

Re-envisioning Family Faith Formation for Today's Families

John Roberto
(jroberto@lifelongfaith.com)
www.LifelongFaith.com



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A Website to Guide You in Creating Lifelong Faith Formation for Today's World
Developed by John Roberto

[Download Your Free Guide to "Transforming Faith Formation for a New World"](#)



Challenge

Design

Playlists

[Challenges Facing Faith Formation](#)

[Designing Faith Formation](#)

[Playlists for Faith Formation](#)



Tools

Curate

Practices

[Digital Tools for Faith Formation](#)

[Curating Resources for Faith Formation](#)

[Practices for Faith Formation](#)

Search the Site

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The screenshot displays two web pages. The left page is the 'Vibrant Faith Catalyst' homepage, featuring a logo with a stylized 'V' and 'C' inside a circle. The text reads: 'Vibrant Faith Catalyst', 'A network of leaders committed to creating vibrant lifelong Christian faith formation!', and 'Join Vibrant Faith Catalyst Today!'. It lists benefits of joining, such as connecting with other church leaders, using toolkits for faith formation, and participating in MasterClass programs. The right page is titled 'Toolkitkits: Faith Formation' and lists various toolkits for different age groups: Designing Faith Formation 2020-21, Lifelong Faith Formation Toolkit, Intergenerational Faith Formation, Family Faith Formation Toolkit, Adult Faith Formation, Adolescent Faith Formation Toolkit, and Children's Faith Formation Toolkit. Each toolkit entry includes a brief description and a 'Full age' link.

<https://vibrant-faith-catalyst.mn.co>

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Changing Context

COVID-19 World

- ◆ COVID-19 has disrupted every aspect of life.
- ◆ We are not going back to normal – life before March 1st.
- ◆ We are no longer talking about months but years of COVID-19.
- ◆ We will not be able to gather people as we have in the past.
- ◆ We will not be able to use older models of church life and faith formation in today's context.

Changing Family Life

- ◆ There is more religious diversity from engaged families through unaffiliated families.
- ◆ Families are less religious today than previous generations.
- ◆ There is a steady decline in faith transmission, practice, and participation.
- ◆ Families experience higher levels of stress and pressure. Many feel overwhelmed & overscheduled.
- ◆ Many families are financially insecure or stressed.

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Three Big Topics

1. The central role of families in faith transmission, and the practices that are most significant in forming faith in children and teens
2. Approaches and strategies for forming faith at home; providing faith forming experiences at church; and connecting with families at home through digital media and methods
3. Designing faith formation in the COVID-19 world using online and hybrid models, and the practices and approaches that will work with families during this time

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Fundamental Shift

What if we fashioned faith formation around the family?



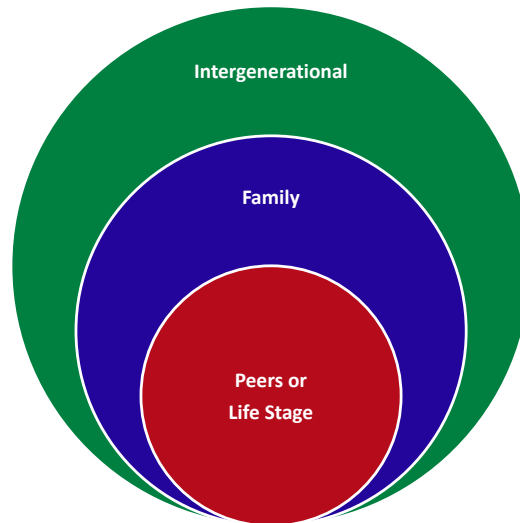
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What do we believe about families & faith?

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

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Holistic Faith Formation



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What's Your Church's Approach

What's Your Congregation's Approach to Families?

Identify your congregation's approach with families using the following questions. (See Chapters 1 and 3 in *Families at the Center of Faith Formation* for background.) For each question, identify your congregation's current practice with parents and/or families using the rating scale:

1 = not at all 3 = often 5 = a lot.

1. We express care with the families in our congregations and communities, including listening to them, showing interest in their lives, and investing in them.	1	2	3	4	5
2. We challenge growth in families by expecting them to live up to their potential and helping them learn from their mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
3. We provide support and advocacy when families really need it.	1	2	3	4	5
4. We share power with families, treating them as true partners by giving them voice in things that matter to them and collaborating with them to solve problems and reach goals.	1	2	3	4	5
5. We encourage families to expand possibilities by connecting them with other people, ideas, and opportunities to help them grow.	1	2	3	4	5
6. We offer regular gatherings of all our families for learning, worship, service, relationship-building, and more throughout the year.	1	2	3	4	5
7. We engage families together with the whole community for learning, worship, service, relationship-building, and more throughout the year.	1	2	3	4	5
8. We find ways to reach families at home with support, resources, and activities to develop family life and grow in faith.	1	2	3	4	5
9. We strengthen families by helping them develop the practices and skills for healthy family life.	1	2	3	4	5
10. We equip parents with the knowledge and skills for effective parenting and forming faith in young people.	1	2	3	4	5
11. We engage parents as leaders and contributors in the congregation and in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
12. We design ministries, projects, and activities that complement and reinforce the role of families in faith formation.	1	2	3	4	5
13. We recognize the family as the epicenter of faith formation across the generations.	1	2	3	4	5
14. We celebrate the evidence of vibrant faith at work in the everyday lives of families and their young people.	1	2	3	4	5

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Part One Insights from Research

Article: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/evangelization-catechesis/leadership-institute-catechetical-sunday-2020>

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Research Finding #1.

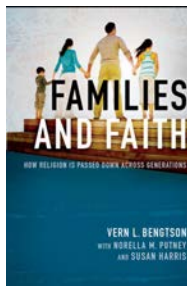
Parents are the most significant influence on the religious and spiritual outcomes of young people.

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

(American Catholic Religious Parenting, Burtkus and Smith)

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The single most powerful force in a child's religious formation is the spiritual personality of the parent. We know the parental factors that make a significant difference in promoting faith in children and youth include:

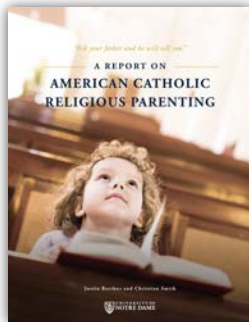
- ◆ parents' personal faith and practice
- ◆ a close and warm parent-child relationship
- ◆ parent modeling and teaching a religious faith
- ◆ parent involvement in church life and Sunday worship
- ◆ grandparent religious influence and relationship
- ◆ family conversations about faith
- ◆ family faith religious practices including praying, reading the Bible, serving others, and celebrating holidays and rituals

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Research Finding #2.

The primary way by which Catholic identity becomes rooted in children's lives are the day-to-day religious practices of the family and the ways parents model their faith and share it in conversation, collaboration, and exposure to outside religious opportunities.

