



Developing Lifelong Faith Formation Archdiocese of Toronto

Presenter: John Roberto, Vibrant Faith Leadership Team
Email: jroberto@lifelongfaith.com VibrantFaith.org LifelongFaith.com

- Topic 1: Maturing in Faith
- Topic 2: Intergenerational Faith Formation
- Topic 3: Family Faith Formation
- Topic 4: Life Stage Faith Formation
- Topic 5: Developing a Faith Formation Plan
- Homework: Designing a Faith Formation Plan

Resources

- Handouts/Resources/PowerPoint Presentations: <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/lifelong-faith-formation.html>
- *Families at the Center of Faith Formation*. Leif Kehrwald, Gene Roehlkepartain, Jolene Roehlkepartain, and John Roberto (LifelongFaith, 2016)
- *Generations Together*. Kathie Amidei, Jim Merhaut, and John Roberto (LifelongFaith, 2014)
- *Intergenerational Christian Formation*. Holly Allen & Christine Ross (IVP Books, 2012).
- *Reimagining Faith Formation for the 21st Century*. John Roberto. Naugatuck: LifelongFaith, 2015.
- *The Digital Cathedral: Networked Ministry in a Wireless World*. Keith Anderson (Church Publishing, 2015)
- *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation*. John Roberto, editor. Naugatuck: LifelongFaith Associates, 2015.
- *Families at the Center of Faith Formation* website: <http://www.FamiliesattheCenter.com>
- *Seasons of Adult Faith Formation* website: www.SeasonsofAdultFaith.com

Part 1. Maturing in Faith

We need to focus faith formation on the essential characteristics of lifelong growth in Christian faith and discipleship. These characteristics would incorporate knowing and believing, relating and belonging, practicing and living. Here are ten characteristics that can form the basis of helping people discern their faith journey and needs, and help the congregation accompany people through relationships, programs, activities, and resources.

1. Developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ
2. Living as a disciple of Jesus Christ and making the Christian faith a way of life
3. Reading and studying the Bible—its message, meaning, and application to life today
4. Learning the Christian story and foundational teachings of the Christian faith (Trinity, Jesus, creed, morality and ethics) and integrating its meaning into ones life
5. Praying—together and by ourselves, and seeking spiritual growth through spiritual disciplines
6. Living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values
7. Living the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace.
8. Worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship, ritual celebrations, and the seasons of the church year
9. Being actively engaged in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community
10. Practicing faith in Jesus Christ by using one’s gifts and talents within the Christian community and in the world

Personalizing Faith Formation

We need to tailor faith formation to the individual journeys of children, adolescents, and their parents in order to address their increasing spiritual and religious diversity and life stage needs. The days of a one-size-fits-all program are gone. No one program, class, or resource can address the diverse religious and learning needs of people today. We now live in a one-size fits one world where we need to tailor faith formation around the people.

We can discern at least four “religious-spiritual identities” in our young people and their parents

1. *People with a vibrant faith and relationship with God who are engaged in the faith community.* For these people religious faith is central to their lives. These are parents who are transmitting this faith to their children and are actively engaged as a family in a church community. These are children, adolescents, and parents who are spiritually committed and growing in their faith. They have found their spiritual home within an established Christian tradition and a local faith community that provides ways for them to grow in faith, worship God, and live their faith in the world. They are practicing their faith at home as a family.
2. *People who participate occasionally in the faith community and whose faith is not central to their lives.* These are people who participate occasionally in church life—Sunday worship, seasonal

celebrations, community events, and age-group programs. For parents transmitting a religious faith often means bringing their children to educational programs at church, and participating because of their children. Their spiritual commitment is not central to the way they live their lives and their connection to the church is more social and utilitarian than spiritual. While receptive to an established church, they do not have a faith commitment that would make their relationship with God and participation in a faith community a priority in their lives. Their occasional engagement in church life does not lead them toward spiritual commitment.

3. *People who uninvolved in a church but spiritual.* These are people who are often called “spiritual but not religious.” They have left participation in an established church. Many believe in God and have a relationship with God, and are growing spiritually. Many practice their Christian faith unattached to a faith community or tradition. Parents, though not involved in a church, may send their children to church programs; and the parents may participate at times with their children.
4. *People who unaffiliated and have left involvement in organized religion.* These are the “Nones.” They no longer believe religion is important in their lives. Many parents are “first generation Nones” and are raising their children in religiously uninvolved and unaffiliated homes creating a “second generation of Nones.” Many parents left organized religion because they stopped believing in the religion’s teachings (usually a top reason) or because their family was never that religious when they were growing up or because of their experience of negative religious teaching about or treatment of gay and lesbian people (*Exodus*, 2016).

It is obvious that the days of a one-size-fits-all programs for young people and parents are gone forever. We now live in a one-size fits one world where we need to focus on people’s specific spiritual and religious identities and needs.

One of the latest educational innovations provides a way to address the diversity we are facing. It is called personalized learning which tailors the educational environment—the what, when, how and where people learn—to address the individual needs and interests of each person. We need to personalize faith formation—to create personalized approaches that use the faith maturing characteristics to guide people in discerning their faith growth needs.

We can develop a simple tool that would help people discover where they are in their faith journey using a continuum from “getting started” to “making progress” to “going deeper” with short illustrations for each one. Then we can develop a personalized faith growth plan—or what educators are now calling “playlists”—of content (print, audio, video, online) and experiences to address their needs.

Developing a Faith Formation Plan

Faith Maturing Characteristic	Children	Adolescents	Young Adults	Adults	Family
	<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>Age Group</u>				

Faith Maturing Characteristics

1. Developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ
2. Living as a disciple of Jesus Christ and making the Christian faith a way of life
3. Reading and studying the Bible—its message, meaning, and application to life today
4. Learning the Christian story and foundational teachings of the Christian faith (Trinity, Jesus, creed, morality and ethics) and integrating its meaning into ones life
5. Praying—together and by ourselves, and seeking spiritual growth through spiritual disciplines
6. Living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values
7. Living the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace.
8. Worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship, ritual celebrations, and the seasons of the church year
9. Being actively engaged in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community
10. Practicing faith in Jesus Christ by using one’s gifts and talents within the Christian community and in the world

Developing a Faith Growth Pathway: Adult

We believe that growth in our relationship with God and in following Jesus (discipleship) is a lifelong process. We are constantly trying to grow deeper in our relationship with God and in living the Christian way of life each day. Our church is committed to helping you grow wherever you may be in your faith journey. We are committed to helping you live the Christian way of life everyday.

To help you discover areas for growth and to help us serve you better, please take a few minutes to complete the Adult Faith Growth Pathway. It will help you identify strengths and areas of growth in your own life. Use these statements to assess where you are honestly and prayerfully. Rate “How true each statement is for you” using the rating scale: 1 = Rarely true of me, 2 = Sometimes true of me, 3 = Occasionally true of me, 4 = Almost always true of me, 5 = Always true of me.

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am growing in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. My faith shapes how I think and act each and every day. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I make the Christian faith a way of life by integrating my beliefs into the conversation, decisions, and actions of daily life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I am aware of God present and active in my own life, the lives of others, and the life of the world. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I have a real sense that God is guiding me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I seek 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. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I devote time to reading and studying the Bible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I use the Bible to discover how I should think and act. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I pray to God and take quiet time to reflect and listen to God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I am growing spiritually through spiritual practices such as contemplation, <i>lectio divina</i> , praying Scripture, daily Examen (reflection), and meditation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I can articulate the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I am growing in my understanding of the Christian faith—beliefs, traditions, and practices. | | | | | |
| 13. I exercise moral responsibility by applying Christian ethics, virtues, and values to making moral decisions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. My faith helps me know right from wrong. | | | | | |
| 15. I live a life of service by caring for others and reaching out those in need. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I am involved in ways to promote social justice and address injustice in the world. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I am involved in actions to care for creation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I share the Good News of Jesus through my words and actions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I participate actively and regularly in the worship life of the church community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I participate in the life, ministries, and leadership of the church community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Ways I Can Grow

- Areas Where I Need to “Get Started” (look at the numbers 1 and 2)
- Areas Where I Need to “Grow” (look at the numbers 2 and 3)
- Areas Where I Want to “Go Deeper” (look at the numbers 4 and 5)

Part 2. Intergenerational Faith Formation

Congregations can enhance the power of intergenerational faith formation experiences in three connected ways.

