



Guide for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation

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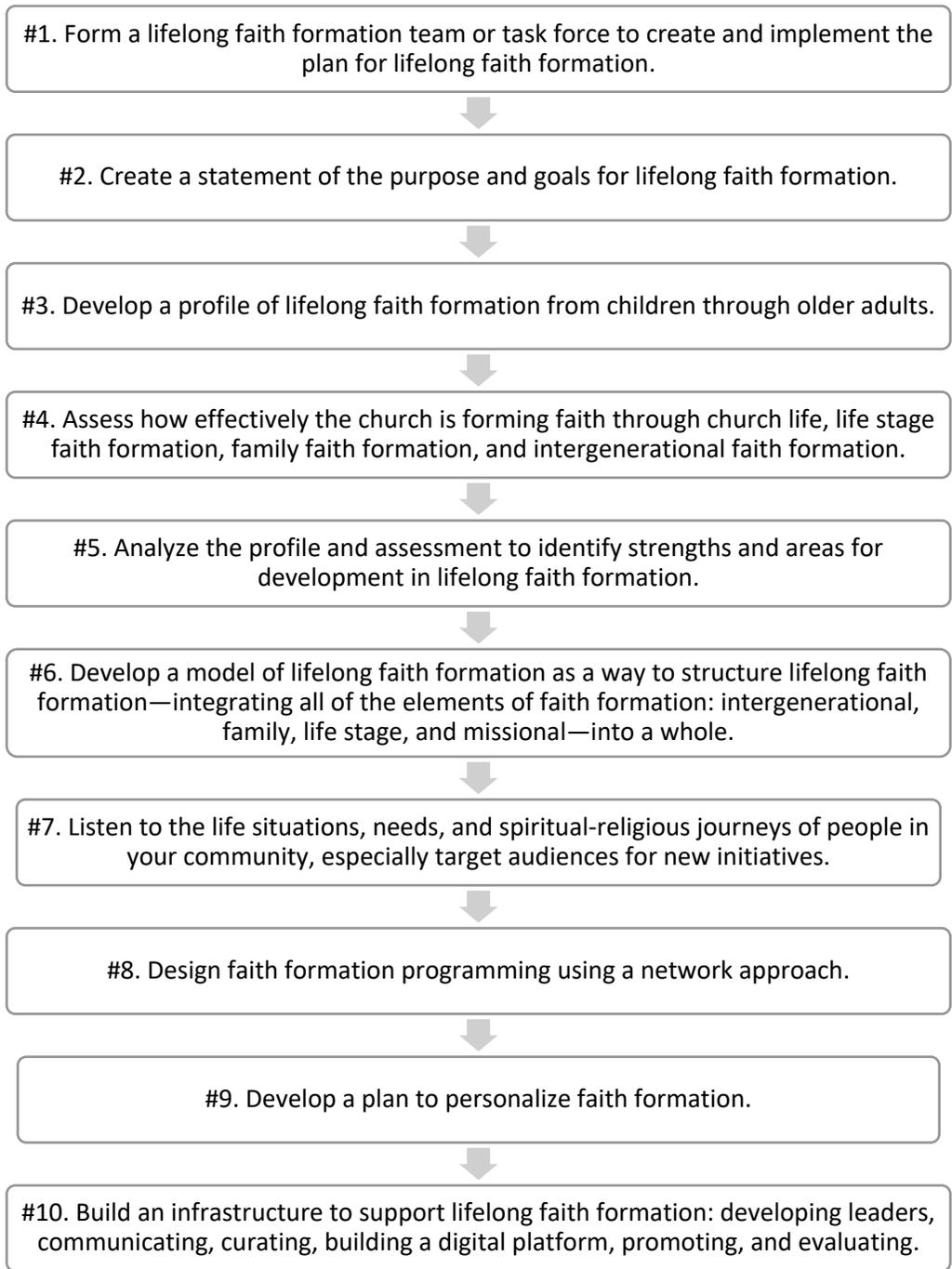
A Guide to the Principles and Practices of Lifelong Faith Formation presented ten principles and practices that can inform congregations as they create, sustain, and expand lifelong faith formation.

1. Lifelong faith formation is a lifetime journey with Christ, in Christ, and to Christ.
2. Lifelong faith formation promotes maturity in faith through the ages and stages of life.
3. Lifelong faith formation addresses the diverse spiritual and religious lives, engagements, and practices of children, adolescents, adults, and families.
4. Lifelong faith formation thrives in a vital and vibrant faith forming Christian community.
5. Lifelong formation is holistic—integrating three primary faith forming environments: the church community, the family, and life stages
6. Lifelong faith formation creates networks that address the life tasks, spiritual and religious needs, and interests of families and all ages by offering a variety of content, programs, activities, and resources in multiple settings, aided by the use of digital platforms, media, and methods.
7. Lifelong faith formation guides individuals and families in discerning their spiritual and religious journeys and life stage needs, and giving people an active role in shaping their own personal trajectories of faith growth.
8. Lifelong faith formation includes missional outreach to the spiritual-religious needs and journeys of the “spiritual but not religious” and the “unaffiliated,” and creating pathways to experience the Christian faith, encounter Jesus Christ, and embrace the Good News.
9. Lifelong faith formation incorporates digital methods and media to enhance and expand the ways people of all ages grow in faith.
10. Lifelong faith formation involves new leadership roles including learning architect, digital designer, and curator.

The *Guide for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation* assists a church in creating a lifelong faith formation plan with intergenerational, family, and children-youth-adult faith forming programming, guided by the ten principles of lifelong faith formation. The goal is to integrate all of these elements into one plan for lifelong faith formation. The end product is a plan for lifelong faith formation in your church that can shape faith formation planning over the next three years.

A lifelong plan is both a vision for the future and a practical guide with lots of ideas and strategies. It is also an opportunity to bring together the leadership of a church to contribute their ideas, offer their feedback, create partnerships in offering programming, and assist with implementation and promotion.

