# Activity: Models of Lifelong Faith Formation

### 1. Review the Four Models.

Review the four models of lifelong faith formation. These are examples that can be used to stimulate thinking about how to create a model. Any of the four models can easily be adapted for your church or used to create your own unique model.

* Thematic Model
* Worship-Centered Model
* Intergenerational Model
* Life Stage Model

2. Name Your Current Model.

* How would we describe our current model of lifelong faith formation?
* Do any of the models help us name our church’s model of lifelong faith formation?
* Develop a visual diagram of your current model of lifelong faith formation.

3. Analyze Your Current Model.

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 to better accomplish your goal of providing lifelong faith formation for all ages and generations.

### 4. Use the Four Models to Design Your Model.

Each model has strengths and weaknesses. Consider the following questions for each model:

* What it would be like if our church selected this model of lifelong faith formation?
* What are the features I like best?
* What questions do I have about adopting this model?
* Even if we don’t adopt this model, what features do I think need to be included in our model of lifelong faith formation?

# Models of Lifelong Faith Formation

### 1. Thematic Model

In the **Thematic Model**, faith formation is built around an annual (or seasonal) church-wide theme that becomes the central focus of the whole community. This theme can emerge from the lives of people, the life of the church community, events in the community and world, the Bible and theology, Christian practices, and more. Faith formation on the theme can include intergenerational gatherings, family programs, life stage programs, online programs and activities, and more.

* Design faith formation around an annual (or monthly or seasonal) church-wide theme that becomes the central focus of the whole community. This theme can emerge from the lives of people, the life of the church community, events in the community and world, the Bible and theology, Christian practices, and more. Faith formation on the theme can include intergenerational gatherings, family programs, life stage programs, online programs and activities, and more.
* Provide a variety of programming to explore and experience the theme: intergenerational programs, family programs, age group programs, small group programs, online faith formation with a playlist of activities for all ages
* Develop an online faith formation resource center that extends the theme with activities
* Continue to offer specialized, short term preparation programs for sacraments and milestones
* Continue to offer specialized programs for age groups that complement thematic learning,

### 2. Worship Model

In the **Worship Model**, faith formation is developed around Sunday worship— the scripture readings, sermon, and ritual—with a weekly or monthly theme to focus formation. For churches that are lectionary-based, the cycle of scripture readings forms the basis for themes addressed in faith formation. For churches that develop topical worship series, the theme of the series, as found in the sermon and scripture readings, forms the basis of formation. Churches use a variety of programming to address the theme: intergenerational gatherings, life stage experiences, small group programs, online faith formation, and more. For example, a monthly theme that is the focus of the Sunday worship experience can be deepened through an intergenerational program on the first Sunday of the month, life stage programming in a variety of formats throughout the month, and a playlist on the theme with activities for all ages.

* Develop faith formation for all ages around Sunday worship: the Scripture readings, sermon, and ritual—with a theme to focus formation (weekly, monthly).
* Provide a variety of programming to explore and experience the theme: intergenerational programs, family programs, age group programs, small group programs, online faith formation with a playlist of activities for all ages each Sunday
* Develop an online faith formation resource center that extends the Scripture readings with at home and individual activities throughout the month.
* Continue to offer specialized, short term preparation programs for sacraments and milestones
* Continue to offer specialized programs for age groups that complement intergenerational learning,

### 3. Intergenerational Model

In the **Intergenerational Model**, faith formation for all ages together is at the center of lifelong faith formation. Intergenerational programming, involving all ages and conducted monthly, biweekly, or weekly, is the shared faith formation experience for all ages. Churches develop a multiyear curriculum of themes that apply to all ages—focusing on one theme per year or integrating multiple themes in one year. The multiyear curriculum can include programming on scripture, Christian beliefs, Christian practices, prayer and spirituality, worship and sacraments, morality, the Sunday lectionary cycle readings, church year feasts and seasons, and social justice.

* Provide faith formation for all ages and generations together in one learning model, conducted monthly or twice per month. (Learning sessions are usually 2 hours in length with prayer, community building, learning, and a meal.) The intergenerational program includes all ages learning and age-group sessions with children, teens, and adults.
* Provide foundational faith formation with an annual theme or multiple themes each year, such as Bible, Creed and beliefs, Christian practices, prayer and spirituality, worship and sacraments, morality, service and social justice, Sunday readings, church year feasts and seasons, and social justice.
* Offer the intergenerational program on multiple dates and times to accommodate the size of your meeting space and to give people choices to choose from.
* Develop an online faith formation resource center that extends the monthly theme with family, teen, and adult activities throughout the month.
* Continue to offer specialized, short term preparation programs for sacraments and milestones.
* Continue to offer specialized programs for age groups that complement intergenerational learning,

### 4. Life Stage Model

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In the **Life Stage Model**, faith formation is developed around each stage of life: children and families (0–10 or 0–5 and 6–10), adolescents (11–19), young adults (20s–30s), midlife adults (40s–50s), mature adults (mid 50s–mid 70s), and older adults (75+). (Many churches combine several adult stages, such as mature and older adults.) Each stage of life incorporates three essential faith-forming experiences: intergenerational relationships, activities, and church life and events (including Sunday worship), family faith practice at home, and life stage activities and experiences designed to address life stage needs and situations, interests, and religious and spiritual journeys at each stage of life.

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* Design faith formation for each stage of life: children and families (0–10 or 0–5 and 6–10), adolescents (11–19), young adults (20s–30s), midlife adults (40s–50s), mature adults (mid 50s–mid 70s), and older adults (75+). (Many churches combine mature and older adults.)
* Incorporate three essential faith-forming experiences at every stage of life
* intergenerational relationships, activities, and church life and events (including Sunday worship),
* family faith practice at home
* life stage activities and experiences designed to address life stage needs and situations, interests, and religious and spiritual journeys at each stage of life
* Offer programming in multiple formats: gathered in physical locations, online (website, social media), and hybrid formats combining gathering in-person and online.
* Develop an online faith formation resource center for every stage of life.
* Incorporate specialized, short term preparation programs for sacraments and milestones.