1. *Utilizing* the intergenerational events and experiences of church life (community life events, worship and the lectionary, seasons of the year, service and mission projects, prayer and spiritual formation) as a primary “content” in faith formation by *preparing* people with the knowledge and practices for participating, by *engaging* people in the event, and by *reflecting* upon the meaning of the event and how to *live/practice* in daily life
2. *Infusing* intergenerational experiences and relationships into existing programs and activities, such as bringing mature adults into children and youth programs for interviews, storytelling, and mentoring; and transforming age-group programs (vacation Bible school, service projects) into intergenerational experiences
3. *Connecting* the generations through new intergenerational programs and experiences that bring together all of the generations for learning, celebrating, praying, reading the Bible, serving and working for justice, and worshipping. For example, developing grandparent-grandchildren programming—VBS, summer camp, service/mission projects, field trip; and/or creating new intergenerational learning programs, service programs, retreat experiences, camp experiences, and much more.

Free Download

To download an “Intergenerational Toolkit” from the *Generations Together* book with more details about strategies and ideas, and a variety of case studies of churches and intergenerational resources and activities go to the Vision and Practices section of the LifelongFaith.com website:

<https://www.lifelongfaith.com/intergenerational-faith-formation.html>.

#1. Utilize the Intergenerational Events and Experiences of Church Life

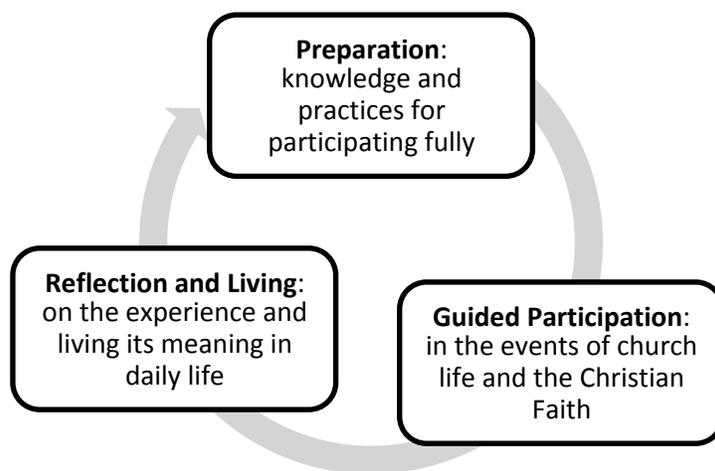
Every congregation already has events and experiences that can be enhanced and strengthened to unlock their faith forming potential.

- *The feasts and seasons of the church year* provide a natural rhythm and calendar for fashioning faith formation for children, adolescents and the whole family: Advent and Christmas, Epiphany, Baptism of the Lord, Call of the Disciples, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Easter season, Pentecost, and many more throughout the year.
- *Sunday worship and the Scripture readings* (lectionary or sermon series) provide a rich curriculum for the whole community with its cycle of weekly Scripture readings.
- *Ritual, milestone, and sacramental celebrations* provide events rich in theological meaning and faith practice that celebrate the faith journey throughout life.

- *Acts of service and justice*—locally and globally—provide a focus on mission to the world and put in action biblical and church teachings on service, justice, and care for the earth.
- *Prayer and spiritual traditions* provide times for reflection, praying as a community, and living the practices of the spiritual life through the community’s life together
- *Congregational events* that originate within the life and history of a individual congregation, and celebrate and reinforce the congregation’s identity and mission

In order to tap into the power of these events, faith formation can be fashioned around the event using a simple three-step methodology:

1. *Prepare* people—intergenerationally or in age groups—with the knowledge and practices—for participating in the event, experience, or activity,
2. *Experience/participate* in the intergenerational event , experience, or activity
3. *Reflect* upon the meaning of the event and discover how to *live/practice* that learning in daily life



This method can easily be incorporated in a variety of faith formation settings—intergenerational programming, family-centered programming, and/or age group programming. Consider the possibilities of making church life and events your faith formation curriculum throughout the year.

- People prepare for Sunday worship and rehearse the Scripture readings; they experience Sunday worship with the faith community; and they are equipped to live the Sunday worship experience at home and in their daily lives (with activities and resources delivered online).
- People learn about the a particular justice issues and the biblical and church teachings on the justice issue; they experience action to serve those in need, work for justice, and care for creation—locally and globally; and they reflect on that experience and integrate it’s meaning into their lives as Christians.
- People learn about the Bible and how to read it, interpret it, and apply it to their lives; they experience the Bible at Sunday worship and in the life of the community; and develop their own practice of Bible study and reading.
- People learn about Jesus by studying the Gospels; they experience the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus through the seasons of the church year; and they reflect upon their understanding of Jesus and how to follow him.

- People learn about prayer and spirituality and how to develop their spiritual lives through prayer and spiritual disciplines; they experience the prayer life of the faith community; and they are equipped to develop their own practice of prayer and the spiritual disciplines.

#2. Infuse Intergenerational Experiences into Current Programs and Activities

Think of all the possibilities for incorporating intergenerational relationship building and experiences using the programs and activities your congregation is already offering—age-specific programs and all ages community activities. Allow the following ideas to spark your own thinking about the potential for infusing an intergenerational element into current programs and activities.

- Include all generations in Sunday worship and involve all generations in worship leadership roles—music, art, hospitality, reading Scripture, and more. While there may be time during the Scripture readings and sermon/homily when children have a separate experience, it's important to have children involved with the whole worship community for most of the service.
- Add other generations into current age-group programs, such as mission trips, service projects, retreat experiences, and vacation Bible school. Consider adding intergenerational experiences into VBS such as a grandparent component or redesigning the youth mission trip into an all ages mission trip from adolescents to older adults.
- Incorporate intergenerational dialogues, interviews, and presentations into programming—providing opportunities for children and youth to experience the wisdom, faith, and interests of (older) adults; and then reverse the process and provide opportunities for the (older) adults to experience the wisdom, faith, and interests of children or teens through presentations, performances, and discussions.
- Add a mentoring component into children, adolescent, and parent programming: parent mentors for baptism parents, confirmation mentors, learning-to-pray spiritual direction, justice and service mentors—to name a few possibilities.
- Connect people of different generations who have insights and life experiences that may be helpful to other generations, for example midlife and mature adults helping new parents with financial management and household management, or young people helping older adults navigate the digital and online world.
- Involve the whole community in praying for special moments and experiences, for example: birth and baptism of a child, young people on a mission trip or retreat weekend, a milestone event such as first communion or graduations.
- Add intergenerational relationship building and activities into social and recreational activities in the congregation, such as the church picnic and after worship gatherings.
- Develop specific roles for the younger generations in church leadership, such as adolescents serving as teachers in children's faith formation or as worship leaders.
- Develop a leadership or ministry apprenticeship for younger generations to serve in church ministries and leadership positions.

#3. Connect the Generations through New Intergenerational Programs and Experiences

A third way to enhance the power of intergenerational faith formation experiences in your congregation is to create new programs and activities that bring together all of the generations for learning, celebrating, praying, reading the Bible, serving and working for justice, and worshipping. Here are ideas for creating new intergenerational learning and intergenerational service programming.

