **Multiple options:** Offer multiple options for faith formation that meet their needs and respects the reality of family life today, i.e., intergenerational sessions, empower parents as faith coaches, small family groups with parents as leaders
47. **Church dinners:** At church dinners, encourage families to prepare and lead opening prayer
48. **Family gathering:** Sponsor family gatherings once a month and invite each family to lead a session by exploring a question they have about their faith or a family faith tradition they do as a family; this could be done in small groups
49. **Family plan:** Family play and prayer night monthly could offer an opportunity to engage in playful activity bookended by prayer opportunities

## Family Faith at Home

50. **Family faith growth plan:** Create a faith/strengths/gift inventory assessment that families/individuals can complete and which will form the basis of a personalized faith formation plan
51. **Affirm families:** Affirm families in their holiness—sharing that every family is holy as they are: sacrifice for one another, heal one another, forgive one another, prayer for one another
52. **Faith traditions:** Ask families what is their favorite tradition practiced in their family (prayer, seasonal, celebrations); collect and post to church website. Help families without faith tradition to establish meaningful spiritual practices in their own family.
53. **Table Talk:** Create table talk cards for families to use during meal times—providing time to connect, share highs and lows from the day, and celebrate God’s promise and presence in everyday life
54. **Evangelization:** Equipping active parishioners to do relational evangelization and discipleship with peers, coworkers, and family.
55. **Recognition:** Help parents to recognize that their family is already doing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy through an initiative called families living the Gospel. Family life is living mercy.
56. **Bible study:** During the summer post on Facebook a family Bible study reflection for the family’s summer travels, like: visiting a zoo, movie discussion, creation/nature, science museum, water adventure, amusement park, chores, service/volunteers
57. **Advent Bible reading:** Create a family (not individual) Bible reading challenge for Advent that ends with a church family Christmas dinner with competition for all ages, with trivia questions and prizes
58. **Resources:** Provide resources (in person and email) that encourage simple ways to grow in faith and foster good memory-making
59. **Service:** Provide service opportunity for the family to work on together
60. **Share faith:** Provide families with a blank calendar and invite them to discover ways they share their faith with each other (or friends, neighbors, strangers) each day and recognize how they are living their faith in daily life
61. **Conversation starters:** Provide conversation starters for all the time that families are spending in the care coming and going from activities
62. **Moral dilemmas:** Send moral dilemmas that students and parents can workout together
63. **Bible app for children**
64. **Advent journey app**

## Parents

65. **Gathering:** On faith formation nights have space to gather for coffee, snacks, use computer, read, rest; no volunteering or working—just be!
66. **Parent Space:** Provide a parent space during junior youth time to provide connections and encouragement (and good coffee and deserts).
67. **Listening:** Do conflict resolution by starting with listening to their wish/desire and then situation.
68. **Parent Night Out**
69. **Babysitting:** Provide babysitting while parents Christmas shop; having children create gifts for parents in that time
70. **Babysitting:** Offer four hours of babysitting on a Saturday night from 4-8 pm a couple of times a year; teens plan activities for children and the parents get a date night
71. **Facilitate:** Facilitate discussions in a way that challenge parents to draw on their resilience (affirms their inherent goodness and efforts)
72. **Honor parents:** Privately or publically honor parents' hard work and sacrifices by having format where others thank them/notice all they do
73. **Mentoring:** Partner up young families with older, experienced, spiritually strong families in a mentoring relationship for support, best practices, and encouragement
74. **Panel:** Do a parents panel discussion around best practices for discipline, faith practices, finding time for personal interests, dealing with teenagers
75. **Coffee and conversation:** Bring parents together (provide childcare) to discuss parenting and faith issues that are important to them
76. **Single parents:** Celebrate the dedication of single parents and support them weeks when they and their children are not at church
77. **Grandparents:** Support group for grandparents raising their grandchildren
78. **Support groups:** Parent support groups of the different age groups to not only share their challenges but what it is that they like best about their family

## Relationships/Listening

79. **Build:** Build relationships via conversation, cards, or notes—intentionally learning about one family at a time
80. **Listen:** Proactively listen to people's stories to genuinely connect and follow-up in the near future
81. **Listen:** Be there to listen and talk to them about what faith (Holy Spirit) will do in their lives, discussion on faith for coping with hard times
82. **Listen:** Actively listen to families—they aren't always looking for answers, just someone to listen
83. **Don't judge:** Don't judge problem behaviors; appreciate parent/caregivers attempts to manage a difficult situation and discover ways to support them and love the children
84. **Hopes and dreams:** Ask families what their hopes and dreams are for their family regarding faith and have them pick one thing right now that brings them closer each day to that goal
85. **Outreach:** Have coffee with a family that has left the church to understanding why they have left
86. **Hospitality:** Organize a welcoming group whose task it is to get to know families
87. **Survey:** Send a survey to parishioners asking about ways to better serve them; what would they like to see as part of faith formation programs
88. **Survey:** Send a survey to each family: What is one strength your family has? What is one way our church can support your own family?
89. **Parent council:** Create a parent council, who together with church leadership, connect with other families through gatherings and phone calls