The *Guide for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation* includes the following steps:



Design Tools

A companion document *Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation* provides all of the reproducible materials (handouts, assessment tools, worksheets) for using the design process in *A Guide for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation*. Included are the following materials:

- Design Tool #1. Purposes and Goals for Lifelong Faith Formation
- Design Tool #2. Lifelong Faith Formation Profile
- Design Tool #3. Lifelong Faith Formation Assessment Tool
- Design Tool #4. Models of Lifelong Faith Formation
- Design Tool #5. Research Guide and Surveys (Adult, Youth, and Family)
- Design Tool #6. Designing Faith Formation Programming
- Design Tool #7. Generating Program Ideas
- Design Tool #8. Ideas for Intergenerational Programming
- Design Tool #9. Ideas for Family Programming
- Design Tool #10. Ideas for Life Stage Faith Formation
- Design Tool #11. Personalizing Faith Formation
- Design Tool #12. Curating Resources Faith Formation
- Design Tool #13. Evaluating Faith Formation

Suggested Flow of Planning Process

Preparation Reading: All of the team members should read, “A Guide to the Principles and Practices of Lifelong Faith Formation” before the first meeting.

Meeting 1: Step #2: Create a statement of the purpose and goals for lifelong faith formation.

Meeting 2: Step #3: Develop a Profile of Lifelong Faith Formation.

Homework: Step #4. Complete the Lifelong Faith Formation Assessment and compile the results.

Meeting 3: Step #5. Analyze the profile and assessment to identify strengths and improvements.

Meeting 4: Step #6. Develop a model of lifelong faith formation & Step #7. Develop a process for listening to people in your community.

Homework: Conduct research.

Meeting 5: Step #7: Analyze the research.

Meeting 6: Step #8: Design faith formation programming using a network approach. (Part 1)

Meeting 7: Step #8: Design faith formation programming using a network approach. (Part 2)

Meeting 8: Step #9. Develop a plan to personalize faith formation

Meeting 9: Step #10. Implementation: Build an infrastructure to support lifelong faith formation: developing leaders, communicating, curating, building a digital platform, promoting, and evaluating.

Continuing: Continue implementation planning.

Launch: Launch the new annual or seasonal plan for lifelong faith formation.

Process

Preparation Reading

All of the team members should read, “A Guide to the Principles and Practices of Lifelong Faith Formation.”

#1. Form a lifelong faith formation team or task force.

Develop a team or task force that reflects the scope of lifelong faith formation (ages, generations, families) and includes the pastor, faith formation leaders, church staff and ministry leaders, and members from the community who bring new perspectives and experiences to the design work (e.g., older teens, young parents, young adults). It is very helpful to have several people who bring experience and expertise in digital technologies and social media

The team or task force works together through the planning process to design a lifelong faith formation plan, organize the implementation logistics, find leaders and resources for the plan, monitor progress, and conduct evaluations. The team or task force is led by a coordinator or convener who facilitates the work of the task force.

#2. Create a statement of the purpose and goals for lifelong faith formation.

Work together as a task force to prepare a short statement of the purpose for lifelong faith formation. Together as a team review “A Guide to the Principles and Practices of Lifelong Faith Formation,” and the important faith formation documents from your denomination or faith tradition. Use **Design Tool #1** in *Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation* to guide you.

Second, identify the goals of maturing in faith to guide lifelong faith formation in your church. What is our vision of maturing in faith? Toward what ends are our lifelong faith formation efforts directed? What is our church try to accomplish in the lives of people from children to older adults? Together as a team review Principles #1 and #2 in “A Guide to the Principles and Practices of Lifelong Faith Formation” and the important faith formation documents from your denomination or faith tradition. Use **Design Tool #1** in *Design Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation* to guide you.

#3. Develop a profile of lifelong faith formation from children through older adults.

Develop an inventory of the current intergenerational, family, and life stage activities your congregation provides correlated to the ten faith maturing characteristics (or your own set of characteristics). Use **Design Tool #2. Profile of Lifelong Faith Formation** in *Design Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation* as a way to develop a blueprint of lifelong faith formation in the church. Add your current programming: 1) intergenerational (or whole church) faith forming

experiences (ministries, programs, activities), 2) parent and family faith formation activities, and 3) age group programming. It's not important to “fill every box.”

- *Intergenerational*: Identify the ways that your congregation nurtures faith through intergenerational faith forming experiences: relationships, community life, worship, learning, service, prayer, etc.
- *Family*: Identify the ways that your congregation nurtures family faith at home and through church events, programs, and activities, and how the congregation equips and supports parents.
- *Life Stages*: Identify the ways that your congregation nurtures the faith of each age group: at church, at home, small groups, online, etc.
- *Missional*: Identify the ways that your congregation engages in missional outreach and relationship building, and provides pathways for people to explore the Christian faith and discipleship. Integrate your church’s missional strategies into the appropriate life stage(s).

One of the easiest ways to envision this plan is by using six sheets of newsprint—one for each life stage (see example below). You can code the activities on your list: IG (intergenerational), F (family), A (age group). Weave your missional strategies into the appropriate life stage(s). Many programs or activities, like Sunday worship, will appear in multiple age groups. You can write directly on the newsprint or use Post-It notes for each individual program or activity.

Faith Maturing Characteristic	Children	Youth	Young Adults	Midlife Adults	Mature Adults	Older Adults
#1.	<u>Inter-generational</u>	<u>Inter-generational</u>	<u>Inter-generational</u>	<u>Inter-generational</u>	<u>Inter-generational</u>	<u>Inter-generational</u>
	<u>Family</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Family</u>
	<u>Age Group</u>					

#4. Assess how effectively the church is forming faith through church life, age-group faith formation, family faith formation, and intergenerational faith formation.

Assess how well the church is forming faith through congregational life, age-group faith formation, family faith formation, and intergenerational faith formation using **Design Tool #3. Lifelong Faith Formation Assessment Tool** in *Design Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation*.

Engage the your church leadership team (pastor, professional staff, faith formation coordinators/leaders, other leadership groups) in working with you to complete the assessment. Distribute copies to everyone. Have everyone review the lifelong faith formation profile before they

complete the assessment tool. You might have different team members complete sections of Part 3 based on their responsibilities in faith formation.

To compile the results, have each person give you his or her completed survey and then develop an average rating (from 1 to 5) for each item. Compile the results of each question into a summary document.

Note: Parts 2-5 of the assessment tool are based on the ten characteristics or goals of faith maturing found in “A Guide to the Principles and Practices of Lifelong Faith Formation.” If you develop your own goals or modify these goals, you will need to adjust the statements in Parts 2 through 5.