Intergenerational Service Models

Intergenerational service provides many benefits to the whole church community. Intergenerational service helps narrow the generation gap between older and younger church members; recognizes that all people in the church, regardless of age, have talents to contribute that are valuable and important; assists young people in feeling a part of the church today, not just the church of tomorrow; connects the generations and builds relationships as they serve God by serving their neighbor; and communicates that it is the responsibility of all Christians, regardless of age, to serve people and work for justice as a follower Jesus Christ.

Here are several ideas for creating new programming that engages all ages in serving those in need, caring for creation, and working for justice. There are so many local, national, and global organizations that provide educational resources and action projects your church can use to create new intergenerational programming.

An Annual Church-Wide Service Day

Mobilize the whole faith community through an annual church-wide justice and service project. Create a four-week, church-wide campaign that culminates on a Sunday where the entire congregation engages in service projects in and with the community. As an individual church or with churches in your area, select a local and global project already developed by a justice or service organization. Then develop an annual theme, such as poverty, care for creation, peacemaking. Prepare the whole community for the service engagement, utilizing the resources developed by the partner organizations. Include 1) worship and prayer experiences focused on the particular theme or project; 2) educational sessions including social analysis of the issues and reflection on the teachings of scripture and the Christian tradition; 3) household activities on the theme or project such as prayers, learning resources, and action suggestions; 4) a website with the resources, activities, action projects, and features to allow people to share what they are doing; and 5) special presentations by experts on the issues and by people engaged in action on the issue.

A Monthly Intergenerational Service Project

Using the same design as the church-wide service day, a congregation can develop a monthly service project that addresses one particular need or issue (local and/or global) each month. Each month's project can include a short educational program of the topic, an action project, and reflection on the project. Themes for the service projects can correspond with calendar events and seasons, as well as church year seasons. Examples include Back to School (September) and school kits for students, Thanksgiving (November) and feeding the hungry, Lent (February or March) and serving the poor, and Earth Day (April) and caring for creation.

Intergenerational Service Nights at Church

Service Nights are simple, self-contained programs at church that feature five to ten service activity stations that engage all ages in doing a simple project for the benefit of a group in need. At one station people might create greeting cards for the elderly or for sick church members. At another booth they might make blankets for a homeless shelter. At another booth they might bake cookies or make sandwiches for a soup kitchen. Many organizations provide the organizational logistics a church needs to a service project, for example Feed My Starving Children provides the resources for people to pack food that will be shipped to people in need.

Intergenerational Learning Models

For more than 20 congregations from a variety of Christian traditions have been developing and implementing new models of intergenerational faith formation and learning. Intergenerational learning provides a way to educate the whole community, bringing all ages and generations together to learn with and from each other, build community, share faith, pray, celebrate, and practice the Christian faith. The key is that everyone is learning together—young and old, single and married, families with children and empty-nest families, and it involves the whole family—children, parents, grandparents, in a shared experience of the Christian faith.

We know from the research findings that one of the most significant features of intergenerational faith formation is the way it builds community among people, and relationships across ages and generations. Central to building relationships and community is creating an atmosphere of hospitality and welcoming at intergenerational learning sessions where everyone feels a sense of belonging, acceptance, and respect. *This welcoming spirit is as important as the content being taught.* The intergenerational learning model creates the environment and experiences where people of all ages learn from each other and grow in faith together. Adults gain meaningful insights from their interaction with children and youth; and children and youth experience meaningful support from non-parental adults. Intergenerational learning creates an environment in which participants feel safe to learn, ask questions, and grow in faith on a deeper level.

We know from the research that intergenerational learning strengthens parental and family faith by encouraging the whole family to participate—children, teens, parents, and grandparents. It equips parents (and grandparents) to be faith formers of their children by developing their competence and confidence through such faith-forming experiences as sharing stories, celebrating rituals, praying together, reading the Bible, and more. Intergenerational learning provides activities that model the practices that churches want parents and families to live at home. The research findings also revealed that families *enjoy* opportunities to pray, learn, and be together (even if parents may resist participating initially).

Model #1. Generations of Faith

The Generations of Faith intergenerational model is based on the work of James White in his book *Intergenerational Religious Education* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1988). White identified four patterns of relationships that shape the four components of an intergenerational religious education learning experience: 1) in-common experiences, 2) parallel learning, 3) contributive occasions, and 4) interactive sharing.

The model created by the Generations of Faith Project used White's four components in the following way. This model can be used for all ages intergenerational faith formation or for family faith formation with children, adolescents, and their parents (and grandparents).

1. Gathering and opening prayer
2. All-ages learning experience: intergenerational learning begins with a multigenerational experience of a theme that all generations can share together.
3. In-depth learning experience: through structured learning activities each generation—families with children, adolescents, and other adults—explores the biblical and theological understanding of the topic, using one of three possible formats:
 - The *Age Group Format* provides parallel, age-appropriate learning for groups at the same time. Though age groups are separated, each one is focusing on the same topic—utilizing specific learning activities that are designed for their life cycle stage: families with children or children alone, adolescents, young adults, and adults.
 - The *Whole Group Format* provides a series of facilitated learning activities for everyone at the same time using intergenerational or age-specific small groups or table groups.
 - The *Learning Activity Center Format* provides structured intergenerational and age-specific learning activities at a variety of stations or centers in a common area.
4. Sharing learning reflections and application: in intergenerational groups participants share what they learned and prepare for applying their learning to daily life using resources and activities provided in print or online.
5. Closing prayer service

Congregations are using the intergenerational model of learning in a variety of ways:

1. To develop a faith formation curriculum for the whole community using intergenerational faith formation as the primary learning model, supplemented by age-specific and affinity group faith formation models
2. To extend a topic featured in the faith formation program for children or teens, to the whole community through intergenerational learning
3. To replace a topic in the children or adolescent program with intergenerational learning on the same theme
4. To add intergenerational learning to milestone and sacramental preparation and celebrations
5. To conduct intergenerational faith formation around church year feasts and seasons, such as Advent-Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Pentecost, and more
6. To add intergenerational learning experiences into a vacation Bible school, camp, or summer program
7. To conduct intergenerational learning in preparation for service projects and actions for justice
8. To sponsor an intergenerational retreat for the whole community.

Churches that make intergenerational learning their core faith formation experience for all ages conduct monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly intergenerational programs, and then offer a variety of age-group 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.

Since the early 2000s St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church in Acton, Massachusetts, has been offering monthly intergenerational learning as the core faith formation experience for all ages. Their curriculum is liturgically-centered, connecting faith formation with the realities of daily experience and the Eucharistic celebration. For St. Elizabeth the Sunday Eucharist is the heart of all efforts to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ. This is where their community accompanies everyone on their journey of life and faith. They schedule intergenerational learning monthly between Labor Day and the Easter season with four sessions per month to accommodate the large number of participants and their different schedules. Every session begins with a meal. What follows varies from month-to-month, but usually includes an opening activity in common and age-appropriate breakouts (grades K-4 with at least one parent, middle school, high school, and adult). Each session runs no longer than two and one-half hours. Each month's theme is drawn from one of the Sunday lectionary readings in that month. Some years they adopt a theme—2017-18 is Discipleship—while other years have a monthly theme drawn directly from the lectionary readings. In addition to monthly programs, St. Elizabeth sponsored a 24 hour intergenerational experience of prayer, learning, service, and worship called “24 Hours with the Lord” and has sponsored an intergenerational mission trip. To learn more about their work go to <http://www.seoh.org/faith-formation/gift>. (Download the annual plan with themes.)

While St. Elizabeth is a large suburban parish, Our Lady of Fatima is a small town church in New York State. Since the early 2000s they have been doing monthly intergenerational faith formation called GIFT, a parish model of intergenerational, life-long, event-centered faith formation. All ages gather once a month for a learning session around a yearly theme. In 2017-18 they are focusing on Mary, the mother of Jesus, and learning through her about the life of Jesus. Gatherings are on Saturday, and begin with a potluck supper immediately following the 4:00 pm Mass. To learn more about their program go to http://www.rcda.org/churches/OurLadyOfFatima/faith_formation.html. (Download the annual plan with themes.)