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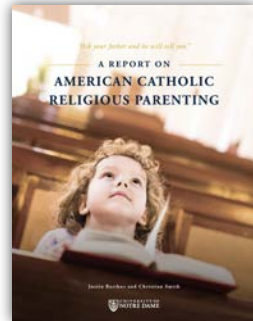


James Burtkus and
Christian Smith

University of Notre
Dame

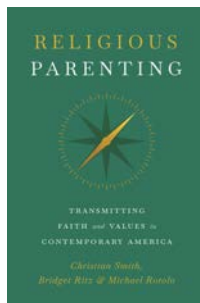
The primary mechanisms by which Catholic identity becomes rooted in children's lives are not Catholic schooling or sacramental preparation, but rather the day-to-day religious practices of the family and the ways parents model their faith and share it in conversation, collaboration, and exposure to outside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

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This is all to say that the definitive causal agents in the religious and spiritual outcomes of American youth are neither clergy nor youth ministers, neither educators nor the voices of popular culture and media, but parents.

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Christian Smith
Bridget Ritz
Michael Rotolo)

Princeton
University Press,
2020

Parents have only one good and hopefully effective way to raise children to understand and carry on their family's religion (or perhaps return to it someday after a period of disaffection). That is for parents simply to practice their own personal religious faith, naturally, for its own sake and as role models for their children.

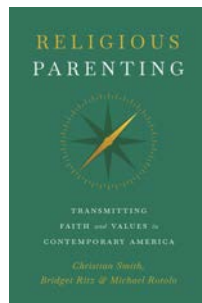
If all goes well, children will over time learn, absorb, and embrace their own version of that faith, almost unconsciously.

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Research Finding #3.

The family is the primary community where Catholic faith practices are nurtured and practiced.

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Christian Smith
Bridget Ritz
Michael Rotolo)

Princeton
University Press,
2020

We have discovered through research that certain faith practices make a significant difference in nurturing the faith of children and teens at home.

“Raising religious children should thus primarily be a practice-centered process, not chiefly a didactic teaching program. Parents modeling religious practices is primary, and explaining belief systems is secondary”

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

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Research Finding #4

The quality of a parent's relationships with their children or teens and the parenting style they practice make a significant difference in faith transmission.

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1. Parents cultivate relationships of warmth and love which makes everything else possible.
2. Parents balance religious firmness with religious flexibility in their parenting to maintain more positive relationships with their children.
3. Parents balance desire for religious continuity with children's agency. They transmit their faith to their children while honoring their children's agency by teaching principles and values, providing expectations of religious participation and responsibility, not forcing faith, allowing exploration and mistakes, and showing respect for children's views

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4. Parents talk with their children about religious matters during the week. This is one of the most powerful mechanisms for the success or failure of religious transmission to children.
5. Parents practice an "authoritative" parenting style. Parents maintain and enforce high standards and expectations for their children while simultaneously expressing a lot of open warmth and connection to their children and confidently giving them enough space to work out their own views and values.
6. Parents listen more and preach less – conversations are more youth-centered than parent-centered.

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Sources for Finding #4

“The Best Practices—and Benefits—of Religious Parenting.” David Dollahite, Loren Marks, and Hal Boyd Public Discourse. February 6, 2020. (Accessed at <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2020/02/59688>)

Religious Parenting: Transmitting Faith and Values in Contemporary America. Christian, Smith, Bridget Ritz and Michael Rotolo. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020.

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Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*

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

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Using the Four Insights to Design

How can you **Encourage** parents to grow in faith and become faith formers; **Equip** parents to incorporate faith practices into family life at home; **Engage** parents in education and formation, as well as the whole family in faith forming experiences and programs?

1. Assess how well your current practice addresses the 4 findings.
2. Identify ministries & programming that need to be redesigned.
3. Create new initiatives to engage, encourage, and equip parents and the whole family at home, church, and school.

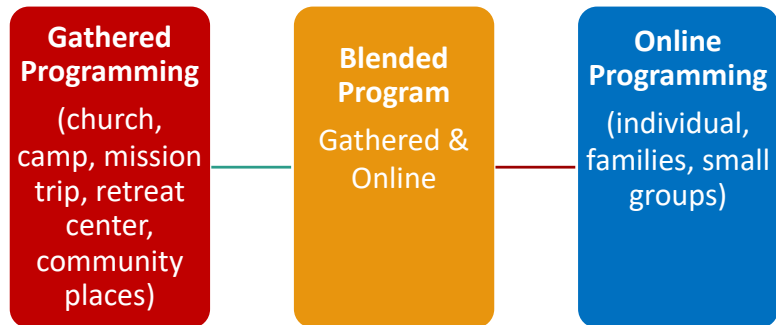
Article: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/evangelization-catechesis/leadership-institute-catechetical-sunday-2020>

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Part Two Programming Approaches Ideas and Strategies

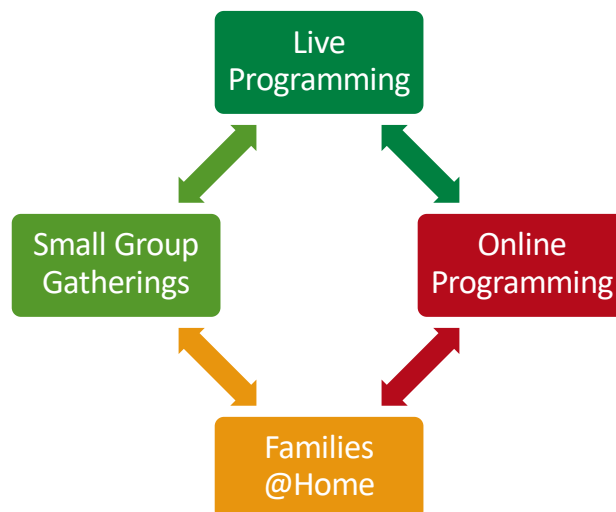
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Faith Formation Programming Approaches



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Family Faith Formation in 2020-21



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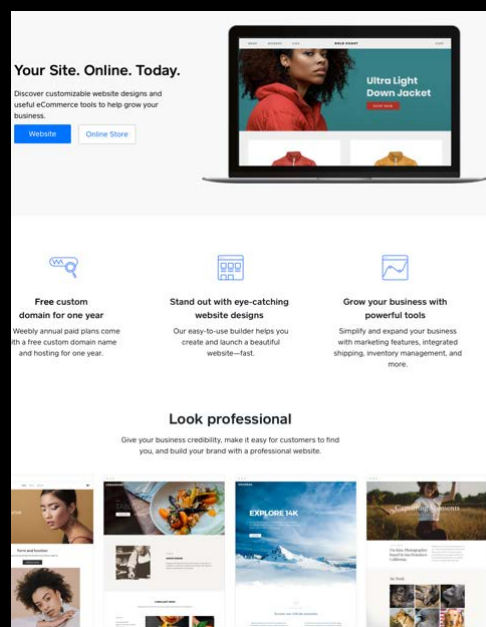
Digital Tools for Family Programming

