John Roberto
LifelongFaith Associates
jroberto@lifelongfaith.com

www.LifelongFaith.com
SeasonsofAdultFaith.com
FamiliesattheCenter.com
Wondering . . .

- What does a vibrant and vital Christian faith look like in a 21st century world?
- How does faith grow and mature over a lifetime in our 21st century world?
- What factors make a difference in forming faith?
- What does faith formation for all ages and generations look like in a 21st century world?
- How can we engage people of all ages in life-giving and life-transforming faith formation?
- How do make the Christian faith relevant and engaging for those who are not involved in a faith community or feel religion is not important?
SEE THE BIG PICTURE

STRENGTHEN THE
FAITH FORMING ECOLOGY

Several Key Research Studies
Exemplary Youth Ministry Study

- **Congregational Life & Ministries**
- **Family & Household Faith**
- **Youth Ministry**
- **Congregational Leadership**

- **Focus on Jesus**
- **Environment**
- **Relationships**
- **Multiple Approaches**
- **Well Organized**

- **Discipleship**
- **Scripture**
- **Prayer & Worship**
- **Mission**
- **Intergenerational**
- **Community Life**

- **Spiritual Influence**
- **Models Faith**
- **Interpersonal & Leadership Competence**
- **Support Teams & Leaders**

- **Parental Faith**
- **Family Faith Practices**
- **Family Harmony**
- **Family Relationships**
Growing Young Study

1. **Unlock Keychain Leadership**: Keychain leaders entrust others with access and authority, and empower all generations including teens and emerging adults with their own metaphorical “set of keys” to help influence and shape the direction of the church.

2. **Empathize with Today’s Young People**: This means “feeling with young people” as they grapple with existential questions of identity, belonging, and purpose; as they experience “systemic abandonment” due to divorce and the self-absorbed adults around them; and as they act out a desire for connection through social media.

3. **Take Jesus’ Message Seriously**: The authors were struck by how, in the churches studied, “Jesus reigns over poor theology and his words ring true for young sojourners hungry for life-giving direction.” One young interviewee said, “The goal for our church is not really effectiveness with young people, but serving and following Jesus. And young people like me are attracted to churches that want to do that.”
Growing Young Study

4. **Fuel a Warm Community:** “Warm is the new cool” in these congregations, where authenticity triumphs over worship style or a multitude of programs. Young people who participated in the research praised their churches for “warm” attributes, such as welcoming, belonging, accepting, hospitable, and caring.

5. **Prioritize Young People (and Families) Everywhere:** Churches in the study revealed a disproportionate prioritization of young people—an impulse that, rather than excluding older generations, breathed life into the entire congregation. As one pastor put it, “Everyone rises when you focus on young people.” Involving young people in every ministry has allowed these churches to thrive with authenticity and intergenerational relationships.

6. **Be the Best Neighbors:** The authors found that in churches growing young, the community accepts the difficult task of offering young people a thoughtful path to neighboring well. They provide opportunities for teens and emerging adults to serve others, pursue social justice, find their calling, interact with popular culture, and respond to heated cultural issues.

Families & Faith

- **Primary Influence:** Parents and the Family

- **Secondary Influence:** The Congregation and Significant Adults
Families & Faith

- The intergenerational transmission of religious faith and practice today:
  - Key location: Home, not congregations
  - Key agents: Parents, not clergy or youth minister
  - Key mechanisms: Formation of ordinary life practices and identities, not programs, preaching, rites of passage

Families & Faith

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

(Burtkus and Smith)
Families & Faith

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.

(Burtkus and Smith)

Families & Faith

- Parent as Sponsor of the Catholic Faith
- Parent as Gatekeeper of the Catholic Faith
- Parent as Interpreter of the Catholic Faith

As “sponsors,” “gatekeepers,” and “interpreters” of the Catholic faith for their children, parents give children a glimpse of what Catholicism seems to be all about and whether or not it can meaningfully inform one’s day-to-day life.

(American Catholic Religious Parenting, Burtkus and Smith)
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)
Intergenerational

**Connect** the generations

**Infuse** intergenerational relationships & experiences

**Create** intergenerational experiences

Family

1. God in Everyday Life
2. Faith Practices at Home
3. Milestones
4. Seasonal Events
5. Encountering God in the Bible
6. Intergenerational Connections
7. Strong Family Life
8. Parents & Grandparents as Faith Formers
Missional

✧ Expand and extend the church’s presence through **outreach, connection, relationship building**, and **engagement** with people where they live—moving faith formation out into the community.