#5. Analyze the profile and assessment to identify strengths and areas for development in lifelong faith formation.

Use the following process to analyze the results of the profile and assessment.

1. **Part 1** of the “Lifelong Faith Formation Assessment Tool” examines the faith forming culture of the church community. Analyze the results to determine your church’s strengths (ratings of 4 and 5), and areas that need to be strengthened or developed (rating of 3 or lower). What did you learn about the faith forming culture of your church from the assessment?
2. **Part 2** of the “Lifelong Faith Formation Assessment Tool” examines ten priorities for lifelong faith formation. Analyze the results to determine which statements are high priorities for your church (ratings of 4 and 5), and which are lower priorities (rating of 3 or lower). What did you learn about the priorities of lifelong faith formation in your church and how well it compares with the reality of lifelong faith formation?
3. **Parts 3, 4, and 5** of the “Lifelong Faith Formation Assessment Tool” examine how effectively your church implements the ten priorities in **faith formation with children, adolescents, and adults**. Analyze the results to determine the strengths with each age group (ratings of 4 and 5), and areas that need to be strengthened or developed (ratings of 3 or lower). Develop a list of the areas that need to be strengthened with children, adolescents, and adults.
 - What are the strengths in each age group: children through older adults?
 - How well does your church address the life tasks, needs, interests, and spiritual-religious life of children, adolescents, young adults, midlife adults, mature adults, and older adults? Where are the areas for growth?
4. **Part 6** of the “Lifelong Faith Formation Assessment Tool” examines **family faith formation**. Analyze the results of each part to determine your church’s strengths (ratings of 4 and 5) in family faith formation, and areas that need to be strengthened or developed (rating of 3 or lower) in each area. Develop a list of the areas that need to be strengthened with family faith formation.

- What are the strengths in family faith formation? in parent faith formation?
 - Where are the areas for growth?
5. **Part 7** of the “Lifelong Faith Formation Assessment Tool” examines **intergenerational faith formation**. Analyze the results to determine your church’s strengths (ratings of 4 and 5) in intergenerational faith formation, and areas that need to be strengthened or developed (rating of 3 or lower) in each area. Develop a list of the areas that need to be strengthened in intergenerational faith formation.
 - What are the strengths in intergenerational relationships, community, and faith formation?
 - Where are the areas for growth?
 6. How well does faith formation address the four **religious-spiritual identities** of people today: the engaged, the occasional, the spiritual but not religious, the unaffiliated? Who is programming targeted to? Who is involved? Who is left out? (See Principle #3 in “A Guide to the Principles and Practices of Lifelong Faith Formation” for descriptions.)
 7. How well does faith formation utilize **multiple settings** for faith formation: self-directed, mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, church-wide, in the community and world, and online—to provide a variety of ways for people to learn and grow in faith that respects their preferred styles of learning, their life situations, and their time constraints?
 8. How well does faith formation utilize **digital** technologies, methods, and media in faith formation? Consider digital strategies such as extend programming, flip the program using online content, online programming, multi-format programming, prepare and follow-up programming. (See Principle #9 in “A Guide to the Principles and Practices of Lifelong Faith Formation” for more information.)
 9. Is there a **digital platform** that integrates all of the content (programs, activities, resources), connects people to the content and to each other, provides continuity for people across different learning experiences, and is available anytime, anywhere?

Summary Activity

Review your analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement in lifelong faith formation from the nine questions. Develop a summary report using the questions below. This information will provide the basis for planning in the next steps of the process.

1. What are our greatest **strengths** in lifelong faith formation?
2. What areas needs to be **strengthened** or **improved** in our current lifelong faith formation?
3. What areas needs to be **expanded** with more programming or needs to be **extended** to engage more people in our current lifelong faith formation?
4. What new initiatives need to be **created** to address gaps in lifelong faith formation, respond to new needs and challenges, or engage new audiences?

#6. Develop a Model of Lifelong Faith Formation

A “model” is a way to structure lifelong faith formation that integrates all of the elements of faith formation—intergenerational, family, life stage, and missional—into a whole, and that provides direction for promoting faith maturing through the ages and stages of life. A clearly articulated model of lifelong faith formation provides a way for everyone to understand the purpose and goals of lifelong faith formation, and how your church is implementing them.

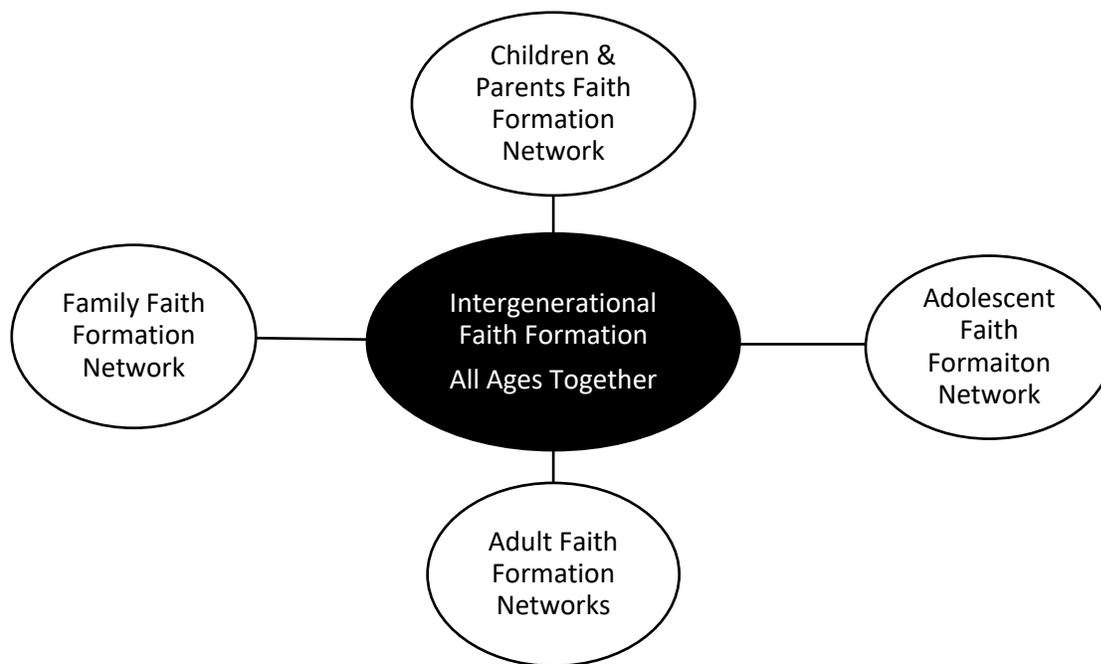
The models described in this section are ways to think about how to integrate all of the elements. They are descriptive, not prescriptive. They are meant to serve as guide for naming your current model and/or creating your own model of lifelong faith formation that integrates all of the elements of faith formation. Each of the four models has a distinct focus to guide the development of lifelong faith formation: 1) Intergenerational Focus, 2) Worship Focus, 3) Thematic Church-Wide Focus, and 4) Life Stage Focus. Each is described with diagrams to illustrate the interplay of the elements.