- A Digital Platform for Faith Formation: Websites – Weebly, Squarespace, Wix
- Video Conferencing & Streaming: Zoom, Facebook Live, YouTube Live
- Group Interaction: Facebook Groups
- Communication Tools: Email, Texting
- Social Media Tools: Facebook, Instagram
- Online Learning Platforms: Edmodo, Google Classroom
- Digital Learning Apps



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Website Builder Weebly.com



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Facebook Groups



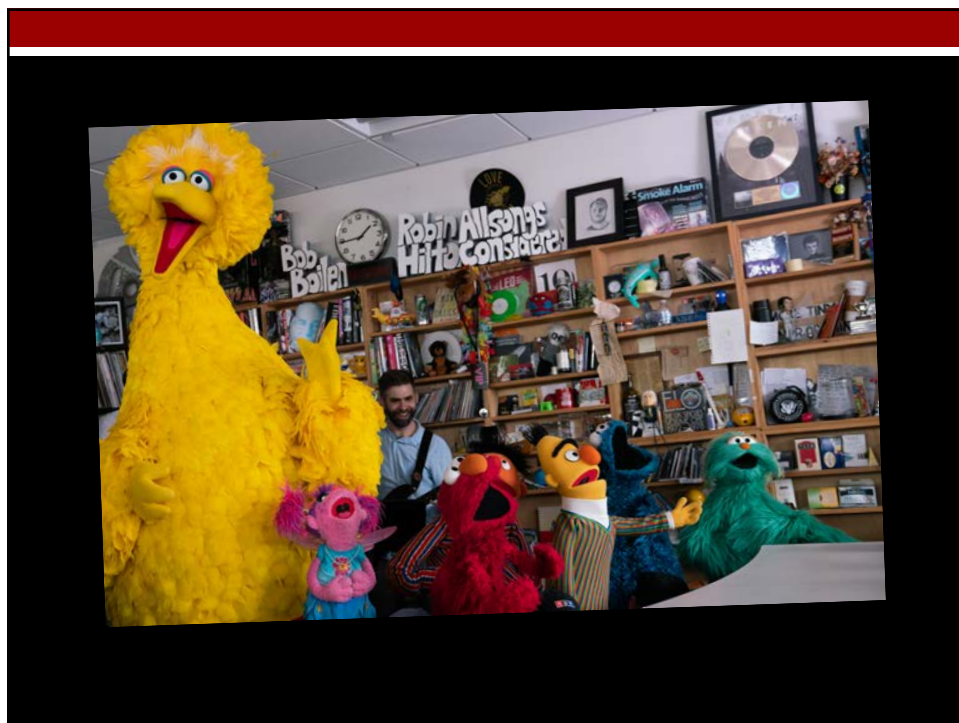
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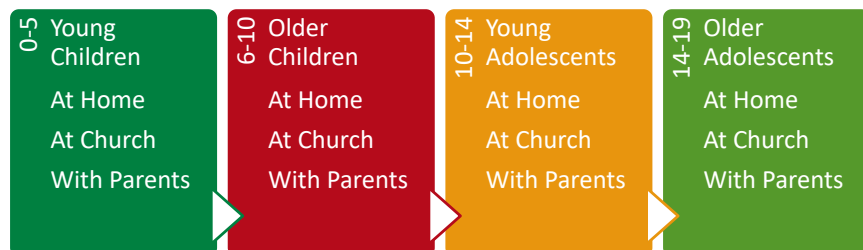
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Low Tech Delivery Systems



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Family Formation Plan *Developmentally-Appropriate*



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Family Formation Plan Activities for Each Life Stage

1. Faith Practices appropriate to the age
2. Seasons of the year
3. Rituals and milestones
4. Learning the tradition
5. Prayer and spiritual formation
6. Reading the Bible
7. Service, justice, care for creation

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Reaching Families & Parents



Through the day: mealtimes, car times, morning and bedtime, exits and entries, family sharing times, waiting for... times



Through key family moments: good times and hard times, times of joy and sorrow



Through the year: church year seasons, holidays, rituals and celebrations—birthdays, anniversaries, etc.



Through the lifecycle: milestones and rites of passage



Finding the spaces and times in family life

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Programming in 4-Month Seasons

Sept – Dec Jan – April May - Aug

Programming	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4
Adult Life Issues				
Spiritual Formation				
Scripture				
Theological Themes				
Justice & Service				
Seasons				

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Practical Strategies: Family

Whole Family Programs

Event-Centered: Sacraments & Milestones

Family Experiments

Faith Practice of the Month

Connect to Sunday Mass

Seasons @Home and @Church

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Four-Week Program Plan

Week 1 - Live Stream Presentation/Demonstration on the Theme (synchronous)

Week 2 & 3 - Home Family Experience (asynchronous)

- Individual family or groupings of families
- Online playlist of age-appropriate faith formation activities on the theme
- Resources for parent enrichment on the theme

Week 4. Live Online Session to Share and Present Projects (synchronous)

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Extended Program Plan

Welcome & Opening Prayer

Part 1 All Ages Introduction to the Theme (live stream)
All Ages Experience (live stream)

Part 2 Demonstration of Home Activities (live stream)
At Home Family Activity (resources online)
(age appropriate, together or individualized)
At Home Adult Presentation (video or live stream)

Part 3 Quick Sharing from Participants using Facebook
Page or Photos on Instagram
Closing Reflections & Prayer/Ritual (live stream)

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Program Example: Called to Pray

Gathering and Opening Prayer

Welcome to Prayer Program

Prayer Experiences: Demonstrate Live & Practice @Home

- Activity 1: Creating a Space for Prayer
- Activity 2: Praying with Scripture
- Activity 3: Praying with the Psalms
- Activity 4: Intercessory Prayer
- Activity 5: The Jesus Prayer

Making Prayer an Essential Part of Family Life

Closing Prayer

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Event-Centered Programming

Preparing

- What types of experiences, programming, activities, and resources will you develop to prepare people for the event?
- Independent, small group, large group
- Blended
- Playlists

Experiencing

- How will you design the event?
- How will you engage age groups, families, and the faith community?

Living

- How will you sustain/extend the event?
- What types of experiences, programs, activities, and resources will you offer people?
- Independent, small group, large group
- Blended
- Playlists

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7-Day or 30-Day Family Experiments

1. Focus on a practice.
2. Curate (mobile) resources to explain and demonstrate the practice (video, print, how-to recipe).
3. Publish resources on a web page.
4. Have families find a time to do the practice each day and schedule their time.
5. Do the practice.
6. Remind people daily with text message.
7. Encourage people to share photos or videos on a Instagram # or in a Facebook Group.

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Faith Practices - Theme for the Month

Themes

- Prayer
- Reading the Bible
- Christian Practices
- Service, Care for Creation, Social Justice
- Church Year Feasts & Seasons
- Moral Values
- Etc.