St. Anthony on the Lake parish in Pewaukee, WI has been offering family-intergenerational faith formation for over 25 years. They started with 20 families and have grown to over 350 families, which includes adult-only households. Offered on Sunday mornings or Monday evenings (whatever is most convenient for people), twice a month mid-September through March, the program begins with an intergenerational activity and breaks into age-group learning where both parents/grandparents, children, and youth explore faith themes covering the Bible, the Creed, sacraments, morality, and prayer and spirituality. The Sunday program begins at 10 am with fellowship and concludes at 12 noon; the Monday program begins with a light supper at 5:30 pm and ends at 7:30 pm. To learn more about their program go to: <http://www.stanthony.cc/family-program>.

Model 2. Logos

A second model of intergenerational (and family) learning has been created by *GenOn Ministries* (www.genonministries.org) and includes weekly intergenerational experiences for children and/or youth that creates an intentional arena where all ages can learn about and practice the art of Christian relationships. In these cross-generational gatherings, everyone eats together, plays together, studies together, and prays together. These four parts, plus weekly congregational worship, make up the whole,

providing everyone involved a cross-generational arena in which to have a complete, holistic experience of Christian nurture. In addition, young people also lead in congregational worship on a regular basis.

The four-part learning model includes:

1. *Bible study*: A time for each grade or a combination of grades to study the Bible as the model for Christ-centered living. Churches can use a non-denominational curriculum developed by GenOn for LOGOS or their own curriculum.
2. *Worship skills*: Choir, drama, bells, or other arts are rehearsed at LOGOS and then presented regularly in corporate worship. Each church decides the best fit with its own liturgy and worship style.
3. *Family Time*: The shared meal is a time to gather regular “table families” of various ages who eat together each week for the entire program year. Kitchen teams prepare dinners that are served family style, using table settings and serving dishes practicing the art of serving one another.
4. *Recreation*: All have great fun in a cooperative atmosphere, often drawing on the hobbies and interests of adults in the congregation willing to share their passions on a one-time basis or longer.

Model 3. Messy Church

A third model of family/intergeneration learning is *Messy Church* (<http://www.messychurch.org.uk>, <http://messychurchaustralia.com.au>) started in 2004 in the UK with a simple question: “How can our small church reach the many families in our community?” Messy Church was created for those outside the church, and became church for them, not a stepping stone to Sunday morning church. Messy Church is church for families who may not find other forms of church appealing and who don’t yet belong to a church. There are now thousands of Messy Churches all around the world in most denominations.

A typical Messy Church meets monthly and includes four parts:

1. A flexible, relaxed arrival time with drinks and snacks
2. Creative exploration of a Bible story or theme through many creative experiences for people of different learning styles and of all ages. Children and adults are not separated and are encouraged to explore the story or theme together
3. A short but explicit time of worship with story, music and prayers that builds on the creative exploration that has already occurred.
4. A generous welcome and hospitality is expressed through an invitation to share a delicious home-cooked, sit-down meal with others

The key values which define Messy Church are Christ-centeredness, creativity, and joyful celebration in a spirit of generous, inclusive hospitality. Messy Church tries to focus on people as they are and form relationships with whole families, no strings attached.

Model 4. Intergenerational Vacation Bible School

A fourth, emerging model is family/intergenerational vacation Bible school. Congregations have begun to re-think vacation Bible school, redesigning a child-only experience into a family or intergenerational experience. One approach to intergenerational VBS has all ages participating for three or four evenings in the summer with food, fun, music, learning, and games. The program incorporates typical VBS Bible

content and interactive learning, but everything is intergenerational. A typical evening design (3 hours) could look like this: registration, light meal, opening /music, Bible story, outdoor activity/inside craft, and snacks and closing. A second approach begins each evening with a family-style meal. Then the children participate in Bible stories and activities, while the adults (parents, grandparents) participate in an adult-themed session. Families then reunite in the church for music and prayer to close the evening.

Other Models

For additional models of intergenerational faith formation check out the case studies in the two volumes of *Let's Kill Sunday School and Birth Cross + Gen Ministries* from Faith Inkubators.

Application of Intergenerational Ideas

Review the “Intergenerational Profile.” Analyze the ways that your congregation nurtures the faith of children, adolescents, and the whole family through intergenerational experiences in the faith community: relationship building, worship, rituals/sacraments, learning, service, prayer, and the other ministries and activities of your congregation.

- What are the strengths in your congregation?
- What are the areas that need improvement or attention in your congregation?
- What are the areas where new initiatives need to be created?

Develop ideas for improving current activities and for creating new initiatives for strengthening the intergenerational faith forming power of your congregation. Use the four categories for developing ideas: 1) Young Children, 2) Older Children, 3) Young Adolescents, 4) Older Adolescents, and 5) the Whole Family. Ideas can apply to multiple categories.

- How can you *utilize* the intergenerational events and experiences of church life (community life events, worship and the lectionary, seasons of the year, service and mission projects, prayer and spiritual formation) as a primary “content” in faith formation?
- How can you *infuse* intergenerational experiences and relationships into existing programs and activities?
- How can you *connect* the generations through new intergenerational programs and experiences that bring together all of the generations for learning, celebrating, praying, reading the Bible, serving and working for justice, and worshipping?

Part 3. Family Faith Formation

#1. Nurturing Family Faith Practices

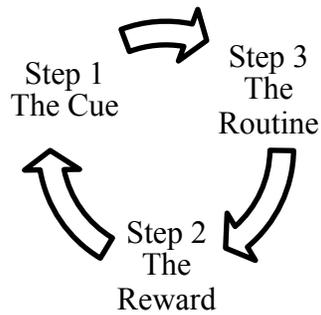
Equipping and resourcing families to practice their faith at home through prayer, devotions, reading the Bible, rituals, milestone celebrations, service, learning, and more.

The family at home is the community where Christian faith practices are nurtured and practiced. We have discovered through research that certain faith practices make a significant difference in nurturing the faith of children and adolescents.

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. Participating regularly in Sunday worship as a family
5. Being involved in a faith community and serving in church as a family and as young people
6. Eating together as a family
7. Celebrating rituals and holidays at home
8. Having family conversations
9. Talking about faith, religious issues, and questions and doubts
10. Ritualizing important family moments and milestone experiences
11. Celebrating holidays and church year seasons at home
12. Providing moral instruction

Faith practices are learned and practiced as they woven seamlessly into the fabric of daily life. They can become “habits of faith.” Consider this when you woke up this morning, what did you do first? Did you hop in the shower, check your messages, put on your sneakers and workout or go for run, or have breakfast? Did you tie the left or right shoe first? What did you eat for lunch? What did you do when you got home in the evening?

Most of the choices we make each day may feel like the products of well-considered decision making, but they’re not. They’re habits. Charles Duhigg, in *The Power of Habit*, writes that at the core of every habitual pattern is a habit loop. The habit loop can be broken down into three basic steps. First, there is a cue, a trigger that tells your brain to go into automatic mode. The cue can be internal, such as a feeling or thought, or external, such as a time of day or the company of certain people (which is why it’s easier to exercise among our running buddies, but harder to study when our friends are in the library). The second part of the habit loop is the routine, the behavior that leads to the reward. The routine can be physical (eating a donut), cognitive (“remember for the test”), or emotional (“I always feel anxious in math class”). The third part is the reward. Not surprisingly, the reward can also be physical (sugar!), cognitive (“that’s really interesting”), or emotional (“I always feel relaxed in front of the TV.”). The reward determines if a particular habit loop is worth remembering.



Here is the process of creating a habit, drawn from Charles Duhigg's *The Power of Habit*.

The Cue: Every habit has a trigger.