See **Design Tool #4. Models of Lifelong Faith Formation** for a handout of the four models in *Design Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation*.

Planning Process

1. **Review:** Read the four models of lifelong faith formation presented in this section.
2. **Reflect:** How would you describe your current model of lifelong faith formation? Do any of the models help you name your church’s model of lifelong faith formation? Develop a visual diagram of your current model of lifelong faith formation.
3. **Analyze:** Identify the strengths and weaknesses in your current model and determine if you need to *improve* it or if you need to *create* a new model of lifelong faith formation to better address the findings from your analysis. Use the results of the Summary Report (Planning Step #5) to inform your work in analyzing your current model.
4. **Plan:** Develop your model of lifelong faith formation.
 - If you want to **strengthen your current model** develop recommendations for the future: improving current programming, expanding programming, extending programming to engage more people, and creating new programming to engage new audiences and/or meet new needs.
 - If you want to **create a new model**, select one of the models presented and adapt it for your church and context or create an entirely new model. Diagram your model. Incorporate programming that you want to continue offering. Develop recommendations for the future: revise current programming, expand programming, extend programming to engage more people, and create new programming to engage new audiences and/or meet new needs.

Model: Intergenerational Focus



In the Intergenerational Focus Model programming for all ages together is at the center of lifelong faith formation. Churches conduct monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly intergenerational programs, and then offer a variety of life stage or affinity-group programs throughout the month or year to address specific age-appropriate needs. These churches replace or modify their age group programming to place the emphasis on all ages learning together. They develop a multi-year curriculum for the whole community built around themes from the Bible, the cycle of Sunday lectionary readings, church year feasts and seasons, Christian practices, service and social justice, prayer and spiritual disciplines, core Christian beliefs, and moral teachings.

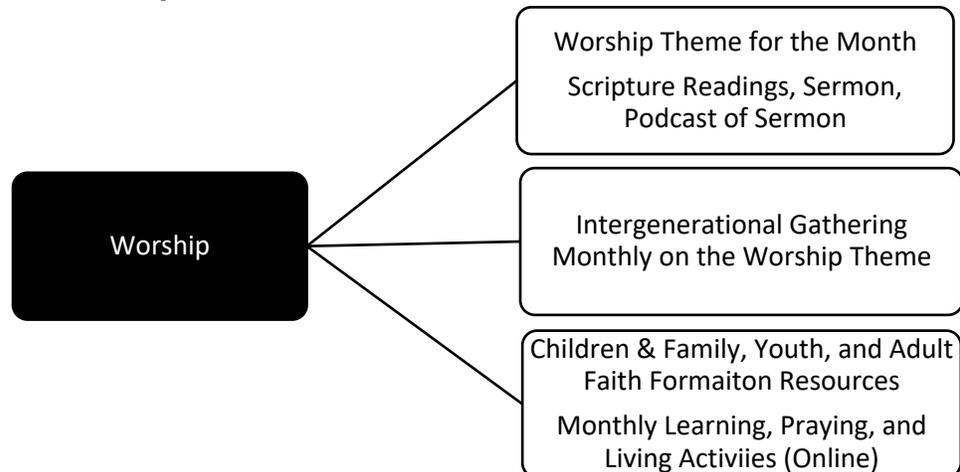
Design Tasks

- Develop a plan for the content that will be address intergenerationally, e.g., themes from the Bible, Sunday lectionary readings, church year feasts and seasons, Christian practices, service and social justice, prayer and spiritual disciplines, core Christian beliefs, moral teachings, and more. Some churches focus on a theme for the year; others weave a variety of topics into each year.
- Decide on scheduling: monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly intergenerational programs.
- Determine the content and programming for the networks of life stage or affinity-group programs throughout the month or year to address specific age-appropriate needs.

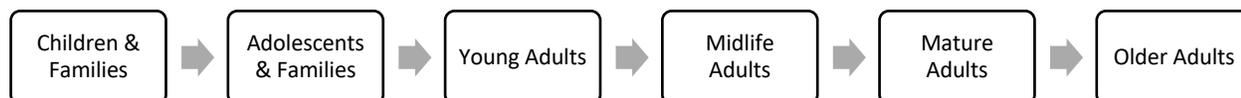
Planning Resource:

- Martineau, Mariette, Joan Weber, and Leif Kehrwald. *Intergenerational Faith Formation: All Ages Learning Together*. New London: Twenty-Third Publications, 2008.

Model: Worship Focus



Life Stage Faith Formation Networks

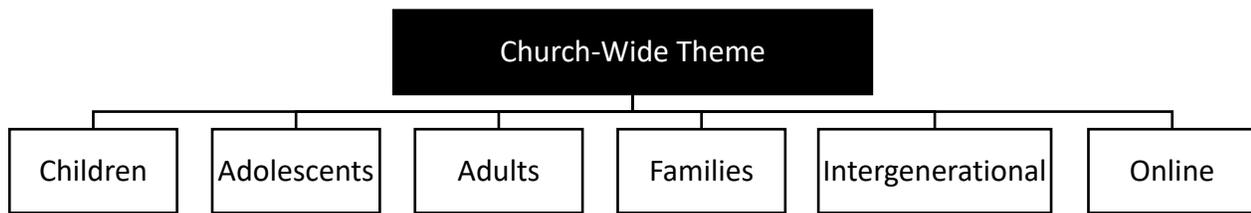


In the Worship Focus Model faith formation is built around Sunday worship with faith formation organized around a monthly theme, such as a topical sermon series, lectionary readings, and/or the season of the church year. The monthly theme that emerges from Sunday worship guides the development of a monthly worship resources, a monthly intergenerational gathering, and life stage experiences and online faith formation resources. In addition, the church offers a variety of life stage or affinity-group programs throughout the month or year to address specific age-appropriate needs.