## Digital/Media

90. **Training:** Offer a “digital world” training event in which children teach their families how to use new technology
91. **Online resources:** Provide online resources in bulletin and website that families can use
92. **Easter video:** Create Easter story video by having families video record their part of the story

## Visits/Contact

93. **Visits:** Visit families in their home—ask to come to bring them information about \_\_\_\_ While there listen to their experience, do a simple prayer/ritual/blessing.
94. **Visit:** Conduct a family visit for every family and find out what they think their strengths are

## Special Needs

95. **Worship:** Families finding it difficult to worship with children on autism spectrum: start a coffee and chat group to support families with children with ASD; set up a sensory area in church foyer which all families can use but especially for families with children on the autism spectrum
96. **Gathering:** Get families with special needs together and listen to them and their struggles and celebrate with them their successes, how you care, and that the church wants to know

## Additional

97. **Presentation:** With all ministers directly involved with families, have a presentation on who families are today and where they are at; the goal is to reduce judgment and create mercy and compassion toward today’s families
98. **No Homework:** Negotiate a “no homework” night for students with their schools so that families can do....
99. **Photos:** Showcase and celebrate families visually in a space at church with testimonials
100. **Poverty:** In working with families in poverty, focus on them, their gifts, and their stories rather than see them as needing services from the congregation

## Part 2. Family Symposium Projects

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The following projects and ideas were developed by the Symposium participants. For many of the projects, there were multiple groups who developed ideas. All of these ideas have been grouped together under the project.

### Project: Family Challenges (Busyness, Time)

#### 1. Spirituality

- Book club: on-site, digital
- Online retreats: Pray as You Go, Sacred Space, Loyola Press
- Family prayers and prayer partners
- Liturgical seasons
- Bible study (for divorced, for singles)

#### 2. Faith Formation

- Retreats
- Discernment of needs

- Multiple models of formation: classroom, family centered, homeschool, summer intensive, intergenerational, digital/online
3. Service
    - Service within family
    - Family community projects: soup kitchen, Habitat
    - Parish centered: food pantry, Giving Tree, Thanksgiving baskets
  4. Social
    - Parent getaways, date night
    - Grandparent: summer camp
    - Child getaways
    - Seasonal family gathering
    - Marriage enrichment
  5. Connections
    - Employment connections
    - Mentor families (similar experiences)
    - Counseling services: Retrouvaille, research Christian counselors (put on webpage)
    - Website
  6. Questions for the ride
    - Reflections connected to the service readings: website, bulletin, newsletter
    - Fridge notes: prayer and educational activities
  7. Flash mob
    - Social witness: standing on the side of love, song singing
    - Social justice with interfaith actions in area, connect relationship
  8. “Barn raising”
    - Online cooperative between parents / link congregants with skills and time
    - Babysitting
    - Getting home projects done
    - Make dinners to take home and freeze
  9. iFaith app
    - Blog: one thing from what happened today
    - Prayer list
    - Where did you see God today
    - Song of the day: what song reminds you of God
    - Picture of day: how did you see love today (take a photo and post)
  10. More class times on different days
    - Group grades together (same number of teachers)
    - Can change day with sports season
  11. Parish website
    - Links to everything
    - All schedules
    - Latest information
    - List of all activities of other churches (interfaith): vacation Bible schools, youth groups, social action for families
  12. Online religious education
    - Online anytime and/or at a specific time(s) online and/or in person
    - Lessons online: children or parents-children

- Content online (15 minutes\_
  - Zoom or Google hangout
  - Meet in person follow-up
13. Connecting sports to faith
- Blessings
  - Sports equipment swap
  - Lessons: faith form sports
  - Who needs rides to games
  - Meet people from same geographic area
14. Time management
- Digital resources
  - Christian practice: saying yes, saying no
  - Family Sabbath-keeping
  - Time management app
15. Listening to families
- Small groups and one-to-one
  - Listen and holding what was heard
  - Hear vision
  - Implement vision by adapting faith formation to their lives and time; teach them that some of the things they already do are faith formation
  - Curate digital resources to share with parents (that implement the vision)
  - Provide other print resources at church; email
  - Keep talking, keep listing, keep connecting, keep building
16. Seasonal experiences digitally
- Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Ordinary Time
  - Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
17. Family journey in faith (app, digital, online, social media component)
- Connecting sacraments
  - Milestones
  - Connection to others in process
  - Connection to community milestones (and church hosts some of these activities in building)
  - Experiential opportunities schedule and sign up
18. Ministry to mission (app, digital, online)
- Video content of before and after change
  - How to do active listening, community organizing
19. Listening to families
- Focus groups
  - One-on-one conversations
  - Surveys
20. Disengagement opportunities
- Camp: family fun days
  - Retreats: men, women, all church, youth
  - Fellowship opportunities: meals, dinner clubs