✧ Provide **pathways** for people to consider or reconsider the Christian faith, to encounter Jesus and the Good News, and to live as disciples in a supportive faith community.

---

Faith Forming

Intergenerational

Family

Youth
FOCUS ON THE GROWTH OF THE YOUNG PERSON

MATURING IN FAITH

Eight Faith Forming Processes

- Learning the Tradition
- Praying Spiritual Formation
- Reading the Bible
- Serving Working for Justice Caring for Creation
- Worshipping
- Caring Relationships
- Rituals & Milestones
- Church Year Seasons
Focus on Maturing in Faith: *Toward What Ends Are We Working*

1. Sustaining a **personal relationship with Jesus Christ** supported through regular prayer, faith sharing and Bible reading.
2. Making the Christian faith a **way of life** by integrating their beliefs into the conversation, decisions, and actions of daily life.
3. Possessing a **vital faith** and being aware of God present and active in their own life, the lives of others, and the life of the world.
4. Seeking **spiritual growth** by actively pursuing questions of faith, learning what it means to believe in God, and what it’s like to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.
5. Living a **life of service** by caring for others, reaching out those in need, and addressing injustice in the world.
6. **Sharing the Good News** through words and actions, through Christian stewardship and working for peace, justice and human dignity.
Focus on Maturing in Faith

7. Participating fully, consciously, actively and regularly in the ritual and worship life of the faith community.

8. Articulating the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith and demonstrating a commitment to learning and growing in this faith.

9. Exercising moral responsibility by applying Christian ethics, virtues, principles, values, and social teaching to moral decision-making, life situations, and in interactions with the larger culture.

10. Practicing faith in Jesus Christ, privately and publicly, through participation in the congregation’s worship, ministries, and leadership.

11. Discerning and using their gifts to actively belong to and participate in the life and mission of the Christian community.

12. Exploring God’s call to vocation through prayer, reflection, and discernment.

13. Possessing a positive spirit with loving and hopeful attitudes toward others and life, convinced that they can make the world a better place.

Multiple Ways to Foster Maturing in Faith from Childhood through Adolescence
Personalized Pathways of Faith Growth

- **Not Spiritual, Not Religious Unaffiliateds**
- **The Spiritual but Not Religious Uninvolved**
- **Faith & Engagement – one among many priorities Occasionals**
- **Faith & Engagement at the Center of Life Actives**

[Diagram showing pathways of faith growth]

[Diagram showing examples of faith growth]

---

**Faith Growth Pathway**

[Continued diagram showing different pathways and activities]
Personalized Pathways of Faith Growth

- Vibrants
  - Variety of Experiences & Activities
- Occasionals
  - Variety of Experiences & Activities
- Spirituals
  - Variety of Experiences & Activities
- Unaffiliateds
  - Variety of Experiences & Activities

21st Century Approaches

Forming the Faith of Young People
21st Century Approaches

1. Create immersive environments for faith growth
2. Create personalized pathways for faith formation
3. Design episodic engagements & micro-learning experiences
4. Provide an abundance of content & experiences developed around the needs and lives of all ages and generations available on demand, 24x7
5. Use multiple formats: independent, mentored, at home/daily life, small group, large group, church-wide, in the world
6. Build a digital platform that integrates all faith formation content and experiences seamlessly
7. Use digitally-connected strategies to enhance and expand all faith formation programming
A 21st Approach to Learning

A shift from education to learning anywhere, anytime.
A shift from consumption of information to participatory learning.
A shift from institutions to networks.

Immersive Environments

- Home
- Church
- Community & World
- Online
Personalized Pathways of Faith Growth

- Vibrants: Variety of Experiences & Activities
- Occasionals: Variety of Experiences & Activities
- Spirituals: Variety of Experiences & Activities
- Unaffiliateds: Variety of Experiences & Activities

Whoever you are, wherever you are, you only have to know one thing: #YouCanLearnAnything

Khan Academy
Digitally Enabled & Digitally Connected Faith Formation

- Fully Online Faith Formation
- Mostly Online with Regular Interaction in Gathered Sessions
- Online Faith Formation & Gathered Sessions (Flipped Classroom)
- Gathered Program with Online Components beyond the Program
- Gathered Program with Supportive Online Content

What is Edmodo?