Design Tasks

- Develop a plan of monthly worship themes. For lectionary-based traditions, the monthly themes can emerge from the readings and the seasons of the church year. For churches whose worship is developed around sermon series, develop monthly themes and select Scripture readings that reflect those themes.
- Determine scheduling of the monthly intergenerational gathering on the theme. Many churches use the first Sunday of the month to introduce the theme for the month.
- Develop monthly age-appropriate content and activities on the theme; provide the content and activities in a website.
- Determine the content and programming for the networks of life stage or affinity-group programs throughout the month or year to address specific age-appropriate needs.

Model: Thematic Focus

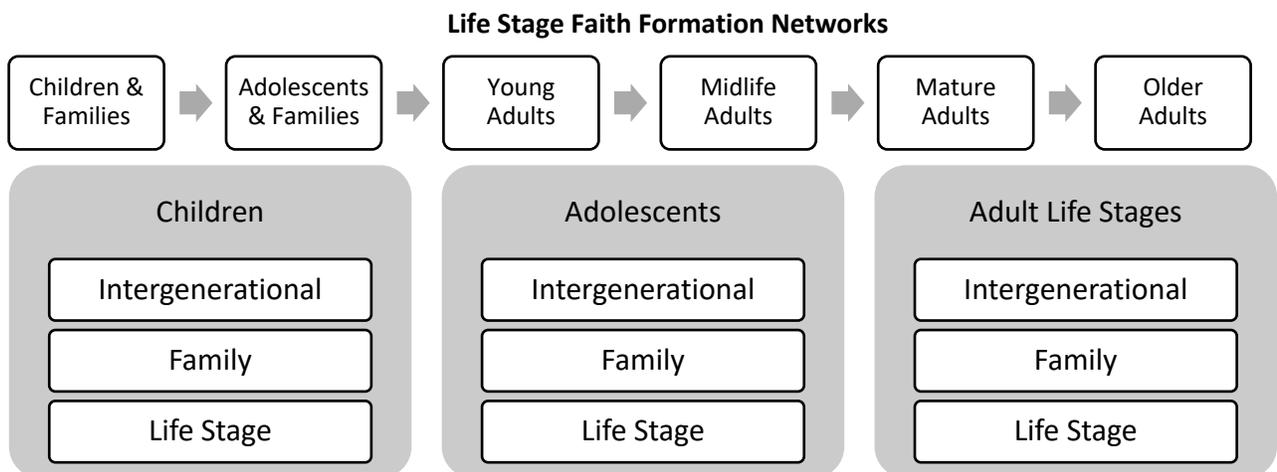


In the Thematic Focus Model all faith formation is built around a church-wide theme for the year (or a season of the year). The theme can be a biblical, theological, life-centered, or social theme that provides a focus for all faith formation for the year. Programming can include intergenerational gatherings, family events and programs, life stage or affinity-group programs, and online programs and activities.

Sample Design Tasks

- Develop an annual or seasonal (4-month) theme.
- Develop networks of age-appropriate, family, and intergenerational programming on the theme that can be delivered in a variety of settings: self-directed, mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, church-wide, in the community and world, and online.

Model: Life Stage Focus



In the Life Stage Focus Model faith formation is developed around each life stages by creating networks of faith formation that incorporate *intergenerational* relationships, activities, and church life and events (including Sunday worship, *family* life—equipping and supporting *parents* and the whole *family* in sharing and practicing their faith at home, and *life stage* in activities and experiences designed to address life stage needs and situations, interests, and religious and spiritual journeys at each stage of life.

Design Tasks

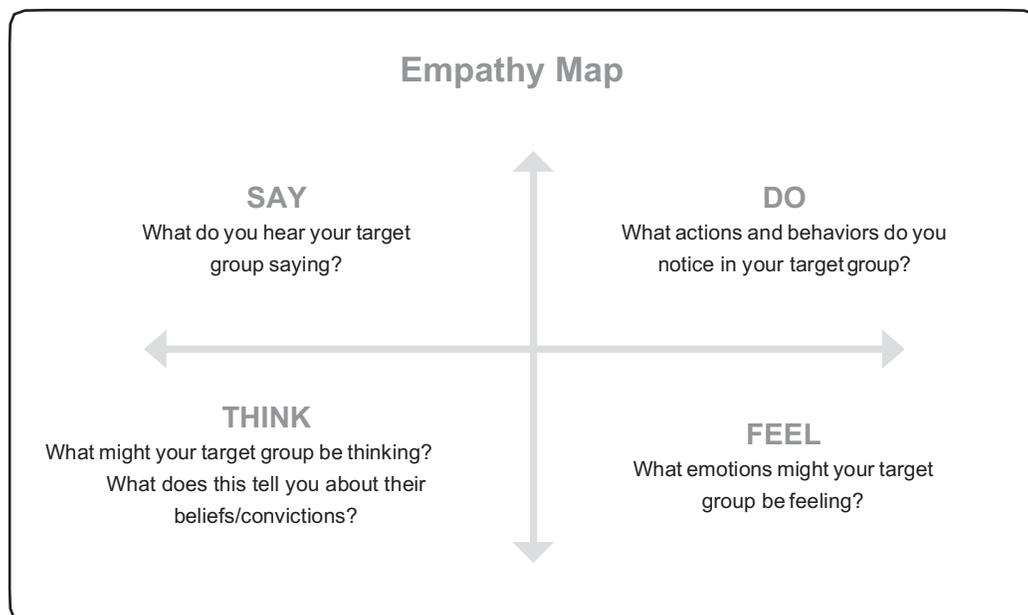
- Create a plan for the year, based on your current and new programming, that integrates the three faith forming environments for each life stage (many churches combine two adult life stages for programming).
- Create networks of faith formation experiences, programs, and activities for each life stage.

#7. Listen to the life situations, needs, and spiritual-religious journeys of people in your community, especially the target audiences for new initiatives.