## 21. Flexible programs

- Multiple times for gathering
- Babysitting
- Online: Facebook page; website—links to daily devotionals, resources for parents, children’s center
- Online group activity (covenant group, closed group): How can we help you this week? How would you work through? Tell us something from the week to celebrate? How can we pray for you?
- At home applications: weekly online Facetime with parent groups, weekly at home resources—10 minute modules for around the dinner table

## 22. Parent helps

- Spiritual practices (Practicing Our Faith book by Dorothy Bass, et al.)
- Stress relief: Taize, Tai Chi, meditation/contemplative prayer, labyrinth, yoga
- Time management: apps for families, multiple calendar, book lists—help/info resources

## 23. Parallel programming

- Small group gatherings—parents and children
- Parent faith formation paired with children’s programs
- Busy parenting group

# **Project: Empowering Parents to Grow in Faith & Share Faith with Children**

## 1. Articulating their faith

- Sharing faith journey: identifying needs and gifts—parents and children
- Mission statement: faith—parents and children, relational—parents, children, others
- Testimony
- Online survey
- Questionnaire

## 2. Web content

- Original content
- Devotionals
- Listicles
- Curated resources: links, blogs, forums, tools

## 3. Support system

- Congregational support
- Connecting parents with mentors
- Separate age groups

## 4. Embody / faith practices

- Prayers: times to pray, ways to pray
- Milestones: identify, celebrate, resources

## 5. Basics of the Faith (5 minute online videos)

- What is church
- Trinity
- Church rituals and sacraments
- Bible literacy
- Prayers

## 6. Cohort family service projects (possible weekend retreat)

7. Milestones (online and on site)
  - Everyday life milestones
  - Church milestones
  - Loss/grief
  - Seasonal celebrations
8. Living well
  - 6-12 weeks on finance, health, Sabbath, retirement, college fund, eating healthy,
  - Online and on campus
9. Discovering sacred in everyday life
  - “Catch them in the Act”—video of sacred in action
  - Pictures of the holy in everyday life
  - Prayers for everyday
  - Story/witnessing, blog, meetings
10. Witnessing practices
  - “Lent through the Eyes of Parents” App
  - Prayer partner/mentor
  - Scripture connection to “our” own witness/services
  - Sharing stories: good/bad
11. Consulting to generate feedback
  - “What will our mission be this year”
  - Mission/service project, outreach opportunity
  - Gospel application to daily life
  - Feedback
  - Ownership of activities
12. Support
  - Mentor families
  - Parent support groups
  - Give authority and recognition to parents as primary educators
  - Tool to listen to families concerns and questions and fears
13. “Hot line” tool kit
  - Libraries
  - Faith cards
  - Facebook page
  - Blessings and prayers
  - Links to resources
14. Educate parents
  - Website
  - Webinar
  - Adult classes: gather, non-gathered, “Faith 5” or other methodology, teach simply rituals
  - Model: role play, family worship practices
15. Develop relationships
  - Mentor families
  - Dinner for 8 (groups)
  - Mom’s coffee group
  - Dad’s activities
  - Fun events

16. Personal spirituality
  - Daily devotions
  - Prayer partners
  - Rituals and celebrations—milestones
  - Different prayer styles
  - Mini-retreats
  - Answering the call to discipleship and serve others
  - Involvement in children’s service opportunities
17. Intergenerational sharing: parent-child
  - Intergenerational meal: movie night, service project, faith story—interview family about faith story, talk about God’s big story, follow-up activities
18. Parenting class
  - Stages of parents’ life/faith
  - Development of faith stages of children
19. Seasons
  - Workshop on seasonal celebrations, faith practices
  - Seasonal symbols: color pages
20. Peer mentors for parents
  - Online discussion
  - Ongoing check-in
  - Invite last year’s parents to this year’s event (e.g. communion preparation)
21. Prayer how to
  - Talking to God; listening to God
  - Movement prayer: walking prayer, labyrinth
  - Prayer groups
22. Mission/service activity
  - CROP walk
  - Social justice learning
  - Scripture about mission and service
23. Bible study
  - Facebook discussion
  - Blended
  - In-home small groups
  - For parents/family: drama, puppets, songs

## **Project Empowering and Affirming Parents**

1. Digital bootcamp for parents: digital resources and media, training
2. Family home kits around a theme, prayer, story, faith idea, etc.
3. Parent networking and sharing; peer mentoring
4. Family vacation quests
5. Affirm: formal sessions
  - Videos
  - Icebreakers
  - Teaching home rituals
  - Age appropriate content
  - Intergenerational