Design

1. Teach: Key Content (video, live stream, small group or large group program)
2. Demonstrate: "How to" do this: personal, family
3. Resources: playlist of faith forming activities on the theme

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Connect Sunday Worship to the Home

Weekly Lectionary-Based Playlist on the Website

- ✓ family conversation questions
- ✓ weekly table ritual
- ✓ podcast or video of the sermon with a study guide for the parents,
- ✓ children's creative Bible activities
- ✓ storybooks
- ✓ videos presenting the Bible story
- ✓ daily prayer
- ✓ weekly family devotion

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February 10, 2019: Call of the Disciples - Luke 5:1-11

The Gospel Reading Luke 5:1-11: www.usccb.org/bible/readings/021019.cfm

Take a few moments as a parent to reflect on the Gospel of Jesus calling the disciples: www.americanbible.org/resources/text-to-divine

For background on Luke's Gospel, watch the video of Luke 3 - 9. Focus on Luke 5 which is around 2 minutes into the video: [Gospel of Luke Video](#)

Read the Gospel together: Luke 5:1-11

Do a coloring page together of Jesus calling the disciples.

[Call_of_the_disciples.pdf](#)
Download File

Symbol of the Week

Cut small fish shapes cut out of paper for the children to color. Place these fish shapes in a clear glass bowl on the center of the table. Read the Gospel story together once or twice during the week. Talk about how Jesus calls us to follow him today.

The Call of the Disciples

Jesus Calls Peter

Children's Storybook

Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun: Having the Courage to be Who You Are
by Maria Dismondy (Written for ages 4-11)

Likely after a long night of work, the fishermen were washing their nets and preparing to return to their homes when Jesus comes along and asks Simon to take him out in his boat. Jesus tells Simon to put his net back out into the water, and Simon hesitates for he'd already tried to catch fish all night long and caught nothing. But Simon does as Jesus says, trusting that Jesus has a plan for him. Simon's net is full of fish. Simon's net is full of fish.

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JANUARY 6, 2020
EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

taking faith home

God's light shines through Jesus.

EPIPHANY BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Epiphany celebration.

Monday Matthew 2:1-12 The wise men worship Jesus
Isaiah 60:1-6 The glory of God shines on the people

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR EPIPHANY


Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. **Isaiah 60:1 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for Epiphany:
Dear God, in Jesus you show your glory to the nations. Come, Holy Spirit, bless all the nations of the world with peace, joy, and love. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:
Lord God, as the star shone over Bethlehem to reveal the presence of your Son, may this meal remind us that this food is a gift of your love. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:
May the light of Christ bring you peace and joy.

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JANUARY 6, 2020
HYMN FOR EPIPHANY
Rise, Shine, You People!

taking faith home

EPIPHANY MILESTONES
Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.


CARING CONVERSATIONS
Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Why do some people fear other people they don't know?
- How does the light of Christ help us to conquer our fears?
- A star led the wise men to Jesus. What leads you to Jesus?

DEVOTIONS
Read: Matthew 2:1-12.
People of another religion and another part of the ancient world used astrology to guide them to Jesus, and it worked. God wants the world to be blessed by the light of Christ that shines from Bethlehem to Jerusalem and on to the ends of the earth. It is God's powerful light that has entered the darkness of fear. Not only is King Herod frightened by the message that a king has been born to the Jews, so are all the people of Jerusalem (v. 3). That is, even the people faithful to God's reign are fearful. A new day that brings astonishing news is feared by all. We easily fear change, even if it has come to benefit us. The moment something new happens to us, we lose a sense of control. It is no longer about us. In this instance, the change is about God's rule, God's ways, and God's love that shines brightly into a darkened world. Thanks be to God for the light that breaks into the dark corners of our world and of our lives. It is the only light and only hope that really matters. Is change easy or difficult for you? How do you ask God for help?
Pray: Dear Jesus, bless us to see in you the one who takes our fears and worries and turns them into joy and gladness. Amen.

SERVICE
Epiphany, also known as Three Kings Day, is a time when an age-old Christian tradition of blessing homes takes place around the world. It is a custom to inscribe 20+C+M+B+20 with chalk on the door. C, M, and B between the year 2020 are the initials of the Magi but also stand for a Latin phrase meaning bless this house. The + symbolizes the cross. Our homes are places where daily spiritual practices take place (i.e., reading scripture, praying, or blessing others). Visit a person today who is homebound and pray with them. Conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS
The wise men followed a star to find Jesus. We still need something to guide us to Jesus. Take a moment to stand with your legs spread slightly and your arms stretched out. Just as a star has five points, imagine your head, hands, and feet being the points of a star. When you think about the awesome role you have as a star, leading others to Jesus, imagine how you can do that. Talk about, draw a picture, or make a list of ways you can lead others to Jesus through your actions and words.

 In addition to Taking Faith Home, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

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Celebrate the Seasons



- Identify a monthly seasonal event (church year or calendar year) and developing a webpage for each season
- Organize a seasonal family festival / gathering (virtual or physical) to support the seasonal plan.


Jan:	ML King Jr. (justice and peace, serving)
Feb:	Valentine's Day (loving)
March:	Lent (praying, fasting, almsgiving)
April:	Earth Day (caring for creation)
May:	Mother's Day (honor parents, love, care)
June:	Father's Day (honor parents, love, care)
July:	Independence Day (freedom)
August:	Back to school (new beginnings)
Sept:	Fall Harvest (grateful, generosity)
Oct:	St. Francis (care for creation and animals)
Nov:	Thanksgiving (grateful, generous)
Dec:	Advent and Christmas

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Rituals & Milestones


celebrate meaningful, memorable moments in your family

Baptism Anniversary




Share with each of your children the story of their baptism day to celebrate their new life in Christ and embrace their relationship with God as their Father and Creator. Go to [Vibrant Faith at Home](#) for the instructions and worksheets.

Starting School




Going off to Preschool or Kindergarten or first Grade for the first time is an exciting milestone for children and their families. As children prepare to venture out from home and begin a new routine at school, they'll hear Jesus' promise to be with them always. Together, the family will create a visual reminder of Jesus' great love for children. Go to [Vibrant Faith at Home](#) for the instructions and worksheets.

Getting Ready to Worship



Getting out the door to make it to worship on time can be a trying experience for parents and children. Create a preparation ritual to help your family get ready to worship at your church, whether on Sunday morning, Saturday night, or during the week. Go to [Vibrant Faith at Home](#) for the instructions and worksheets.

Birthday Celebrations



Prayer
 God, we come today to give thanks to you for creating the life of _____ (name). We ask your blessing on _____ (name), that he/she may continue to honor and praise you by using the gifts and talents you have given him/her. We ask that _____ (name) continue to grow in age, wisdom and grace—as Jesus grows.

Scripture Reading
 Be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude to your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Letter of Paul to the Colossians.)