Select one or more target audience(s) that you want to focus your research. Review your analysis of the areas for improvement in lifelong faith formation (Planning Step #5) to determine which life stage(s) you need to research so that you can develop new initiatives. If you want to focus on families, specify which life stage you want to research, e.g., families with young children, grade school children, young adolescents, older adolescents, or some combination of these.

The **Design Tool #5. Research Guide** in *Design Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation* to provides four tools for developing a deeper understanding of the lives of people in your community that can form the basis of developing new initiatives: 1) community observation process, 2) interviews with church leaders, 3) focus groups with your target audience(s), and 3) surveys for adults, youth, parents, and families.

After you have completed your research work, use the format of the “Empathy Map,” developed by the Stanford School of Design, to synthesize observations and draw out insights from the research. Organize research findings into the four quadrants: Do this activity as a research team and use one or more sheets of newsprint to compile the findings. If you address multiple audiences, do an Empathy Map for each audience.



Review the results of the Empathy Map and identify the most important needs, interests, issues, and concerns of each target audience using the categories below. Record them on newsprint or create a report for everyone.

- Life-stage issues (developmental needs, concerns, interests) and life situations
- Generational issues
- Milestones and life transitions
- Ethnic and cultural needs
- Spiritual and religious needs

Conclude the research phase by defining the **Point of View** of each target audience. POVs are statements (phrases or sentences) which describe the lives, needs, hungers, interests, and religious-spiritual life of each target audience from their point of view (not the point of the view of the church). What are they telling you about their lives? Review the key research findings and summarize them in several phrases or statements to capture the Point of View of your target audience. Do this for each of your target audiences.

#8. Design faith formation programming using a network approach.

Design faith formation programming using a network approach that moves planning from a provider-centered, program-driven model to a learner-centered model where the content and experiences are designed around the people and where they have control over their learning. In a network model, faith formation shifts from “one size fits all” curriculum and programming to a variety of religious content and experiences that connect with people’s spiritual and religious needs. (See Principle #6 in “A Guide to the Principles and Practices of Lifelong Faith Formation.”)

A network approach to faith formation programming has several distinct features

1. It provides a *variety* of content, programs, activities, and resources to address the diverse life tasks and situations, needs and interests, and spiritual and faith journeys of families, children, adolescents, young adults, midlife adults, mature adults, and older adults.
2. It is developed in *multiple settings*: self-directed, mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, church-wide, in the community and world, and online—to provide a variety of ways for people to learn and grow in faith that respects their preferred styles of learning, their life situations, and their time constraints.
3. It address the *whole person* and how they learn best by offering programs, activities, and resources that emphasize different ways to learn (multiple intelligences: word-centered, verbal-linguistic, logical, musical, visual, intrapersonal, interpersonal, naturalist, and bodily-kinesthetic); and different styles of learning (direct hands-on experiences, reflective observation, exploration and analysis, and active experimentation).
4. It *personalizes* faith formation by giving people an active role in shaping their own learning and moving along their own personal trajectories of faith growth.

5. It utilizes the *abundance* of spiritual-religious content that is available in print, audio, video, digital, and online formats.
6. It is built on a *digital platform* that integrates all of the content (programs, activities, resources), connects people to the content and to each other, provides continuity for people across different learning experiences, and is available anytime, anywhere. The digital platform provides for seamless learning across a variety of experiences, resources, locations, times, or settings; and provides continuity between faith formation in the congregation, at home, in daily life, and online.

Design Process

This is available as a handout in **Design Tool #6. Designing Faith Formation Programming** in *Design Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation*.

Step 1. Select a Life Stage

Use this process to address one life stage or a combination of two life stages, such as midlife through mature adults. If you want to focus on families, specify which life stage you want to research, e.g., families with young children, grade school children, young adolescents, older adolescents, or some combination of these.

Step 2. Add Current Faith Formation Activities

Use the “Faith Formation Profile” from Planning Step #3 to identify all of the current programming for your target audience that will continue to be offered. Use the “Network Planning Form” to record all of your programming: intergenerational (or whole church) faith forming experiences (ministries, programs, activities, parent and family faith formation activities at church and at home, and current age group programming).

Step 3. Generate New Faith Formation Ideas

Review your summary report from Planning Step #5 with ideas for strengthening or improving faith formation, expanding or extending programming, and new initiatives to address new needs. Use the **Point of View** statements and the key research findings from Planning Step #7 to generate ideas for innovative faith formation programs, activities, and/or strategies to address the lives of each target audience. Program ideas can include:

1. Ideas for strengthening or improving current faith formation programming for the target audience
2. Ideas for expanding or extending programming to engage more people
3. Ideas for new initiatives to respond to the needs and life situation of a target audience.

Be sure to consider programming in multiple settings as you develop ideas: self-directed, mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, church-wide, in the community and world, and online.

Design Tool #7. Generating Program Ideas in *Design Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith*

Formation provides four creative thinking activities to generate ideas: 1) “What If” You Used Your Imagination, 2) Perfect World, 3) Brainwriting Sheets, and 4) “How Might We?” Use one or more of these to generate program ideas for a target audience. Use the “Network Planning Form” as a guide to record all of the new ideas. You can create newsprint sheets designed using the format of the worksheet. If you use Post-It notes people can attach their ideas to the appropriate “box” on the newsprint sheet.

For intergenerational and family ideas and strategies see **Design Tool #8. Ideas for Intergenerational Programming** and **Design Tool #9. Ideas for Family Programming** in the resource *Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation*.

Network Planning Form

Faith Formation Goals	Intergenerational	Family	Age Group
1. To guide people in developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ.			
2. To equip people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ and make the Christian faith a way of life.			
3. To teach people to read and study the Bible, and its message, meaning, and application to life today.			
4. To teach the Christian story and the foundational beliefs of one’s particular Christian faith tradition and guide people in integrating its meaning into their lives.			
5. To teach people how to pray and to nurture their spiritual growth through practices and disciplines.			
6. To guide people in living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values.			
7. To equip people to live the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace—locally and globally.			
8. To prepare people for worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship and ritual celebrations, and throughout the seasons of the church year.			
9. To engage people in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community.			
10. To equip people to use their gifts and talents in the Christian community and in the world.			

Step 4. Incorporate Digital Methods and Media

How can you use digitally enabled strategies to improve, expand, or create new faith formation programming? Identify specific ways you can integrate digital methods and media into your plan.