6. Affirm: intergenerational connections
  - Prayer partners
  - Mentor programs
7. Affirm: family app
  - Succinct info
  - Blogs
  - Non-churchy
  - Short devotions (daily)
  - Facebook support group
8. Affirm: remove obstacles
  - Less on requirements
  - Focus on preparation
  - Address needs: child friendly space, childcare
9. Create a space place for parents to question, share gifts, share stories, share experiences, share struggles and joys, collaborate, reflect on their faith journey and how they can share it with their children
10. Resource using multiple formats
  - Gathered events: parent events, meetings, potlucks, award ceremonies, youth events, intergenerational
  - Print format: bulletin, mailings, newsletter
  - Digital: live feeds, podcasts, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, apps, text and email, meetup.com
  - Apps: daily devotion, daily Gospels, faith thought of the day
  - Training apps
  - Websites: moments of life, faith enrichment resources
11. Mentoring
  - Parent meetings, chat room
  - Peers
  - Families
  - Grandparents
  - Community meals, chat room
  - Training: webinars
12. Take advantage of moments
  - Family life: develop rituals, how God is already present
  - Youth ministry events: family service opportunities
  - Baptism: mentors (grandparents, peers), preparation sessions (parents' role, meaning of baptism, connection to community), follow-up (personal, letters, gathered events)
  - First sacraments: parent preparation sessions, gathered sessions (parents' role), home sessions
  - Confirmation: sponsors/mentors, parent involvement, retreat
  - Kindergarten/first grade/first time at faith formation: welcome, parents' role
13. Offer options for formation and growth
  - Parenting skills
  - Solicit needs
  - One time event (address different learning styles)
  - Seasonal: prayer services, Lent/Advent retreats

- Multi-lingual

## **Project: Faith Formation in Complex Families**

1. Different beliefs
  - Learn about other beliefs
  - Celebrating the richness of other beliefs
  - Tools for respectful conversations
  - Establish guidelines
  - Facilitation
2. Fragmentation
  - Affirmation
  - Recognizing strengths: tell their faith story, express gratitude, extended family/support networks, opportunity to express care for each other
  - Safe respite
3. Listening
  - Authentic
  - Meals
  - Matching listening to the situation: neutral ground/their turf
4. Diverse family structure
  - Awareness of language and biases
  - Help develop a sense of pride
  - Understanding diversity in the Bible
  - Whole congregation

## **Project: Prioritizing Faith in Family Life**

1. Collaborate
  - Schools: coaches, teachers, concerts, testing, sports, dance, vacation/breaks
  - Parents: schedules
  - Other families
2. Inviting environment
  - Putting Christ first
  - Church leaders model Christian faith
  - Christianity in the home
  - Hospitality
  - Recognizing everyone's diverse life journey (faith)
  - Personal invitations
3. Social media
  - Church app (calendar)
  - Website
  - Facebook
  - Online curriculum
  - Parent and children networking
4. Support systems
  - Ministry volunteers
  - Personal invitations
  - Welcome committee (gifts)

- Take home resources
  - Confirmation mentors
  - Baptism and beyond teams
  - Prayer partners
  - Parental resources
  - Engagement
5. Support
- Digital
  - Tools
  - Bible
  - Prayer intentions: beginning of school, ongoing book of prayer requests
6. Listen
- Assessment: timeline, core group discussion
  - Peer to peer
  - Neutral site for conversation
7. Empower/equip
- Use milestones moments
  - Provide youth internship, leadership opportunities
  - Witnessing to value of faith: experienced parents, high school students, college admissions-counselor and student
8. Engage
- Activities, games
  - Service opportunities
  - Family value mapping
  - Create family vision statement

## **Project: Fragmentation & Lack of Community**

1. Mapping physical community
  - Business
  - Church
  - Community institution: schools, healthcare, support/recovery groups, justice system, police
2. Social network mapping
  - Identify friendships
  - Build trusting relationships
  - Identifying interests: creating support groups, connecting cultures
3. Church building trust
  - Touch
  - Digital connection/clear communication
4. Cross-church groups
  - Intergenerational
  - Mix church services
5. “The church goes shopping downtown”
  - All community congregations would align nonprofits with them
  - Each group would have an identifying token
  - On “shopping day” token would be deposited in jar at store; money earned for charity

## **Project: Paradigm Shift (Digital Shift—Program to Mission)**

1. Website focused on the use of digital media
  - Space on website about change/with (thought provoking) image
  - List of sources: bullets with images
  - Reflections related to change
  - TED talk on change
  - Invitation to Facebook invite
  - Administrator: questions and monitors discussion
2. Digital shift
  - Changes story
  - Sources other than our own traditions: links to TED Talks, On Being
  - Social media: open us to broader experience—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
3. New narrative on change: place where God is at work
4. Virtual consultant: Facebook, YouTube, app, website
5. Program to mission
  - Shift from teacher to faith witness: ritual, Scripture, story, prayer, service
  - Change from knowledge to discipleship: Christian practices—intention, prayer, service, honoring our body
6. Institutional rigidity to embracing change / resistance to adaptive change
  - Through image and story, hearts and minds
  - Ritual to support change
  - Language of experimentation
  - Learning from other congregations: experiences, resources, people

## **Project; Connecting with the Spiritual not Religious Family Member**

1. Find meaning/purpose in everyday life
  - Discussion prompts
  - Highs and lows
2. Expressing care
  - Support groups, network
  - Mentors
  - Go where they are
  - Build relationships with families
3. Off-campus opportunities: small groups, social clubs
4. Identify family passions: music, sports
5. Service projects