Prayer
 Through Baptism, (name) entered God's special life of love. On this special day of remembrance we ask that (name) may be faithful to God's love and (name) may make good choices to live and continue to grow in age, wisdom and grace.

Seasons of the Year

The seasons of the year offers a variety of opportunities for families to celebrate, learn, and have fun together. We have selected one family activity for each month of the year, reflecting the calendar seasons and the church year seasons.


1. January: Martin Luther King Jr.
2. February: Ash Wednesday
3. March: The Real St. Patrick
4. April: Easter and New Life
5. May: Mother's Day
6. June: Vacation Travel
7. July: Independence Day
8. August: Back to School
9. September: Fall Harvest
10. October: A Helping Halloween
11. November: Thanksgiving
12. December: Christmas is Coming!

January: Serving Others



Observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service—held on the third Monday of January—with your family. Warm the hearts and feet of people seeking help from emergency shelters with socks and personal hygiene supplies. Try this activity with your family. For instructions follow this link to [Vibrant Faith at Home](#).


February: Praying through Lent



Teach your children a new prayer (or two) over the course of the 40 days of Lent by tying it by their bed and praying it together every night at bedtime. Try this activity with your family. For instructions and the special worksheet follow this link to [Vibrant Faith at Home](#).


[LENT ACTIVITIES FOR THE HOME](#)

March: The Real Patrick



Saint Patrick was a real person, born in Britain in the year 385 C. E. He was once a slave, then ultimately a priest in Ireland. He brought many people to God at a time when many had turned away from the Lord. Try this activity with your family. For instructions and the special worksheet follow this link to [Vibrant Faith at Home](#).

April: New Life



The popular custom of coloring Easter eggs comes from an ancient Christian practice of dyeing, cracking, and fasting on eggs as an Easter celebration. Instead of randomly coloring eggs, draw names to decorate (and hide) eggs for one another.

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Designing Playlists: Menu Approach

- Read
- Watch
- Participate
- Listen
- Pray and Reflect
- Live or Practice

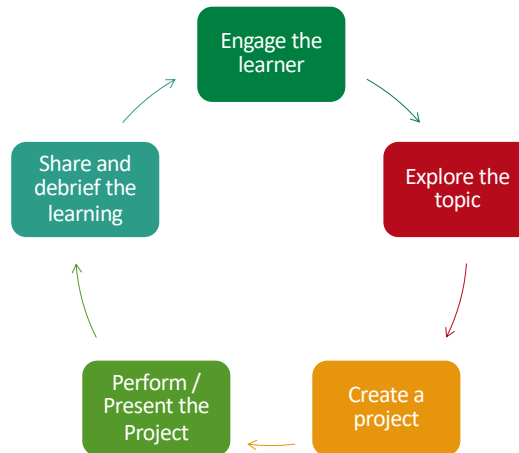
Playlist for a Church Season at Home

- Video: "Lent in 3 Minutes" introduction to Lent video (from Busted Halo)
- Video: Ash Wednesday and Lent from Chuck Knows Church videos
- Daily Lenten prayers
- Daily Scripture readings
- Lenten calendar with short activities for each
- Ash Wednesday service at home
- Lenten service projects: at home, at church, in the community and world
- Daily devotional for Lent for children and for adults/parents
- Video commentary for each Sunday Gospel reading in Lent
- Creative activities for each Sunday of Lent and Holy Week (like
- Weekly symbol and ritual activity
- Rituals: Stations of the Cross
- Children's storybooks on the themes of each Sunday's lectionary readings from Storypath (<http://storypath.upsem.edu>)

54

Designing Playlists: Learning Process

1. Engage
2. Explore
3. Create
4. Perform/
Present



55

Learning Process Approach

Week 1. Engage the learner in the topic or theme (synchronous)

- Synchronous live streamed session to “gather” the group, introduce the topic/theme, and show how it connects to the life of the learner. Methods: presentation, demonstration, video, storytelling, etc.

Week 2. Explore the topic of theme (asynchronous)

- Learners select one or more activities that go deeper into the topic or theme. This can take many forms (video, audio, text, reading, prayer or ritual, etc.)

Week 3. Practice and demonstrate learning (asynchronous)

- Learners use a variety of methods to create an activity, individually or with others in the group, that demonstrate learning. Learning apps can provide a creative way to design an activity.

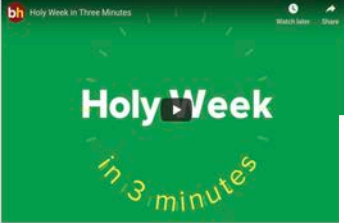
Week 4. Perform and present the project (synchronous)

56

Family Faith Formation Playlist

Holy Week

An Introduction to Holy Week in "Three Minutes"



Holy Week
in 3 minutes

A Catholic Guide to Holy Week

To learn more about the meaning of the Holy Week symbols read the "Guide" at Busted Halo.

- ["A Catholic Guide to Holy Week Symbols"](#)

For a "Guide" to Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday go to Busted Halo:

- ["Your Essential Guide to the Triduum"](#)

Just for Parents: A Virtual Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross is a devotion following the events leading to Jesus' crucifixion. Prayers accompanying it allow time to reflect on the mystery of his death. Originally the Stations of the Cross was an actual physical journey in and around Jerusalem. Later the series was symbolized in outdoor shrines, and today many parishes display artistic representations in their sanctuaries. The Stations of the Cross may be done at any time, but is commonly a part of Lenten spiritual practice, specifically on Good Friday.

Busted Halo has created a series of virtual stations designed for personal devotion. These stations relate to Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom of God and the reason his vision of this Kingdom led to his death. Find a quiet place to watch these stations, and as you do the devotions be open to how God is speaking to you through the Stations of the Cross.

- [Go to Busted Halo Virtual Stations of the Cross.](#)

Stations of the Cross Activity

Print the first page with the Stations of the Cross in color and post it for all to see. Use the prayers throughout the week.

[stations_of_cross_reflections.pdf](#)
[Download File](#)

Holy Week Story Strip Activity


Color the pictures and cut them out. Paste them in order to show the events of Holy Week and Easter.

[holy_week_story_strip.pdf](#)
[Download File](#)

Holy Thursday - Last Supper Craft Activity

Make a Last Supper craft for Holy Thursday based on the famous Leonardo da Vinci Last Supper (picture of the completed project to the right).


- [For instructions go online,](#)



57

Family Faith Formation Playlist

February 10, 2019: Call of the Disciples - Luke 5:1-11



Symbol of the Week

Cut small fish shapes cut out of paper for the children to color. Place these fish shapes in a clear glass bowl on the center of the table. Read the Gospel story together once or twice during the week. Talk about how Jesus calls us to follow him today.