1. *Extend programming.* Which current programs can you extend using online programming? Identify the kinds of content you would provide online to extend each program.
2. *Flip the program using online content.* Which programs are good candidates for flipping the content? Is there high-quality digital content (audio, video, visual, print) available in an online format that you can access? Identify the programs you could flip. What will be available online? What will the gathered session look like when the content is online?
3. *Online programming.* What types of programs can you create online? How can you deliver programming online (webinar, streaming presentation)? How can you develop an online resource center as a portal to curated content?
4. *Multiformat programming.* Which programs are good candidates for multiformat programming? What would a design look like for one multiformat program?
5. *Prepare and follow-up programming.* Which programs can you use a digital strategy to prepare people online for an event or program and then follow up with online content and activities? What would a design for one program look like?

Step 5. Create an Annual Plan for Faith Formation with Seasonal Offerings

Create a plan for the year that provides intergenerational, family, and age-appropriate faith formation content, experiences, programs, and activities, guided by the ten goals of maturing in faith. The goal is to provide a holistic year of faith formation for your target audience.

One of the most manageable way to program a faith formation network is to develop a three-season approach: January–April, May–August, and September–December. It’s important to outline a year’s worth of programming so that you have the big picture, but more manageable to design one season at a time.

Tasks

1. **Determine** which ideas need to be developed for the ten goals that will best address the needs of people in the target audience (that you learned from your research work). Use the ideas on the “Network Planning Form” of current and new programming to select programs and activities that you will offer.
2. **Develop** an outline of annual plan for faith formation with programming for the entire year.
3. **Design** a seasonal plan with programming from the annual plan.

Designing a Seasonal Plan

Design a season of programming: January–April, May–August, and September–December. All of the content from the annual plan does not need to be introduced in the first season of programming.

Over the course of a year (three seasons) content and programming can be added so that the complete plan is finally implemented by the third season. Some of the programming will be consistent in every season, while other programming will be specific to a season.

Develop a first draft of the season and then review all of the programming and make final choices about what to include in the season. Use the template below as a guide for developing the season.

Seasonal Plan			
Target Audience:			
Season:			
Programming:			
Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4

1. **Identify** the target audience(s).
2. **Identify** the season: January–April or May–August or September–December.
3. **Add** programming from your Faith Formation Plan into the content areas and schedule the programming. Some of the programming flows through multiple months in a season, such as a weekly Bible study group or a children’s program. Some programs are monthly, such as a monthly webinar for parents. Other programs are seasonal—Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter—and therefore anchored in one or more months. And other programming/resources are always available, such as an online course or a video program or Bible study resources.
4. **Review** the programming to evaluate how well the seasonal plan address the ten goals of faith maturing.
5. **Review** the programming to evaluate how well it integrates intergenerational, family, and age-appropriate experiences.
6. **Review** the programming to identify how well the plan uses multiple settings and digital methods and media. Consider providing new (or current) programs in different settings— self-directed, mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, church-wide, in the community and world, and online—and/or one program in multiple settings. Consider designing or redesign a program with a digital strategy: extend programming online, flip programming, online-only programming, multiformat programming, and prepare and follow-up programming.
7. **Develop** the final version of the seasonal plan. Select the programs and activities that will be included in this season and save the other ideas for another season.
8. **Design** specific plans for each program, including the following:
 - Description:
 - Describe each program in a style and language appropriate to the target audience.
 - Implementation Steps:
 - When: date and times
 - Where: location(s) or setting(s)

- Who: leaders needed
- What: resources need to implement the program
- How much: expenses, budget

Develop a “Menu” of Faith Formation

The goal of a seasonal plan is to provide holistic faith formation that integrates a variety of faith forming experiences: intergenerational (including whole church experiences), family-centered at church and home, and age-group or peer activities. The “menu” approach to faith formation provides a way for people to select from a variety of programs and activities and create their own plan for faith formation. This learner-centered approach gives people control over what and when and where they will participate. This moves us from “one size fits all” programming. (See Principle #6 in “A Guide to the Principles and Practices of Lifelong Faith Formation.”)

For children and adolescents (and their parents), churches can develop expectations for their participation. The expectations can be developed around the different types of programming or the ten goals of faith maturing. One way to do this is to have children (and their parents) and adolescents select programming from categories such as:

- Informing: Knowing and understanding more fully the Christian faith
- Forming: Developing and deepening their relationship with Jesus and the Christian community
- Transforming: Living the Christian faith in every aspect of their lives

A second way is to develop expectations around participation in Sunday worship, intergenerational gatherings, church year seasonal celebrations, service projects, family at-home projects, age-specific programs (classes, summer program, vacation Bible school), and more.

Westwood Lutheran Church in Minneapolis used a menu approach to confirmation by blending *know*—hands on learning, *live*—service to our neighbor and congregation, and *grow*—fellowship and faith nurturing experiences. They organized the menu similar to a college program by asking the young people to take a minimum of three courses (in a variety of formats—one-day to multiple sessions) in each of the three categories. Over three years young people take 17 credits: four in each of the three categories are required with the remaining five credits as electives. (To see the model go to Westwood Lutheran Church in Minneapolis: <http://www.westwoodlutheran.org/Westwood-U>.)

#9. Develop a plan for personalizing faith formation.

An important component of a network approach to learning is giving people an active role in shaping their own learning and moving along their own personal trajectories of faith growth. A faith formation network, rich in a diversity of content and a variety of ways to learn, can guide people in creating their own personal learning pathways.

Personalizing faith formation means tailoring faith formation around people’s spiritual-religious journeys and life stage needs and interests. We know from learning sciences research that more effective learning will occur if each person receives a customized learning experience. People learn best when they are placed in a learning environment that is sensitive to their learning needs and flexible enough to adapt strategies and resources to individual needs.

One way to personalize faith formation utilizes a *Pathways Guide* to help people discern their faith growth needs, using the characteristics of faith maturing, and then provides *Playlists* of content, experiences, and activities to address those needs. The *Pathways Guide* incorporates a rating scale for discerning faith growth needs, for example: Getting Started, Growing, Going Deeper. *Playlists* of content and experiences are developed for each faith maturing characteristic with activities targeted to each rating on the discernment continuum (getting started, growing, going deeper). There are *Playlists* for each “level” on the continuum. *Playlists* incorporate a variety of programming including gathered programs at church, small groups, online learning and resources, mentoring, and more. The *Playlists* are published on a digital platform to make it easy for people to access them.