## **Project: Affirming Families with Religious Diversity**

1. Celebrating family ritual at home: finding meaning/purpose in everyday life
2. Celebrating family within church context: marriage retreat
3. Modeling hospitality: statements of welcome, language, offering invitations, build relationships between church and family
4. Sacramental preparation (milestone moments): honoring the parent that is not in the tradition

## **Project: Making God and Faith Relevant**

1. Education
  - Programs: Bible studies, home devotions, caring conversations,
  - Resources: website, books, technology
2. Missional advocacy
  - Service opportunities
  - Social justice
3. Pastoral care: life challenges, topical themes
4. Worship
  - Sermons
  - Music
  - Time structures
  - Architectural space
  - Liturgy
  - Prayers
  - Recognizing milestones
4. Fellowship
  - Relationship building
  - Hospitality
  - Invitation
  - Evangelism
  - Witness
  - Connecting

## **Project: The Reality of the Screen**

The challenge is to invite families to rise above the surface screen relationships to a deeper, more meaningful way of relating to one another and use tech to our advantage for assisting families in living their vibrant and integrated faith.

1. Social media
  - Facebook, Twitter, blogs, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, Vine, Snapchat
  - Use Facetime to connect people
2. Screen awareness
  - Human vulnerability: links to addiction studies, links to cognitive development studies
  - Develop screen literacy
  - Living into faith
  - Online learning experience: webinar, vides, retreat experience
3. Curating trusted resources and creating new programs
  - Clearinghouse that curates/reviews information
  - Resources on the four keys
  - Church apps
  - Twitter Masses
  - Developing screen literacy
  - Living into faith
  - Blog: questions Nones ask
  - Video with children/teens teaching

#### 4. Community

- Inclusion through media
- Ministry of presence: conversation starters, media examples of positive and negative uses
- Gathered: coffee groups, small groups
- Intergenerational screen events
- Youth videos
- Youth teaching adults how to use the digital tech and tools

### **Project: Building Relationships in Church Community with and for Families**

#### 1. Share faith stories

- Write devotion with faith stories
- Storytelling station at intergenerational event
- Instagram photo a day (Advent)
- Interviews

#### 2. Gifts

- Identify and empower networks/hubs
- Find places to use gifts
- Strengths bank/database
- Develop gifts for all ages
- Discern gifts: spiritual gifts discernment, gifts survey
- Create skills database
- resume Sunday
- Knowing strengths

#### 3. Share meals

- Neighborhood potlucks
- Parish team take meal to a home and visit families
- Families provide meals for each other

#### 4. Sharing ideas and best practices: parenting groups, social media

### **Project: Place for Parents to Be Heard**

#### 1. In Person

- Paper evaluations
- Round table discussions
- Team from parish making home visits
- Comment cards
- Large group listening session / forum
- Families generating ideas

#### 2. Training a parish listening team

#### 3. Online

- Survey on SurveyMonkey
- Closed Facebook group
- Suggestion box
- Email list

## **Project: Discover the Sacredness of Everyday Family Life**

1. Shared experiences
  - Meals
  - Retreats
  - Vacation
  - Chores and responsibilities
  - Celebrations
2. Teachable moments
  - Current events
  - School and work life
  - Crisis
3. Family and extended family relationships
  - Other role models, mentors
  - Immediate family
  - Grandparents, aunts, and uncles
4. Resources
  - Blogs
  - Devotionals
  - Videos
  - Books
5. Networking with other families
  - School
  - Work
  - Church
  - Service
  - Sports, extra curriculars

## **Project: Child-directed Learning Experiences in the Home**

1. Media experiences
  - Television
  - Phones
  - Computer/internet
  - Video games
  - Videos/movies
2. Roles and responsibilities
  - Service
  - Chores
3. Child-led family meetings
  - Materials to help families
  - Conversations
4. Routines and ritual; milestone celebrations
5. Learning through play—age appropriate; exploration and discovery

## **Project: Digital Platform for Family Faith Formation**

(Content written by “everyday people” not professionals)

1. Faith stories
  - Pictures: milestones, service, community events
  - Struggles and failures: what didn't work
  - Blog
  - Interviews: like StoryCorps
  - Podcasts
  - Videos: home created, families, links
2. Formation resources
  - Scripture
  - Teaching
  - Ideas for families and children at home
  - Webinars
  - Parents encourage parents: support, tips, mentors
  - Online mission
3. Prayer
  - Stations of the Cross with reflections from people
  - Ideas for families and children at home
  - Gospel reflections written by children, teens, parents
  - Everyday Psalms written by everyday people: hopes and joys, fears and struggles
  - Advent/Lent devotions written by the people
  - Intentions

## **Project: Neighborhood Churches**

1. Connection to larger community
  - Regional leaders
  - Large community leadership staff
  - Liturgy and sacraments
  - Digital (see Digital Platform project)
2. Service: works and prayer
3. Structure
  - Already existing family and friend webs
  - Create new groups
  - Geographic
  - Family household: teens, empty nesters, widows/widowers, sacrament seekers
4. Leadership
  - Shared: prayer leader, formation leader, service leader
  - Discerned: gifts
  - Collaborative
  - Rotates
5. Justice: works, prayer
6. Formation
  - Training parents to form, teach, live faith at home
  - Ongoing: books, social teaching, scripture