- What time will this habit occur?
- Where will you be?
- What else will be around?
- What will you have just finished?
- What emotion do you think you will be feeling?

People do not need all these to create a habit. Only one of them is needed to become a cue. But the more people test out, the faster the habit takes hold.

The Reward

- What reward will you give yourself at the end of the behavior?
- Do you actually enjoy this reward? After a few days, ask: Do you crave this reward when you are exposed to the cue? After two weeks ask: Do you crave the intrinsic reward of the habit (how it makes you feel) more than the extrinsic reward (what you give yourself as a treat)?
- If yes, people have created a powerful habit. If not, people need to choose a new reward.

The Routine: This is the behavior you want to become a habit.

Studies show that the easiest way to implement a new habit is to write a plan:

“When ___ (cue)_____, I will ___ (routine)_____ because it provides me with ___ (reward)_____.

People should post their plan where they will see it. Try it for a week. Eventually, studies say the new behavior will become automatic)

We can help families integrate the faith practices into their daily routine by designing activities that present the faith practices in a way that will lead toward making the practice a habit. We can design activities for a particular practice (like reading the Bible) that only take 5 or 10 minutes, suggest a variety of ways to integrate the activity into daily life, have people create a plan, and invite people to reflect on the benefits of the practice after their experience.

One example of helping families form “habits of faith” comes from Traci Smith who proposes a 7-day start up plan for integrating faith practices into daily life using the activities in her book *Faithful Families*:

Creating Sacred Moments at Home. This approach provides an immersion experience for families out of which habits can develop. Explore the other programming ideas at the end of this section.

#2. Celebrating Milestones

Celebrating one-time milestones and annual milestones through experiences at home and in the congregation that activities of naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing

A milestone is a an action or event marking a significant change or stage in development. These life and faith markers can provide important times for engaging families when they are most open to change and growth. Milestones are significant moments in life's journey that provide the opportunity for families to experience God's love and grow in faith through events in the life of the church community and family life. Milestones faith formation provides a natural opportunity to create a partnership between the congregation and the home. Here is a plan from Milestones Ministry (<https://milestonesministry.org>):

- Birth and Baptism
- Anniversary of Baptism: Remembering our way of life
- Prayer: Relationships with God and family
- Welcoming young children to worship: An intentional invitation
- Beginning faith formation at church: First steps for a young child
- Kids and money; Good stewards of God's gifts
- Blessing of the backpacks: A Fall milestone for all ages
- Communion: learning more about the Lord's Supper
- Bible: Placing Scripture in hands and homes
- My Body, God's Gift: Sexuality as God's good gift
- Middle school: Created in God's image
- Beginning confirmation: Walking with youth in their faith journeys
- Confirmation: An evening of honor
- Driver's License: Driver's license as rite of passage
- Mission trip: Community blessings at home and away
- High school graduation: Equipping graduates for the journey

Milestone faith formation can be developed around five elements: *naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing.*

1. *Naming* the sacred and ordinary events that take place in daily life—beginnings, endings, transitions, achievements, failures, and rites of passage, and creating rituals and traditions that shape our identities and give us a sense of belonging to the family of Jesus Christ.
2. *Equipping* brings people together for learning, builds community, invites conversation, encourages storytelling, and provides information. A family or intergenerational learning program—at church or home or in the community—prepares the individual and the whole family for the milestone and for living faith at home.
3. *Blessing* the individual and marking the occasion in a worship service and in the home says that it is *all* about faith. God is present in all of daily life, making the ordinary sacred. Offer a prayer to bless the lives of those involved in the milestone moment: a prayer during worship for those participating in the milestone moment and a prayer at a small group or with family at home.

4. *Gift*ing offers a tangible, visible item that serves as a reminder or symbol of the occasion being marked as well as a resource for the ongoing nurture of faith in daily life.
5. *Reinforcing* the milestone with a follow-up gathering of those involved in the milestone moment to help it gain deeper roots in the life of faith of those who participated.

#3. Celebrating the Seasons of the Year

Celebrating church year seasons and calendar seasons at home, at church, and in the community

Calendar events and the feasts and seasons of the church year provide a natural rhythm for faith formation at home throughout the year. The church year seasonal celebrations can engage families in the intergenerational life of the church, providing a natural way to connect church and home in faith formation. Consider some of the opportunities that occur each year.

Calendar Year Events: New Year's Eve and Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Earth Day, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Start of School, Halloween, Thanksgiving

Church Year Feasts and Seasons: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, St. Francis Day–Blessing the Animals (October 4), All Saints and Souls (November 1–2)

Every church year feasts and seasons provides an opportunity to connect home and church, and to explore more deeply the theological and spiritual meaning of the feast or season. The content and activities for the home can include rituals, learning activities, prayers, Bible reading, and ideas for action (serving, working for justice). There are an abundance of print, audio, and digital content for most feasts and seasons of the church year.

A calendar year event provides a way to connect the family with the church and/or the wider community. Calendar year events provide a way to engage in missional outreach to parents and families. Imagine hosting a blessing of the animals at church for the whole community on a weekend close to the Feast of St. Francis on October fourth. For example an event like Martin Luther King Jr. or Earth Day can involve a family activity but also engaged in a community-wide action project and a prayer service at church or in a neighboring congregation. Consider Earth Day:

Earth Day in the community: community-wide cleanup, planting a community garden, planting trees in the community, and more.

Earth Day at church: all-ages workshop on caring for creation, story time at the public library focused on environmental awareness books, an ecumenical prayer service for caring for creation, an intergenerational program on the theological and biblical foundation of caring for creation, a church energy audit, adopting a global project to address the effects of climate change, recycling activities.

Earth Day at home: planting a family garden, mealtime creation prayer, daily Bible verses on caring for creation for April, children’s activities to explore and experience caring for creation, storybooks and videos on caring for creation themes, home energy and recycling audit.

How can the congregation more fully engage families in celebrating the feasts and seasons with whole community? How can the congregation equip, support, and provide resources for families to live church year feasts and seasons at home?

#4. Reading the Bible through the Year

Encounter God in the Bible through the year and develop the practices of reading and studying the Bible.

One way a congregation can implement this idea is through lectionary-based faith formation programming that explores the Sunday readings in family or intergenerational settings. Churches who do not use a lectionary-based approach can adopt a multi-week sermon series that focuses on a theme connected with Biblical teachings. Programming can include whole family activities, as well as age appropriate learning activities.

A second way to implement this idea is to focus on family resources that flow from the Sunday worship experience. The key is to extend and deepen the experience of Sunday worship at home through activities, practices, and resources. This includes providing a variety of age-appropriate and whole family digital content on the church’s faith formation website. Determine a focusing theme or topic that emerges from the scripture readings and make that the lens you use to select resources. Many churches now provide weekly online faith formation for families and age groups centered on Sunday worship, the readings, and the sermon.

A family faith formation plan can include the following elements, designed around the theme from Sunday worship:

- family conversation questions on the theme of the Sunday readings.
- activities for the church year feast or season (when appropriate).
- weekly table ritual.
- a podcast or video of the sermon with a study guide for the parents, children’s creative Bible activities, storybooks, video presenting the Bible story.
- daily prayer, weekly family devotion.
- short bible reading for each day of the week, online resources for studying the Bible (print, audio, video).
- ideas for living the biblical teaching in the family or in the community.

Practical Strategies for Enhancing Family Faith

Here are several practical suggestions for implementing the four faith forming strategies in a congregation.

1. **Develop a family faith formation website.** Develop a family website with engaging family faith forming activities—print, audio, video, apps, and more—tailored to families with children and adolescents (and with parent content as well). The website serves as the resource center with

content and activities and as a portal to family activities online. This is essential element of all of family strategies.