Edmodo is a classroom website that is completely controlled by the teacher...

...and it looks like Facebook!
Digitally Enhanced Gatherings
One Event/ Program, Multiple Formats

- Gathered
- Small Group
- Independent
- Online

• Digital Content to Extend & Provide New Ways to Experience

Social Media
- Interaction
- Connection
- Communication
- Demonstration

Event/ Program

Multiple Formats

Website

Extend the Event

Church or School Event or Program

At Home & Daily Life
Build on an Event/Experience

Preparing
- What types of experiences, programming, activities, and resources will you develop to prepare people for the event?

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

Living
- How will you sustain/extend the event?
- What types of experiences, programs, activities, and resources will you offer people?

Flip the Model

@ Home / Daily Life
Exploring the Content - print, audio, video, activities

@ The Program
Applying the Content: Create – Practice - Perform - Participate
Our Confirmation preparation program has two components: Once a month in-person classes and an online study. The online study is a place for students to develop their faith weekly by completing multi-media lessons which include videos, reading, Saint reflections, multiple-choice questions and online small group discussions. Each small group has their own online space to discuss faith topics, ask questions, and pray for one another. By having both in person classes and an online study we hope to help families learn more about their faith while respecting the many demands for their time.
Integrate Online and Gathered

CHURCH WITH A CLEAN SLATE

WHAT'S NEW
The Slate Project is a new kind of Christian community that gathers both on-line and face-to-face in Baltimore, Maryland.

We are committed to change the church from inside out.

We are committed to following the way of Jesus together, into our local and digital neighborhoods, and discerning in community how to be the church in the 21st century.

Connect with The Slate Project on-line and face-to-face:

Mondays
What: #BreakingBread (Dinner Church)
Where: 4 E University Pkwy. Ellicott City, MD 21043
When: 6 PM EST

Wednesdays
What: #SlateReads (Live Tweet Chat - Book Discussion)
Where: Twitter -- use the digital bookmark #SlateReads
When: 8PM EST

Thursdays
What: #SlateSpeak (Live Tweet Chat - new topic each week)
Where: Twitter -- use the digital bookmark #SlateSpeak
When: 3PM EST

#BreakingBread
Our weekly face-to-face worship experience happens on Monday nights with a “Dinner Liturgy” we call #BreakingBread.

Starting at 6pm, everyone is invited to participate in transforming our “borrowed space” graciously offered to us by the Episcopal Cathedral of the Incarnation and Diocese of Maryland into an intimate dinner setting for thirty or so people.

#SlateReads
#SlateReads is our on-line book study that happens on Twitter every Wednesday night at 8PM EST.

There is reading for each week and the conversations are informed by those readings.

Follow the hashtag #SlateReads to participate.

Wow. That last hour was awesome. Thanks #SlateSpeak for a great chat!
21\textsuperscript{st} Century Leadership

Emerging Roles of the Faith Formation Leader

Online Only

Prayer
## Emerging Roles of Faith Formation Leader

### Balancing Both Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Roles</th>
<th>Emerging Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Developing religious content</td>
<td>• Designing faith forming environments —architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Designing programming</td>
<td>• Designing Digital Platforms for faith forming content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing programming</td>
<td>• Curating religious content and experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching/Facilitating programming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ideas

![Light bulb and ideas](image)
Intergenerational

Connect the generations
Infuse intergenerational relationships & experiences
Create intergenerational experiences

Connect Intergeneration & Age-Specific

Preparation: knowledge & practices for participating fully

Reflection: on the experience and living its meaning in daily life

Guided Participation: in the events of church life & the Christian Faith
Enhance Intergenerational Relationships

1. Incorporate intergenerational dialogues into programming
2. Develop mentoring relationships
3. Involve the community in praying for each generation,
4. Organize social and recreational activities that build intergenerational relationships
5. “Intergenerationalize” age-group programming
6. Integrate intergenerational programming into an age-group program plan and calendar
7. Offer service projects and mission trips for all ages
8. Offer simple, one-time intergenerational experiences: arts, music/concerts, drama, social events, service projects, sports, educational experiences

Family Faith Formation

1. God in Everyday Life
2. Faith Practices at Home
3. Milestones
4. Seasonal Events
5. Encountering God in the Bible
6. Intergenerational Connections
7. Strong Family Life
8. Parents & Grandparents as Faith Formers
Three Elements of a Family Plan