- Initial: listening training, strength finders, workshops on vulnerability and shame
7. Prayer: all kinds

## **Project: Reaching the Unchurched**

1. Who
  - Neighbors
  - Those who have left
  - Those of other denominations
  - Young adults
  - Ethnic groups
2. Prayer (Luke 10)
  - Teaching families to pray in ordinary moments, e.g., for someone waiting at the bus stop
  - How can we pray for you
  - How does prayer change our own attitudes
3. Online
  - Curate stories heard: how do we recognize the good news in them
  - Creating service opportunities
  - Email follow-ups to those we met
4. Form others to do outreach
  - Asking good non-judgmental questions
  - Maintaining a non-anxious presence
  - Being aware and assist with practical needs
  - Families invite other families to dinner
5. Finding time in schedules to meet someone new
  - Be relational rather than productive
  - Setting priorities to make it a top one, intentional
  - Stop new “programming”

## **Project: Addressing Cultural Trauma**

(Creating ways to break the silence of the hurts people are carrying with them through rituals, networking, resourcing, and dialogue)

1. Enhancing community response
  - Opportunities for communal restoration, acknowledging sin, repenting, forgiving and healing; restorative circles; opportunities to change the situation
  - Community prayer:
    - set a time for everyone to pray—offering a specific prayer (gathered or at home)
    - interfaith prayer service
    - creating communal experiences (right away, proximity, presence);
    - gathering and writing feels or names on balloons to release
    - humanizing the victims so they are more than numbers: naming victims, praying for victims by name, giving everyone the name of a family to pray for
2. Encouraging creative expression
  - Partnering to move from sacred to secular space
  - Create a safe space for expressing anger and frustration: boxing, nerf/noodles
  - Writing your own Psalm of lament: social media feed, printed for a service

- Bible journaling: art, collage, words
  - Soul painting and art
  - Create a Stations of the Cross using modern images: focusing on healing images
  - Creative space for processing trauma
  - Sharing creative expressions to make visible among congregation: worship, newsletters, small groups, digital
3. Creating a network of resources
- Create a directory of resources for broader connections: binder in office, online
  - Finding people in the congregation who have experienced trauma to be mentors, Elizabeth ministry
  - Help parents know what they can process at home and when to seek professional help
4. Dialogue Starters
- Empowering adults to move from dialogue to action: share gifts with community (giving opportunities), opportunities for advocacy, giving opportunities to serve, giving witness
  - Give adults opportunities for book studies: with therapists present, gathered dialogue to teach empathy and compassion, name differences in how men and women respond to stress and give variety of opportunities for dialogue that avoid stigmatizing
  - Empowering parents for dialogue:
    - Class about the internet with parents and children/teens: talking about the dangers of pornography, speakers with knowledge and authority, opportunities for conversations about experiences
    - Dialogue starters around issues
  - Creating ways for children and teens to talk about their worries, concerns, and anxieties at church and at home

## **Part 3. Milestones Ideas for Home and Community (From MN Symposium)**

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### **Name it – Birth of a Sibling**

Equip it – Family works together to prepare the baby room and talk about being an older sibling

Bless it – Welcome baby with lighting a candle and prayer/bless room

Gift it – T-shirt for siblings (ex. “I am the older sister”)

Reinforce it – Quarterly reminders the first year

### **Name it – New Job**

Equip it – Create a pilgrimage and take the route to work

Bless it – Use prayer points and “gratefulness” reminders along the route

Gift it – Key chain/object to sit on desk

Reinforce it – Quarterly/monthly meetings at church to encourage, celebrate new jobs, provide mentorship for anyone in transition

### **Name it – The Cross of Hope**

Equip it – Bless cross at religion class before Christmas

Bless it – Send home a prayer of blessing which includes the parents praying with child, involving whole family

Gift it – Crucifix

Reinforce it – Incorporate reference in Homilies after Christmas and during year/ ask school of religion teachers to reference crucifix during classes

**Name it – Baptismal Milestone**

Equip it – send a card on yearly anniversary of baptism/go to past baptismal records to find date

Bless it – include a prayer for child and blessed water

Gift it – ask parents to get out baptismal robe/candle/photos

**Name it – Youth going to college/Job after graduation**

Equip it – Send a “thinking of you” card to show we care

Bless it – Put a blessing in the card

Gift it – Give them a bookmark (“We prayed for you...”

Reinforce it – Follow up with more cards at holidays, etc.