A second approach to personalizing faith formation, when you cannot use a *Pathways Guide* with people, is to offer a variety of content, experiences, and activities developed around the ten characteristics of faith maturing or the content of a particular program; and then invite people to select the activities that best address their spiritual and religious needs (getting started, growing, going deeper). In this approach the *Playlists* provide the way to personalize faith formation. For example, to help people read and study the Bible, there are three different types of Bible content and experiences for those who are getting started, growing, and going deeper. These activities can be online, gathered, small group, family-centered, and more. All of the content and experiences are published on a digital platform for people to access.

Use **Design Tool #8. Personalizing Faith Formation** in *Design Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation* to design pathways and playlists for your target audience.

#10. Build an infrastructure to support lifelong faith formation.

Building an infrastructure is essential to implementing and sustaining a lifelong faith formation plan. Infrastructure includes: developing leaders, curating resources, building a digital platform, communicating, promoting faith formation, and evaluating programming. It is beyond the scope of this process to provide a comprehensive presentation on these areas.

1. Developing Leaders

For tools and resources for developing leaders go online to the Engagement Toolkit:

<https://scrantontoolkits.weebly.com/engagement.html>.

2. Curating Resources

Design Tool #9. Curating Faith Formation Resources in *Design Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation* provides a guide to curating faith formation resources in the digital age. The Tool describes three steps in the process of curating faith formation: 1) research and organize resources, 2) evaluate resources, and 3) connect the resources to programming.

3. Building a Digital Platform for Faith Formation

Building a digital platform (website) is essential to the network approach to faith formation. A digital platform provides the primary way to connect people with the network's offerings. A faith formation website provides the platform for publishing and delivering the experiences, content, programs, activities, and resources of the network. A website provides the platform for seamless learning across a variety of experiences, resources, locations, times, or settings. The website, together with social media, provides continuity between faith formation in the congregation, at home, in daily life, and online. And it is available to people anytime, anywhere, and any device (computer, tablet, smart phone).

It is important to build a website (or section of the church website) dedicated to faith formation. Today it is possible to develop a new dedicated website for faith formation and then link it to the church website. Building a website is made much easier today by the availability of online website builders that provide predesigned website templates, drag-and-drop features to create webpages, and hosting for the website. Three popular website builders to explore are: Weebly (www.weebly.com), Wix (www.wix.com), and Squarespace (www.squarespace.com). All three have easy to use features and very reasonable subscription fees. For advanced users WordPress (<http://wordpress.org>) provides thousands of predesigned templates, lots of customization features, and ready-to-use apps. WordPress does require an understanding of web design and some programming ability.

Weebly, Wix, and Squarespace have detailed tutorials for designing a website. Go to their websites to view the tutorials. There are also independent websites with tutorials and how-to instructions for designing a website, some specific to these three website builders. There are dozens of websites created by WordPress users that are dedicated to providing assistance to designers. And, of course, there are YouTube videos that teach the basics of web design, and provide particular information for Weebly, Wix, Squarespace, and WordPress.

Here are several suggestions for web usability from Steve Krug's excellent and easy-to-use book *Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability*, Third Edition (Berkeley: New Riders, 2014).

1. Don't make the user think—make web pages self-explanatory so the user hardly has any perceived effort to understand them, for example, clear choice of labels, clearly “clickable” items, simple search.
2. People generally don't read web pages closely; they scan, so design for scanning rather than reading.

3. Create a clear visual hierarchy and menu system (main menu, submenus).
4. Make it very clear how to navigate the site, with clear “signposts” on all pages.
5. Omit needless words.
6. The home page needs the greatest design care to convey site identity and mission.
7. Promote user goodwill by making the typical tasks easy to do, make it easy to recover from errors, and avoid anything likely to irritate users.

4. Communicating

For tools and resources for creating a communications plan go online to the Communication Toolkit: <https://scrantontoolkits.weebly.com/communication.html>.

5. Promoting Faith Formation

One of the ways to promote a seasonal or annual faith formation network is through an online or printed *catalog* with descriptions of all of the offerings and a calendar of events. The catalog includes descriptions for every faith formation activity, indicating clearly the content or focus of the program and the particulars, such as date, location, cost, time, website location, and so on.

In your promotional efforts be sure to describe how your offerings respond to something within the lives of people. Highlight the relationship between the programming and the particular spiritual or religious needs, interests, passions, concerns, or life issues of people. Describe the two to three benefits of participating or engaging in faith formation. Explain to people how to use the network and how to access the activities and resources.

Use as many promotional methods as you can, for example:

1. Ask those who are participating in church life and faith formation to invite their friends and colleagues. Ask people to use their social networks to promote the faith formation offerings.
2. Promote engagement online by connecting to (or extending from) a gathered event, program, or ministry.
3. Send email or regular e-newsletters to targeted groups (use a service like Constant Contact or Mail Chimp or Flock Note).
4. Establish a Facebook page for faith formation for network announcements, updates, stories, and photos from people engaged in faith formation.
5. Use Twitter to announce updates, events, and invite reflections from people on their experiences in the network.
6. Purchase targeted adds on Facebook and Twitter.
7. Provide ways to share experiences using blogs, Twitter, Facebook: videos, reports, photos, and so forth. Have a contest to encourage submissions and give a prize to the best photo, video, or report.
8. Have the pastor share the benefits and information about the network at Sunday worship.

9. Host information sessions after Sunday worship and other gathered programs to describe the network and how to use it.
10. Include information about the network in new member packets. Send a personalized invitation to new members.
11. Promote the network at all gathered programs and events in the church.

Be sure to find ways to communicate the stories and examples of the benefits and blessings that are coming to individuals, groups, families, and to your whole church community. Consider short videos or audio interviews of people who are engaged and then upload them to the church website and the faith formation website, as well as Facebook.

6. Evaluating Faith Formation

There are two essential times to evaluation programming: at the completion of a program or activity and at the end of a season or year of programming. **Design Tool #10. Evaluating Faith Formation** in *Design Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation* has ideas and sample questions for: Program Evaluation, Seasonal or Annual Evaluation, Face-to-Face Seasonal Evaluation, and Online Seasonal or Annual Evaluation.