- Family Life & Parent Formation
- Family Faith at Home
- Family Engagement in the Intergenerational Faith Community

Comprehensive Family Plan

- Young Children
- Older Children
- Young Adolescents
- Older Adolescents

**Family Faith @ Home**
- God in Everyday Life
- Faith Practices
- Milestones

**Intergenerational Faith Community**
- Seasonal Events
- Bible through the Year
- Intergenerational Connections & Experiences

**Family Life & Parent/Grandparent Formation**
- Strong Family Life
- Parents & Grandparents as Faith Formers
Forming Faith through Milestones

- Birth / Baptism
- Baptism anniversaries
- First prayers
- First Bible stories
- Starting school year
- Receiving a first Bible
- First Communion
- Confirmation
- Graduation

1. Church ritual/blessing
2. Home celebration/blessing
3. Learning program – at church or home
4. Symbol
5. Supporting continued growth

Forming Faith through Milestones

First Year - Baptism

- Toddlers - Creation (Care for the World God made)
- Pre-School One - Bible (Reviews Story Bible)
- Pre-School Two - Worship (Proclaim Christ and help in worship)
- Pre-K - Service (Serve your neighbor as Jesus commanded)
- 1st Grade - Lord’s Prayer (Learn about prayer)
- 2nd Grade - First Communion (Share in the Lord’s Supper)
- 3rd Grade - Bible (Receive a more age-appropriate Bible)
- 4th Grade - Baptism (Learn about Lutheran Baptism)
- 5th Grade - Ten Commandments (What do they really mean?)
- 6th Grade - Apostles’ Creed (What do Lutherans believe?)
- 7th Grade - Bible (Receive a Bible with commentary & questions)
- 8th Grade - Elder Wisdom (Faith through the generations)
- 9th Grade - Sexuality (Loving and serving our neighbors)
- 10th Grade - Affirmation of Baptism (Public affirmation of promises)
- 11th Grade - Vocation (Live among God’s people with care)
- 12th Grade - Real World (Tools for living on your own, importance of faith)
Developing a Strong Family Life

Developmental Relationships – Search Institute

1. Communicating effectively
2. Establishing family routines: family meals, shared activities, daily commitments
3. Celebrating meaningful traditions and rituals
4. Discussing tough topics
5. Making decisions and solving problems as a family
6. Learning how to build strong relationships and express care for each other
7. Developing the strengths & potential of children & youth
8. Supporting each other: encouraging and praising, giving feedback, standing up for each other
9. Treating each with respect and dignity
Developing Strong Family Life

Create a Family Life Plan for Each Stage
Using the Family Assets and Developmental Relationships, curate and create developmentally-appropriate programs, activities, and resources for families at each stage.

1. Family website
2. Parent programs
3. Family programs
4. Family mentors
5. Life cycle support groups for parents

Empowering Parents

Key Content

- Developing Faith @ Home
- Parental Faith Formation
- Promoting Healthy Development
- Faith Forming & Parenting Skills
Empowering Parents

Three Roles

- Sponsor of the Catholic Faith
- Gatekeeper of the Catholic Faith
- Interpreter of the Catholic Faith

As “sponsors,” “gatekeepers,” and “interpreters” of the Catholic faith for their children, parents give children a glimpse of what Catholicism seems to be all about and whether or not it can meaningfully inform one’s day-to-day life.

(American Catholic Religious Parenting, Burtkus and Smith)

Empowering Parents

Competencies

- Expressing care, love, affection, and support for children
- Balancing time and commitments, managing stress
- Practicing healthy relationships
- Disciplining children and learning discipline practices
- Creating a warm, caring supportive family.
- Set boundaries and high expectations for children
- Managing technology and media use
- Challenging children to grow and continuously improve
- Providing support to help children complete tasks and achieve goals
- Sharing power with children so that there voice is heard and they share in making decisions.
- Expanding possibilities and connecting children to opportunities for growth
- Developing emotional communication skills
- Developing positive parent-child interaction skills
- Learning to respond consistently to their child
Empowering Parents

Parent Programming

1. Parent website
2. Parent programs—a progression of workshops, webinars, and/or courses for each stage of the lifecycle
3. Laboratory experiences—immersion/hands-on experiences through church events or family/intergenerational programs
4. Parent mentors
5. Lifecycle support groups for parents
6. A parent catechumenate—around key milestone experiences and “moments of return”