**Name it – Young adults going to college/moving out of the house**

Equip it – Parents and siblings help gather stuff for new place

Bless it – blessing the young adult on their new journey/make sign of cross on forehead (back, hands, feet)/blessing of room or apartment

Gift it – a wall hanging/plaque/scripture verse/cross

Reinforce it – send the verse via card/email/text

**Name it – Learning to ride a bike**

Equip it – Recognize gifts God had given us to be able to do new things/thanks to those who helped them learn

Bless it – bless the child and the bike

Gift it – give a new piece to use on the bike kick stand/cup holder

Reinforce it – do a short bike ride

**Name it – First Rejection (audition/try-out, etc.)**

Equip it – Caring Conversation –you are delivered by who you are as a child of God. Not by the rejection/disappointments

Scripture verse: possibly Psalm 139 or Jeremiah 29

Bless it – baptismal remembrance

Gift it – a certificate to remind them that they are a Child of God – already chosen

Reinforce it – remember it - conversation

**Name it – The Every Moment Setting of My Life**

Equip it – Welcoming grief and loss into my life/ Take time on October 28, 2016 to celebrate, grieve, and be grateful for Mama in my life

Bless it – bless the grief out loud, feel it, and name God’s blessings from Mama and the ways I have blessed her

Gift it – decide on physical reminder

Reinforce it – plan a time to do this/ask others to come/follow up to root it

**Name it – Blessing for Spring Cleaning (Easter) and New Year (Advent)**

Equip it – talk about ideas of “home” and “house” and where we live into our faith

Bless it – send home with bottles of holy water (font is blessed at Easter) to bless the home, rooms, etc.

Gift it – Holy Water bottles

Reinforce it – Have families and individuals take pictures of their homes and bring in to the church/show, discuss, share a story of how the blessing event went or how God is present in the home

**Name it – New Job**

Equip it – getting set for work/finding support from others in that line of work/pilgrimage on the journey every day and back

Bless it – blessing of the person

Gift it – keychain (symbol of family)/something for office/reminder of gift they are to have at place of employment

Reinforce it – business lunch

**Name it – Beginning of Menstruation**

Equip it – Scripture reading/conversation about fears and joys, meaning of gift of sexuality

Bless it –pray/bless girl – family prayer for everyone to respect gift of bodies

Gift it – tampon case/ Book/ necklace

Reinforce it – something during cycle

**Name it – Engagement**

Equip it – Scripture about marriage/Book of Tobit/Song of Songs

Bless it – prayer for wisdom, knowledge, discernment, rejoicing in two lives coming together with God at the center

Gift it – praying hands/angels – importance of praying together as a family

Reinforce it – gather with parents and other couples for wisdom/guidance as preparing for life together

**Name it – Engagement/joining of two families**

Equip it – pray/talk about meaning (significance) of marriage to us

Bless it – blessings for couples/hopes for marriage

Gift it – faith symbol for home (statue/tree)

Reinforce it – send things/books/share stories when gathered (about finance, anger, forgiveness, etc.)

**Name it – Getting a New Instrument**

Equip it – Psalm 150

Bless it – blessing talent (with water)/ blessing instrument as gift/ give prayer and thanks to God

Gift it – medal of patron saint of music (Saint Cecilia)

Reinforce it – bring instruments to church/playing it

**Name it – Seniors/Juniors in High School Financial Peace**

Equip it – talking and learning about good financial practices with their parents/book by Dave Ramsey

Bless it – Generous God, we praise you for all the gifts you have provided us. Help us be good stewards of all your gifts so that we may bless others generously and live into the abundant life you have given and promised. Amen./ Scripture

**Name it – Spring Planting**

Equip it – Recognize the new season, preparing and caring for vegetables or flower gardens/  
conversation: favorite things to plant/struggles/joys and concerns/new & tried & true

Bless it – Gen 1:27-31 (vs. 29 – “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon...)

Gift it – plant or garden gift

Reinforce it – meet or do garden tour

**Name it – Completion of a Sport (especially if state)**

Equip it – providing prayers before last game/story of patron saint

Bless it – blessing song at mass

Gift it – St. Sebastian medal

Reinforce it – note of congratulations from pastor

**Name it – Performing in a Play/Musical**

Equip it – providing prayers to before a performance/ story of patron saint

Bless it – blessing song at mass

Gift it – St. Genesius medal

Reinforce it – note of congrats from pastor

**Name it – Lost Tooth**

Equip it – Luke 12:7 “very hairs on your head...”/\*loved and known by the Father/count remaining  
teeth – can you count your hair

Bless it – blessing prayers on the growing. Physical body and knowing God’s love

Gift it – Tooth Fairy idea? /new toothbrush/funny pictures/save your teeth book

Reinforce it – There are many more teeth to lose- each one is an opportunity for follow up

**Name it – Retirement**

Equip it – gather as many family members as possible: how does each of us feel?/what are we looking  
forward to?

Bless it – Scripture: There is a time .... (For everything a season...)

Gift it – a calendar

Reinforce it – Facebook group where people share this in faith and in job during retirement years

**Name it – Empty Nested Transition**

Equip it – mentor/walk with new empty nesters

Bless it – Where is God in this?/devotions

Gift it – a picture of.../journaling

Reinforce it – monthly gatherings with mentors

**Name it – Kiss-Off Chemo**

Equip it – Luke 4:4/provide references to the healing narratives in Scripture

Bless it – have participants bless (with the sign of the cross on the forehead) or offer a brief prayer for  
the survivor

Gift it – an engraved bell (bells are used symbolically and rung when chemo is over)

Reinforce it – service at cancer clinic (Hope Lodge, Relay for Life, etc.)