[call_of_the_disciples.pdf](#)
[Download File](#)

The Gospel Reading Luke 5:1-11: www.usccb.org/bible/readings/021019.cfm

Take a few moments as a parent to reflect on the Gospel of Jesus calling the disciples: www.americanbible.org/resources/lectio-divina

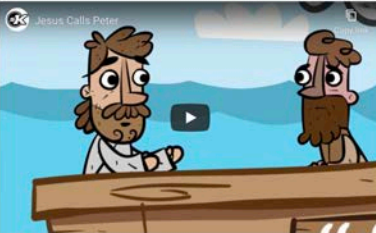
For background on Luke's Gospel, watch the video of Luke 3 - 9. Focus on Luke 5 which is around 2 minutes into the video: [Gospel of Luke Video](#)

Read the Gospel together: [Luke 5:1-11](#)

Do a coloring page together of Jesus calling the disciples.

[call_of_the_disciples.pdf](#)
[Download File](#)

The Call of the Disciples



Children's Storybook

[Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun: Having the Courage to Be Who You Are](#)
by **Maria Dimondy** (Written for ages 4-11)

Likely after a long night of work, the fishermen were washing their nets and preparing to return to their homes when Jesus comes along and asks Simon to take him out in his boat. Jesus tells Simon to put his net back out into the water, and Simon hesitates for he'd already tried to catch fish all night long and caught nothing. But Simon does as Jesus says, trusting that Jesus had called him to follow him. He was right. He was right.

58

Michigan Conference UMC Children's Ministry "Faith & Family Playlist" Rev. Kathy Pittenger

The Wise and Foolish Builder

"The wise man [all people] built his house upon the rock..." may be a song that you sing or sang in Sunday School or Vacation Bible School or summer camp. It comes from a parable that Jesus told his followers about listening to and putting into practice what he has been teaching. We can also use this story to talk about making wise or foolish choices. Start by reading the Bible Story or watching the video and going through the wondering questions. Then pick the activities your family would like to do, as many or few as you like. Close your family faith time with prayer - use your own or the one provided.

Bible Story

- Read the story of The Wise and Foolish Builder in your favorite Bible Story Book, in the [Deas Blue Bible Handbook](#), or in [Matthew 7:24-27](#).
- Wonder about the story together:
 - I wonder if you can remember a storm with lots of rain and wind.
 - I wonder what happens to a house when it is built on the sand when rains and winds come.
 - I wonder what happens to a house built on rock (or a strong foundation) when rains and winds come.
 - I wonder if you can think of a time when you listened to a wise friend or adult.
 - I wonder if you can think of a time when you did not listen to a wise friend or adult.
 - I wonder how you listen to Jesus' teachings.
- Prayer:
 - Dear God, thank you for Jesus' parables to teach us about making good choices. Help us remember what Jesus said about the builder of the house on the sand and rock. Help us to make good choices. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Activities

- Portable [Cubby](#)
- [Building a Good Foundation Activity](#)
- [Activity Activity Bulletin](#)
- [Deas Blue Lessons for at Home](#)

Other activity ideas include:

- Make Sand Art
- Paint a rock with an encouraging message and put it somewhere so others can see it.
- Do a house/rover building experiment: What kind of materials might make a strong foundation weak or unstable? Build a house on a strong foundation and a weak foundation. What is the same? What is different?

Book

Most People by Michael Leman



Building strong foundations in our communities means understanding that most people care about one another and also want to have a strong community. After you read/watch the book, discuss these talking points: How have you seen people being kind in your community? When people are not kind, how can you and your family respond? (You may want to tie this in with understanding race, racism and anti-racism. Learn more [here](#).)

Songs




<https://michiganumc.org/resources/childrens-ministry-tool-box/faith-family-playlists>

59

First Presbyterian, Stillwater, OK <https://www.fpcffaithfulfamilies.com>

FAITH IN AN ANXIOUS WORLD

Anxiety is on the rise in our world, and not just because we're in the midst of a pandemic. How do we respond to the anxiety we feel? What might God be telling us through our anxiety? And how does our faith guide us in healing steps to cope? The resources here will supplement what we're discussing on our PIVG Zoom meetings each week.

READ/WATCH/LISTEN

Read

Spent some time reflecting on these stories where Jesus himself "gets in the boat" with the disciples during an anxious time.

[Mark 6:25-51](#)
[Mark 6:29-47](#)
[Luke 9:1-11](#)

Watch

Four videos from the series "Faith in an Anxious World" (Fuller Study, 2018)

Session 1 - Life in an Anxious World

Session 2 - Life in a Relational World



Session 3 - Life in a Hurting World

Session 4 - Life in a Thriving World

FAITHFUL FAMILIES

CHURCH HOME

EQUIPPING FAMILIES

WONDER

I WONDER...

- What's making your heart feel anxiously today? Make a list of all your worries.
- Wonder what God might be trying to tell you? Where do you see God at work in the midst of your anxiety?
- Wonder what healing steps you are faced to learn to cope with anxiety?
- Wonder who in your life you can talk to openly about the anxieties you're experiencing?

PRAY

PRAYER CHALLENGE

Examen

- Recognize God's presence with you.
- Reflect on your "highs" from the day. For what moment am I most grateful? When did I give and receive the most love? When did I feel most alive today?
- Reflect on your "lows" from the day. For what moment am I least grateful? When did I give and receive the least love? When did I most feel life draining from me?
- Pray the day. Share with God - praise, thanksgiving, repentance, forgiveness, and petitions that come from the day.

Regular mindfulness review of your day using an ancient spiritual practice called the prayer of Examen is helpful now not only to connect with God, but to also manage anxiety.

Three options for practicing Examen:

- Use the Prayer Challenge cardset here.
- Download the "Examinations Excerpt" note on your device.
- Use this series of videos from Fuller Study to guide you through the process.


DO

Grow Your Circle

Who is in your trusted circle of adults you feel comfortable calling on when you need to talk about how you feel?

Check in with one of those adults this week. Share what you find making you anxious today and ask if they can share any helpful practices to listen to and learn from their anxiety.

60




What: Try a new personal, family faith habit or grandparents/grandchild faith habit for the season of Advent, pausing for 5 minutes, 10 minutes, or more, each day to encounter God.

Why: Advent lends itself to faith habits and home practices, which is good, as while these four weeks are full of spiritual preparation for the coming of Jesus, they are also full of the rush of the holidays.

How:

- Sign up to receive four weekly Advent Experiment emails with links to a Bible verse for each day of Advent, prayers, tips, tools and resources to help you, and your family, grow in faith throughout Advent.
- Advent Experiment options, ideas and suggestions are below.

When: Advent begins Sunday, December 1 and ends Tuesday, December 24.

E-Newsletter

ADVENT EXPERIMENT OPTIONS

Pick and choose faith habits for your Advent Experiment

Families with Children/Youth

a) Everyday Immanuel daily Bible reading with the Faith 5*

Gather with your family by candlelight, flashlight, car light, or wherever you are, and:

- i. Share your highs and lows.
- ii. Read a verse/passage from the Bible (We've selected **verses for each day in Advent. [Print a copy.](#)**)
- iii. Talk about how they connect with your life
- iv. Pray for one another (turn highs and lows into thanks and asks)
- v. Bless one another

b) In Light & Darkness: An Illustrated Advent for Families

- Questions and discussion topics in each devotion work for your children, no matter the age. Feel free to tweak the content and questions to work for your family.
- The devotionals and Advent calendars will be printed and given to Sunday School and God Squad children/families on Sunday, Dec. 1. A limited number of the Christmas Shadow Box templates will be printed on card-stock and available for pickup on Sunday, Dec. 1.