2. **Seasonal family festivals and gatherings.** Develop family gatherings or festivals around the four seasons—fall, winter, spring, and summer—or around the church year—Advent-Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost. Select a theme for each gathering such as a faith practice and/or seasonal event and/or Scripture readings. Schedule these as part of the annual calendar. Connect Sunday worship with the family festival.
3. **Connect to Sunday worship.** Find ways to connect faith practices and seasonal formation at home to readings in the Lectionary or in a sermon series, provide a short intro to living faith at home, and show people the at-home activities on the family faith formation website.
4. **Schedule a yearlong plan for milestones.** Integrate milestones formation and celebration that can be schedule into a yearly plan of church-based faith formation for each age group. For example:
 - August: Blessing of the backpacks
 - September: Beginning faith formation at church
 - October: Bible: Placing Scripture in hands and homes
 - November; Kids and money—being good stewards of God’s gifts
 - February: My body, God’s gift
 - March: Drivers license (for those who have and are about to receive a license)
 - April: Communion
 - May: High school graduation
 - June: Mission trip
5. **Make faith practices a seasonal focus.** Make a Christian practice the focus of a season or individual months through all family or intergenerational learning, worship and preaching, and service/action. For example, during the Lenten season the congregation and family can focus on one or more practices that reflect the theology and liturgies of the season, such as forgiveness, discernment, prayer, or transforming the world.
6. **Create family immersion experiences.** Design an extended time programs (half-day, full day) that teach faith through immersion experiences—at church or out in the community—where families can experience a practice first hand, such as hospitality at a homeless shelter or serving a meal at a soup kitchen or caring for creation by planting a garden.
7. **Develop a monthly seasonal event.** The seasons of the year offers a variety of opportunities for families to celebrate, learn, and have fun together. Select one family activity for each month of the year, reflecting the calendar seasons and the church year seasons, and publish the activity on the family website. Here’s a example:
 - January: Martin Luther King Jr.
 - February: Ash Wednesday
 - March: The Real St. Patrick
 - April: Easter and New Life
 - May: Mother's Day
 - June: Vacation Travel

July: Independence Day
August: Back to School
September: Fall Harvest
October: A Helping Halloween
November: Thanksgiving
December: Christmas is Coming!

Selected Resources

- Barrie, Wendy Claire. *Faith at Home: A Handbook for Cautiously Christian Practices*. New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2016.
- Milestones Ministry. Milestone models at <https://milestonesministry.org>
- Muldoon, Tim and Sue. *Six Sacred Rules for Families: A Spirituality for the Home*. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2013.
- O'Boyle, Donna Marie Cooper. *Feeding Your Family's Soul: Dinner Table Spirituality*. Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2016.
- Scandrette, Mark and Lisa. *Belonging and Becoming: Creating a Thriving Family Culture*. Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2016.
- Smith, Traci. *Seamless Faith: Simple Practices for Daily Family*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2015.

#5. Equipping Parents and Grandparents as Faith Formers

Equipping parents and grandparents with the knowledge and skills necessary for faith-forming: how to transmit faith and values to their young people, how to become a Christian role model, and how to build a community of faith at home that nurtures faith growth in the young.

We know that factors that make a significant difference in promoting faith in children and adolescents include: parents' personal faith and practice, a close and warm parent-child relationship, parents' modeling and teaching a religious faith, parents' involvement in church life and Sunday worship, grandparents' religious influence and relationship, family conversations about faith, and family faith religious practices including praying, reading the Bible, serving others, and celebrating holidays and rituals.

In a recent study by Lifeway Research, *Nothing Less: Engaging Kids in a Lifetime of Faith*, researchers 2,000 Protestant and nondenominational churchgoers of all whom attend services at least once a month and have adult children ages 18 to 30. Researchers wanted to know what parenting practices pay off over the long haul when it comes to spiritual health. They asked parents to think about their children today (18-30 years old) and what proved to be significant in developing their faith and spiritual life. They discovered nine things parents do to influence the long-term spiritual condition of their young people (not ranked in order)

1. Parents participated in mission trips as a family as their kids were growing up.
2. Parents in ministry of service projects with their kids as they were growing up.
3. Parents frequently shared Christ with unbelievers as their kids were growing up.
4. Parents personally read the Bible several times a week or more as their kids were growing up.
5. Parents encouraged their teen to serve in the church.
6. Parents typically asked for forgiveness when they messed up as their children were growing up.

7. Parents encouraged their children's own unique talents and interests as they grew up.
8. Parents attended churches that emphasized what the Bible says as their kids were growing up.
9. Parents taught their children to tithe as their kids were growing up.

Marcia Bunge has identified practices from the Christian tradition that describe how parents can fulfill their duties as Christian parents. These eight practices are often mentioned in the Christian tradition as ways to strength a child's moral and spiritual development. These practices resonate well with the research on faith transmission and can serve as the basis of programs and resources for equipping parents and grandparents as faith formers of their young people.

1. Reading and discussing the Bible with children.
2. Participating in community worship, family rituals, and traditions of worship and prayer.
3. Introducing children to good examples and mentors.
4. Participating in service projects with parents or other caring adults and teaching financial responsibility.
5. Singing together and exposing children to the spiritual gifts of music and the arts.
6. Appreciating the natural world and cultivating a reverence for creation.
7. Educating children and helping them discern their vocations.
8. Fostering life-giving attitudes toward the body, sexuality, and marriage (14–17).

There are three components of a parent and grandparent strategy: 1) promoting their spiritual and religious growth, 2) developing their faith forming skills, and 3) equipping them with the knowledge and skills for parenting today.

Spiritual and religious growth. This content will need to be tailored to the four spiritual-religious identities of parents—active, occasional, spiritual/uninvolved, and unaffiliated; and to the traditions, beliefs, and practices of the particular Christian tradition. This content includes, but is not limited to: developing a relationship and commitment to Jesus, experiencing the presence of God in daily life and relationships with others, praying, having Christian moral and ethical values to decide what is right or wrong, serving those in need and applying faith in the world, growing spiritually, reading and studying the Bible, and developing a well-informed Christian faith (Christian beliefs).

Faith-forming skills and practices. This content would include, but is not limited to: having family conversations about religious topics, reading and discussing the Bible, prayer as a family and as individuals, participating in Sunday worship, celebrating family rituals and milestones, celebrate holidays and seasons, engaging in actions of service, justice, and care for creation, talking about faith and the religious tradition, and providing moral instruction and discussing moral issues.

A helpful framework for thinking about the parent faith forming skills and practices is contained in the research study by Christian Smith and Justin Bartkus. They identify three primary roles parents play in transmitting religion.

1. *Sponsor of the Faith:* Parents are the point of access between the church and their children. If children are not initially exposed to the Christian faith by their parents, they usually will not be exposed to it at all.

2. *Gatekeeper of the Faith.* Parents have nearly total control over how much and what sorts of religious content their children encounter—whether prayer, reading the Bible, or receiving Communion will occur regularly in their lives; whether they will be exposed to relationships and communities that have a religious dimension, and so forth. Parents are thus the “gatekeeper” of religious content for their children. To use another metaphor, parents are like a faucet, determining whether religious content will arrive in children’s lives at an occasional drip or in a regular flow.