**Name it – Prayer Service for the Adoption of a 5 year-old Boy**

Equip it – passing of child from one family to the new family

Bless it – bless child and both families

Gift it – gifts given to child

Reinforce it – address difficulties and grow as a family (can be angry at first)

**Name it – New Pet**

Equip it – care for creation/prayer of St. Francis

Bless it – bless the pet

Gift it – collar and tag

Reinforce it – remember this blessing and celebrate birthdays

**Name it – Elders Moves to Assisted Living**

Equip it – God is here before me doing something new

Bless it – Matthew 28:20 /who are your new friends?/what belongings did you bring with you?/tell about what you let go of/ song: Be Not Afraid

Gift it – “Next Chapter” bookmark

Reinforce it – pastoral call, communion serving, or Bible study in new home

**Name it – First Paycheck**

Equip it – Mark 12:44/teach about tithing

Bless it – blessing would include something about being fiscally responsible with God’s gifts

Gift it – wallet or open checking account

Reinforce it – talk about continued ways to tithe

**Name it – Swimming in the Deep End**

Equip it – pray and practice the test for doing so /scripture(Moses parting the Red Sea?)

Bless it – May the waters of the pool hold you up as you swim just as the waters of your baptism hold you up throughout your life.

Gift it – Beach towel/diving rings

Reinforce it – go swimming as a family and give thanks for water in all it’s forms

**Name it – Children Moving Out/Empty Nesters**

Equip it – talk about excitement and fear/find scripture verses that relate (let them go- Proverbs 22:6)/act of service: care for each other in the transition

Bless it – lay hand son each other and pray as a family

Gift it – heart (“home is where the heart is”)

**Name it – Blessing of the Kindergarten Bible (for children in church school)**

Equip it – providing an opportunity for parents and children to hear about Jesus

Bless it – bless the children and the bible/ pray for their family

Gift it – Bible (to use through the year)

Reinforce it – talk to parents about using the Bible at home/put scripture children will be doing each week in a newsletter sent regularly to tell parents about what their children are doing in Christian studies and where the lesson can be found in the Bible so that they may read it together as a family

**Name it – Closing of a Workplace (factory in town/favorite store, school, church, etc.)**

Equip it – meet to share stories and memories of the place/read Bible verse about moving on and take photo of group and individuals in front of building

Bless it – pray for those affected

Gift it – bricks or pieces of the building/books/plants/seeds from a tree

Reinforce it – follow up stories a year out

**Name it – Buying a New House (especially first house)**

Equip it – help pack and move

Bless it – pray at new home

Gift it – doormat or art for wall (bless this home verse)

Reinforce it – celebrate at intervals of 1 year

**Name it – Death of a Pet**

Equip it – select a reading from Scripture (sparrow reading)

Bless it – make a cloth or cross that can be written on and each family member writes a “thank you for...” on cross or cloth that is buried with pet or placed in a special place where the pet “hung out”

Gift it – frame a picture of the pet and place collar or tag in frame also

Reinforce it – Gather on anniversary of death each year to remember and give thanks

**Name it – First Sleepover**

Equip it – pack /Deut: 11:19

Bless it – pray over suitcase - God watch over and protect \_\_\_\_\_ while we are in different places. Let us enjoy our time apart so we have stories to share when we see each other again.

Gift it – small stuffed animal

Reinforce it – share stories: how did it feel? /what was different?/what was the same?/where did you see or feel God with you?

**Name it – Getting Braces**

Equip it – talk about what it is like to get braces/Scripture Philippians 4:6-7

Bless it – prayer about God loving them as they are

Gift it – cup with straw

Reinforce it – when braces come off share stories and take time to reflect

**Name it – Critical Illness/Cancer**

Equip it – support group and caring conversations/Scripture/Service and Rituals or Healing Mass/Anointing

Bless it – bless at many points along the way (during Chemo)/pray during each treatment/pray with surgical staff

Gift it – prayer shawl/1000 cranes for peace and hope

Reinforce it – journal of the journey/Relay for Life

**Name it – First New Pet**

Equip it – Read from Genesis about how God created animals and asked humans to be caretakers/make list of things you promise to do (or not do) for your pet (care, love, hurt)/celebrate “Gotcha Day” (day of adoption or birthday)

Bless it – bless the pet as a beloved creation of God/bless caregivers/pray for help. Patience, and grace

Gift it – food dish/picture frame

Reinforce it – regularly ask about the pet/invite annually to blessing of the pets worship service (if you have one)/offer or direct towards pet-centered service projects and opportunities

**Name it – Soccer Season Kickoff**

Equip it – Special snack- caramel apple

Bless it – Prayer litany for coaches, athletes, parents, and refs

Gift it – water bottle/wristband

Reinforce it – Pizza party at the end of the season