In Light & Darkness Resources:

- **Create a Christmas Shadow Box Theatre**
- **Advent Calendar: [Print the calendar](#) and the [daily discussion questions](#)**
- **Week 1 (Dec. 1-7): [The Darkness did not Overcome](#)**
- **Week 2 (Dec. 8-14): [Vision in the Night](#)**
- **Week 3 (Dec. 15-21): [Overwhelming Light](#)**
- **Week 4 (Dec. 22-24): [Readjusting to the Dark](#)**
- **Christmas Eve & Christmas Day: [The Light has entered the World](#)**

c) Make or buy an Advent wreath for your home. [Super simple to craft](#) and [creative ideas.](#)

d) Take Flat Michael with you this Advent! Michael is an angel, and there's lots of angels popping up in the Advent and Christmas stories! You could [post your adventures with Michael on social media with the hashtag #FlatMichael](#). Pick up a Flat Michael this Sunday or on Dec. 1, or print your own. Things you could do with Michael:

- say bedtime prayers
- light the Advent candles
- help you decorate the Christmas tree or Christmas cookies
- join your family for the Faith 5
- come along to church with you

Adults

a) Bible Readings in Advent:

- Sign up to receive four weekly Advent Experiment emails with links to a Bible verse for each day of Advent, prayers, tips, tools and resources to help you, and your family, grow in faith this Advent. (You'll receive links to both the NIV and The Message versions, and/or)
- Access the Advent Experiment Bible verses on your phone for use during the "tracks and crevices" times.
- Print a handout with the Advent Experiment Bible verses.

b) One Advent devotion each week of Advent. [Print or access here.](#)

c) Make or buy an Advent wreath for your home. [Options for you to explore.](#)

d) Light a single candle and sit quietly in reflective prayer. You may have a special place, or by your Christmas tree.

Sign up for the Advent Experiment

For All Ages

a) AdventExperiment Photo Challenge: Post a photo of how you are experiencing or encountering Immanuel – God with us – in Advent. You can share it online using #AdventExperiment (Please tag Immanuel). You can also email your photo to marin@immanuelus.org.

b) Fill your home, car or ear buds with a Spotify Advent selection: [Advent Conspiracy Worship on Spotify](#) (or create your own playlist).

c) Find a way to serve others, sharing hope, peace, joy and love. Immanuel provides lots of specific ways to serve! [See the current and upcoming service opportunities.](#)

d) Each week reflect and discuss a question by candlelight:

Week 1 - Hope: What does it mean to have hope as we wait for Jesus' birth?

Week 2 - Peace: What does it mean to have peace as we wait for Jesus' birth?

Week 3 - Joy: What does it mean to have joy as we wait for Jesus' birth?

Week 4 - Love: What does it mean to have love as we wait for Jesus' birth?

e) Read an Advent Prayer each week

Sign up to receive four weekly Advent Experiment emails with links to a Bible verse for each day of Advent, prayers, tips, tools and resources to help you, and your family, grow in faith throughout Advent.

61




What: Try a new personal or family faith habit for the season of Advent, pausing for 5 minutes, 10 minutes, or more, each day to encounter God.

Why: Advent lends itself to faith habits and home practices, which is good, as while these four weeks are full of spiritual preparation for the coming of Jesus, they are also full of the rush of the holidays.

How:

- Sign up to receive four weekly Advent Experiment emails with links to a Bible verse for each day of Advent, prayers, tips, tools and resources to help you, and your family, grow in faith throughout Advent.
- Advent Experiment options, ideas and suggestions are below so you can pick and choose what works for you and your family, and
- Sign up to receive four weekly Advent Experiment emails with links to a Bible verse for each day of Advent, prayers, tips, tools and resources to help you, and your family, grow in faith throughout Advent.

When: Advent begins Sunday, December 1 and ends Tuesday, December 24. Life is busy so try a time that works for you. Use:

- Single and creative ideas for the opening of the Advent devotion and your day for waiting to join your faith, sitting or in a different way, with your family.
- Can find a guide to help you, with your family, during the week(s).
- Bedtime (even if you go to bed).
- Morning (even if you go to work).

Webpage

Everyday Immanuel Advent Experiment

Advent Experiment

What: Try a new personal or family faith habit for the season of Advent, pausing for 5 minutes, 10 minutes, or more, each day to encounter God.

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- Can find a guide to help you, with your family, during the week(s).
- Bedtime (even if you go to bed).
- Morning (even if you go to work).

Advent Experiment Options

Families with Children/Youth

a) Everyday Immanuel daily Bible reading with the Faith 5*

Gather with your family by candlelight, flashlight, car light, or wherever you are, and:

- i. Share your highs and lows.
- ii. Read a verse/passage from the Bible (We've selected **verses for each day in Advent. [Print a copy.](#)**)
- iii. Talk about how they connect with your life
- iv. Pray for one another (turn highs and lows into thanks and asks)
- v. Bless one another

b) In Light & Darkness: An Illustrated Advent for Families

- Questions and discussion topics in each devotion work for your children, no matter the age. At the same time, feel free to tweak the content and questions to work for your family. Don't feel like you need to do all the activities for it to be a meaningful experience for you and your family.
- The devotionals and Advent calendars will be printed and given to Sunday School and God Squad children/families on Sunday, Dec. 1. A limited number of the Christmas Shadow Box templates will be printed on card-stock and available for pickup on Sunday, Dec. 1.

In Light & Darkness Resources:

- **Advent Calendar: [Print the calendar](#) and the [daily discussion questions](#)**
- **Week 1 (Dec. 1-7): [The Darkness did not Overcome](#)**
- **Week 2 (Dec. 8-14): [Vision in the Night](#)**
- **Week 3 (Dec. 15-21): [Overwhelming Light](#)**
- **Week 4 (Dec. 22-24): [Readjusting to the Dark](#)**
- **Christmas Eve & Christmas Day: [The Light has entered the World](#)**

c) Take Flat Michael with you this Advent.

Angels pop up throughout the Christmas story bringing joy and comfort and Michael is one of the named angels in the Bible. Where will he go this Advent season? Could he help you light the candles of your Advent wreath? Say bedtime prayers with you! Help you decorate the Christmas tree? Join your family for the Faith 5? Make dinner with your family? Come along to church? Go with you on a trip to see friends or family?