3. *Interpreter of the Faith.* Parents are definitive role models, mentors, who embody a specific manner of being Christian. They teach children how to apprehend the world, how to understand what is good and what is evil, how one ought to affectively, intellectually and practically engage with the world, and so on. They do not just “represent” the faith; in many cases, they are the only meaningful embodiment of that faith in the lives of children. Parents render faith a matter of flesh and blood rather than a lifeless mishmash of doctrines and teachings. If children do not “see” the Christian faith in the “face” of their parents, they will likely never gain sufficient familiarity with it to commit to practicing the faith in the long run. (Adapted from Smith and Bartkus, 15)

Knowledge and skills for parenting. Based on the Developmental Relationships research from the Search Institute we can identify important practices for effective parenting. This content includes, but is not limited to:

- expressing care to young people by listening to them, being dependable, encouraging them, and make them feel known and valued
- challenging young people by expecting them to do their best and live up to their potential
- providing support for my young people by encouraging their efforts and achievements and guiding them to learn and grow
- treating young people with respect, hearing their voice, and including them in decisions that affect them
- inspiring young people to see possibilities for their future, expose them to new experiences and places, and connect them to people who can help them grow
- demonstrating a warm and affirming parenting approach
- creating a warm, caring supportive family environment.
- practicing effective communication skills
- managing “screen time” and social media use
- learning effective discipline practices
- creating a warm, caring supportive family

Suggestions for Conducting Parent Programming

1. **Address diverse spiritual-religious identities of parents.** Parent formation needs to be responsive to the needs, interests, concerns of parents and families in each of the four spiritual-religious types—Engaged, Occasional, Spiritual, Unaffiliated. There is no one-size-fits-all model of parent faith formation that will work today.

2. **Have parents practice new skills with their own children during program sessions.** This is in contrast to training programs where no practice takes place or where parents are asked to role-play with another parent or the group leader.
3. **Design programs that engage parents in the learning experience.** Parent programs need to have content that is relevant to parents and processes that help parents learn and want to participate in new learning. Here are several tips for designing and leading effective educational experiences for parents.
 - Create a supportive, caring environment for learning. Greet parents, provide time for them to get acquainted with one another, and encourage mutual support during and after the experience.
 - Actively engage parents in the learning. The amount they learn will be in direct proportion to how much they put into the experience.
 - Let parents be the experts. Show that you value their knowledge and experience by giving them opportunities to contribute to the learning experience.
 - Tie the learning activities around the parents' experiences and values so they know "this is for me and about my family."
 - Focus the content on real needs, issues, and concerns, not just on content that parents ought to know. If, for example, you want to help parents teach their child/teen about healthy concepts of right and wrong, first identify the ways this connects with parents' needs or concerns regarding moral values, then develop the experience to reflect those concerns.
 - Include information and skills parents can put into action immediately. Such application reinforces and helps parents internalize what they learn.
 - Demonstrate how to use skills and practices during the program so that parents have a direct experience of how to use the skills or practice at home.
 - Provide resources that parents can use for their own personal growth and with their family. Consider developing a parent website with resources and links to websites to enhance and expand the learning experience.
4. **Use a variety of environments and methods to engage all parents, anytime and anywhere.** Use a variety of settings—-independent, mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, church-wide, in the community, and in the world. The seven environments provide a way to offer a diversity of programs in different learning environment as well as to offer the same program content in multiple learning environments—all of which provides parents with more options to participate and broadens the scope of parent formation and education offerings.
5. **Use online platforms and digitally enabled strategies.** Blending gathered community settings with online learning environments. Utilize the abundance of digital media and tools for parent formation and education—to engage parents anytime, anyplace, and just-in-time—and extend and expand faith formation from physical, face-to-face settings into their daily lives through digital content and mobile delivery systems.

Online platforms for parents (websites) integrate the content (programs, activities, resources), connect people to the content and to each other, provide continuity for people across different learning experiences, and make everything available anytime, anywhere, 24-7-365. Digital media tools and resources—social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and more), webinars and online

learning, video conferencing, videos, audio podcasts, and much more—provide more features in designing parent programs, more methods for delivering programs, and more ways to connecting parents to each other.

6. **Give parents a plan.** Reggie Joiner and the Think Orange team emphasize how important it is to give families a plan. “When parents show up at church, they are often asking silent questions that we must answer; questions they don’t even know they’re asking. To begin looking at parents through a different filter, imagine that every time a parent walks through the door, he or she is asking you to do three things:
 - *Give me the plan.* Most parents are parenting reactively, yet many of them desire to be proactive. They want a plan that will give them a system of support, consistent influence, and a steady flow of relevant information. In essence, what they need from the church is a partner.
 - *Show me how it works.* Parents need to be influences as much as children do, and they desire to be engaged in the process in a way that prompts them to take the best next step. Church leadership has the potential to challenge them collectively and give them a network of families to connect with personally.
 - *Tell me what to do today.* If we are going to truly partner with parents, we have to give them specific instructions or resources to use this week. Sometimes parents have a lack of vision, but often they just don’t know where to start. Give parents a map and a schedule. (Joiner 2010, 89–90)

Ideas for Parent Programming

1. **Parent website.** A parent or family faith formation website can provide online learning experiences (workshops, webinars, courses, audio podcasts, video programs). A website can provide parents with resources in all three content areas in a variety of media. The website can also extend learning from gathered parent programs. The website can include original programming created by the congregation and curated programming from other sources. Digital initiatives, such as the website or webinars, provide a way to reach a wider audience of parents in the community. A great example of a website designed for parents is ParentFurther (<http://www.parentfurther.com>).
2. **Parent programs.** In gathered settings (large group or small group) or online (webinars, online courses, video programs) parent programs can be created and/or curated using the content suggested earlier in the section.
 - Develop a progression of parent workshops, webinars, or courses through the life cycle as children and adolescents enter a new stage of life—birth: parenting young children; start of school: parenting older children; parenting young adolescents; parenting older adolescents; parenting emerging adults.
 - Incorporate parent formation and education into congregational events that already engage parents, such as parent preparation programs for baptism, first communion, or confirmation, as well as the celebration of milestones
 - Provide targeted programs of theological and biblical formation for parents and grandparents in a variety of learning formats to make it easy for them to access the opportunities: independent (online), mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, or church-wide.

Incorporate a parent component into an adult faith formation program so that the specific needs of parents can be address.

- Add a parent-only component to family-intergenerational learning programs that addresses parent faith formation or skills development while their children are participating in child-focused activities. Gather the groups together for a shared experience to put into practice what they learned.
- Add a parallel parent experience to the existing children and adolescent program where parents can gather occasionally for a targeted program while their children are in age-specific programs.
- Add a parent component to vacation Bible school in the evenings or online.
- Provide online faith formation for parents using college and seminary programs and organizations such as ChurchNext (<https://www.churchnext.tv>), which offers hundreds of short online courses in spiritual and faith enrichment.

3. **Laboratory experiences.** Immerse parents in hands-on experiences—with or without their children—that teach knowledge and skills for faith-forming and parenting. A family-centered worship experience can be an opportunity to teach parents about worship, reading the Bible, and how to do these things at home. A church-wide service day can be an opportunity to teach parents about the biblical basis of service and how to integrate service into family life. A church year seasonal celebration can be an opportunity to teach about ritual and how to celebrate rituals and church year seasons at home. These immersion experiences can be supported with online content for parents and for the whole family.
4. **Parent mentors.** Provide guidance and support for parents and the whole family at each stage of life with mentors drawn from the grandparent generation who are actively engaged in church and bring decades of parenting and family life experiences. Congregations can identify and provide training for mentors (mentoring skills, understanding today’s family, learning how to access online resources and activities, and more). Developing relationships between parents and mentors can begin with birth/baptism. Mentoring can be life-cycle specific with mentors who focus on children or adolescents. Churches can also identify mentors (spiritual guides) who attend to people’s spiritual life, guiding them in growing in their relationship with God and learning more about the Christian faith.
5. **Life cycle or affinity groups for parents.** Create gathered settings (church, home, community) and in online groups (such as a Facebook parents group) that provide opportunities for parents with children in the same age group to talk about parenting, get information and encouragement, discuss family life issues and challenges, and more. Congregations can also sponsor support groups for divorced parents, parents in blended families, parents of children with special needs, and other affinity groupings. An example of a life cycle support group is MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers).

Application of Family Strategies

Begin by developing an inventory of how your congregation nurtures the faith of the family and equips parents (and grandparents)—at home and at church. Consider programming, activities, and resources, as well as the congregation’s ministries. Use the “Family and Parent” worksheet on the following page to organize your activities. Some activities will appear in multiple categories.