Post your adventures on social media with #FlatMichael

Print a Flat Michael or pick one up from Immanuel beginning in mid-November, or get one at Sunday School on December 1.

d) Make or buy an Advent wreath for your home. [Options for you to explore.](#)

Adults

a) Everyday Immanuel daily Bible Readings in Advent. [Options include:](#)

- Sign up to receive four weekly Advent Experiment emails with links to a Bible verse for each day of Advent, prayers, tips, tools and resources to help you, and your family, grow in faith this Advent. (You'll receive links to both the NIV and The Message versions, and/or)
- Access the Advent Experiment Bible verses on your phone for use during the "tracks and crevices" times.
- Print a handout with the Advent Experiment Bible verses.

b) One Advent devotion each week of Advent. [Print or access here.](#)

c) One Advent Study, [Blessings](#), each week (from the ELCA)

- Week 1 - Jesus is Coming
- Week 2 - From Bad News to Good News
- Week 3 - The Sign of the Promise
- Week 4 - One with God

d) Make or buy an Advent wreath for your home. [Options for you to explore.](#)

e) Light a single candle and sit quietly in reflective prayer. You may have a special place, or by your Christmas tree.

For All Ages

a) AdventExperiment Photo Challenge: Post snapshots of you or your family sharing in Advent Experiment activities with the #AdventExperiment hashtag (Please tag Immanuel). You can also email your photo to marin@immanuelus.org and he can post/share your photos.

b) Fill your home, car or ear buds with a Spotify Advent selection: [Advent Conspiracy Worship on Spotify](#) (or create your own playlist).

c) Find a way to serve others, sharing hope, peace, joy and love. Immanuel provides lots of specific ways to serve! [See the current and upcoming service opportunities.](#)

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Practical Strategies: Parents

Parent Lifecycle Workshops / Webinars / Online Resources

Family Life / Parenting Skills Development Workshops / Webinars / Online Resources

Add a Parent Component to Existing Programs (Embed)
– VBS, Children and Youth Program, etc.

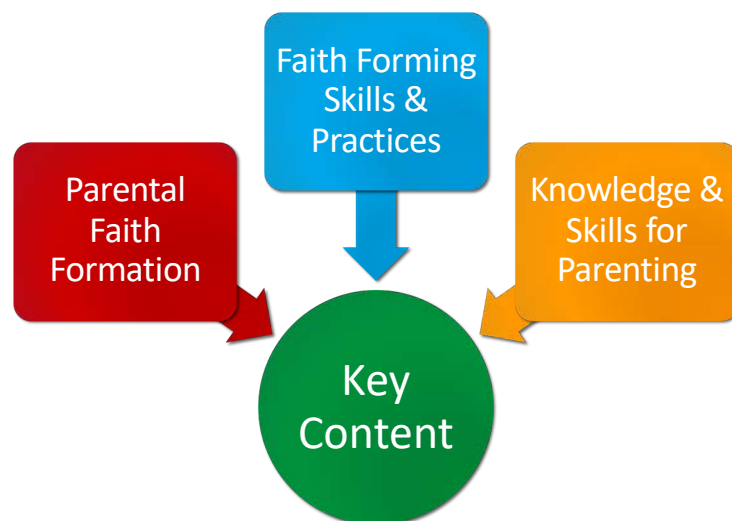
Parent Mentors

Support Groups (life cycle, kindred)


Script a Plan for Parents at Each Stage of Life

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Empowering Parents

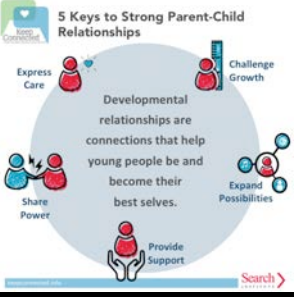


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Parenting Resources - Programs - About - Tools - Blog

Strengthen Your Family Relationships



5 Keys to Strong Parent-Child Relationships

Express Care

Challenge Growth

Share Power

Expand Possibilities

Provide Support

Developmental relationships are connections that help young people be and become their best selves.

Search

Understand Ages & Stages

CHECK IT

Quick quizzes you and other family members can take to check how you're doing, compare notes, and try new things based on what you discover.

TALK ABOUT IT

Over 100 discussion starters on each topic for:

- Parents and kids together; and
- Parenting partners or parenting groups.

TRY IT

Short, interactive activities you can use with your family to explore each topic—and spend meaningful time together at the same time.

READ IT

Selected, high-quality children's picture books and discussion guides, created in collaboration with First Book, to prompt parent-child conversations on relationships.


READ IT

Selected, high-quality children's picture books and discussion guides, created in collaboration with First Book, to prompt parent-child conversations on relationships.


LEARN ABOUT IT

Key background research for each topic.

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BOYS TOWN
Saving Children Healing Families



BOYS TOWN
Saving Children Healing Families
100 YEARS

Featured Parenting Guides




Behavioral Disorders

Most kids' misbehavior is temporary. Sometimes, however, behavior can become a problem that requires professional attention or treatment.

[Get Guide](#)

Tools: [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#)




The Digital Age

Use this guide to help with common issues that arise when your child is using technology. The right call will set the stage for a great digital life.

[Get Guide](#)

Tools: [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#)




Sleep Issues

Your child may not be sleeping as much as you'd like. The right call will set the stage for a great digital life.

[Get Guide](#)

Tools: [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#)

More Parenting Guides




School

The school year can be tough for kids. Use this guide to help them get ready for the year ahead.

[Get Guide](#)

Tools: [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#)




Discipline

There are different ways to discipline your child. Use this guide to help you choose the right one.

[Get Guide](#)

Tools: [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#)




Diversity and Inclusion

Use this guide to help you understand and respect the differences in your child's life.

[Get Guide](#)

Tools: [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#) [Book](#)


Featured Parenting Tools



Teaching Kindness at Home

Teaching children how to be kind will help them grow into happy, successful adults.


[Get Guide](#)



What is a Safety Plan

A Safety Plan is a roadmap for your life. Just like a map can help you find your way when you're going somewhere, a Safety Plan can help you in the right direction when you get lost.

[Get Guide](#)




Teaching Your Kids to Cope With Crisis

When your child experiences a tragedy or a crisis, they will be afraid and confused. Help them by teaching them how to cope with these difficult times.

[Get Guide](#)


More Parenting Tools



12-Day Integrity Challenge

We've developed a guide with 12 days of "challenge" activities you and your child can do together that will help them grow into thoughtful, honest, and moral adults.


[Get Guide](#)



Launching for College

This guide will guide you on how to support your child as they prepare for college. It includes tips on how to help them grow into thoughtful, honest, and moral adults.

[Get Guide](#)



Tool-a-Day for 12 Days

Here's a series of 12 tools with skill-building tasks that can help improve your communication, decrease negative behaviors, and even add a little fun to your family dynamic.

[Get Guide](#)

Surviving Vacation With Toddlers

[Get Guide](#)

Surviving Vacation With Tweens & Teens

[Get Guide](#)

Summer Contract

[Get Guide](#)

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Family Formation Plan

Developmentally-Appropriate