Analyze the ways that your congregation nurtures the faith of the family and equips parents.

- What are the strengths in your congregation?
- What are the areas that need improvement or attention in your congregation?
- What are the areas where new initiatives need to be created?

Develop ideas for improving the your congregation’s response to families and parents using the ideas contained in the five strategies. Build on your current strengths and identify new initiatives that you want to implement. Review the strategies before you begin.

- #1. Nurturing Family Faith Practices
- #2. Celebrating Milestones
- #3. Celebrating the Seasons of the Year
- #4. Reading the Bible through the Year
- #5. Equipping Parents and Grandparents as Faith Formers

Download a “Family Strategies Toolkit” from the *Families at the Center of Faith Formation* book with descriptions and examples of all eight strategies, and additional family faith formation resources and activities go to the Vision and Practices section of the LifelongFaith.com website:

<https://www.lifelongfaith.com/family-faith-formation.html>.

You may want to select family and parent ideas—at church, at home, and online—that apply across all four age groups: 1) Young Children, 2) Older Children, 3) Young Adolescents, 4) Older Adolescents.

You may want to focus on the in-depth development of one age group with family and parent ideas—at church, at home, and online.

You may want to focus on equipping parents using the ideas in Strategy #5.

A Family & Parent Plan

Strategy	Family with Young Children	Family with Older Children	Family with Young Adolescents	Family with Older Adolescents
----------	----------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------

Nurturing Family Faith

Faith Practices				
Celebrating Seasons				
Milestones celebrations				
Reading the Bible through the year				

Equipping Parents

Parents growing in faith				
Parents as faith formers				
Parents as family creators				

Part 3. Life Stage Faith Formation

Two Approaches for Personalizing Life Stage Faith Formation

Approach One: Personalize the Pathway for People

1. Develop pathways of faith maturing
2. Develop playlists of content and experiences tailored to the pathways
3. Upload playlists to a digital platform

Approach Two: Personalize the Offerings

1. Offer a variety of content, experiences, and activities tailored to different spiritual-religious identities and the life stage needs of people
 Getting Started ---- Growing ---- Going Deeper
2. Format the content tailored to different spiritual-religious identities
3. Develop a digital platform with content to address the needs

Digital Strategies for Faith Formation

- Extend a church event or program
- Design one event or program, offer it in multiple platforms
- Prepare for and follow-up an event or experience
- Flip a gathered program
- Integrate online and gathered
- Create online only experiences
- Use webinars, Facebook live, podcasts, etc. to deliver programming directly to people

Online

Online			Face-to-Face	
Fully Online	Mostly Online	Online and Gathered	Gathered and Online Content	Gathered with Online Content
An online program with all learning done online and limited face-to-face, gathered learning settings	A mostly online program with opportunities for regular interaction in face-to-face, gathered settings	Online learning focused on presenting the content of the program <i>combined with</i> face-to-face, gathered sessions using active learning methods to discuss, practice and apply the content.	A gathered event or program that provides online content and activities to extend and expand the learning from the gathered program	A gathered event or program that uses online content as part of the design of the event or program

Part 1. Create Pathways

Personalized learning is tailoring learning (faith formation) around each person's strengths, needs and interests—including enabling choice in what, how, when and where people learn (grow in faith and discipleship).

A Pathway is a process for helping people discern where they are in their faith journey and to chart a path for faith growth—to get from where they are to a closer relationship with Jesus and a deeper practice of the Christian faith.. People should be able to clearly understand where they are in their faith journey and their next steps in faith growth. They don't have to do everything, they just need to do the one next thing..

A Pathway is holistic incorporating the whole person: head, heart, and hands.

- *A way of the head* (inform) demands a discipleship of faith seeking understanding and belief with personal conviction, sustained by study, reflecting, discerning and deciding, all toward spiritual wisdom for life. This requires that we educate people to know, understand, and embrace with personal conviction Christianity's core belief and values.
- *A way of the heart* (form) demands a discipleship of right relationships and right desires, community building, hospitality and inclusion, trust in God's love, and prayer and worship. This requires that we foster growth in people's identity through formation and the intentional socialization of Christian family and community.
- *A way of the hands* (transform) demands a discipleship of love, justice, peace-making, simplicity, integrity, healing, and repentance. This requires that we foster in people an openness to a lifelong journey of conversion toward holiness and fullness of life for themselves and for the life of the world.

(See *Will There Be Faith: A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples*. Thomas Groome, HarperOne, 2011, pages 111-119).

A Pathway focuses on faith maturing. The goal of a Pathway is to develop disciples and promote faith growth. A Pathway is created around the church's vision of discipleship and mature faith—identifying characteristics of faith maturing that can be used for people to discern their faith journey and chart a path for growth.

Faith Maturing Characteristics

1. Developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ
2. Living as a disciple of Jesus Christ and making the Christian faith a way of life
3. Reading and studying the Bible—its message, meaning, and application to life today
4. Learning the Christian story and foundational teachings of the Christian faith (Trinity, Jesus, creed, morality and ethics) and integrating its meaning into one's life
5. Praying—together and alone, and seeking spiritual growth through spiritual disciplines
6. Living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values
7. Living the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God's creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace.
8. Worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship, ritual celebrations, and the seasons of the church year

9. Being actively engaged in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community
10. Practicing faith in Jesus Christ by using one's gifts and talents within the Christian community and in the world

Designing a Pathways Model for Discipleship & Faith Growth

1. Identify a target audience(s): children and parents, adolescents, young adults, midlife adults, mature adults, older adults.
2. Describe the life stage and religious-spiritual characteristics of your target audience.
3. Identify how you will use the Pathways model, for example:
 - Sacraments/milestones: Marriage, Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, beginning church faith formation, etc.
 - RCIA, evangelization, and new member processes
 - Gathered faith formation events and programming
 - Parenting meetings
 - Small groups: affinity groups, interest groups, Bible study groups,
 - On-ramps where people in your church might start the discipleship journey
4. Develop the characteristics of faith growth you want to use in your Pathways model. For example:
 - Option 1. Use characteristics of faith growth specific to the life stage (such as family faith practices) or the content of the event (such as preparing for confirmation)
 - Option 2. Use characteristics of maturing faith (see the "Faith Maturing Characteristics" below)
 - Relationships with Jesus Christ
 - Living the Christian way of life - discipleship
 - Living with moral integrity
 - Learning and articulating the teachings of the Christian tradition
 - Praying and seeking spiritual growth
 - Studying and reading the Bible
 - Engaging in service and mission to the world
 - Worshipping with the community
5. Develop a "discernment continuum" that gives people a way to reflect on their current growth, for example:
 - Inquiring---Getting Started---Making Progress---Going Deeper
 - How true is each statement for you: 1= not true from me , 3=somewhat true for me, 5=very true for me

Part 2. Develop Playlists of Content & Experiences

A faith formation playlist is a curated group of digital (online, video, audio, print) and gathered (church, home, small groups, etc.) faith forming experiences and resources that are tailored to the specific faith growth needs of people around a particular characteristic of faith maturing or theme/topic. Playlists are developed for each "stage" on the discernment continuum, such as Inquiring, Getting Started, Growing, Going Deeper. Each playlist provides a variety of ways for people to learn and grow in faith.

An Example of a Playlist

Characteristic: Reading and studying the Bible—its message, meaning, and application to life today

Getting Started

- Participate in the “Welcome to the Bible” program at church
- Watch the video programs on how to read the Bible
- Watch the video program with an overview of the Old Testament and New Testament
- Use the Guide to select a Study Bible and find the Bible online
- Participate in the 30-Day Bible Experience: Reading one Gospel (Matthew, Mark, or Luke)

Growing

- Develop a daily plan for reading the Bible
- Participate in the lectio divina reflection group after Sunday worship
- Learn how to pray with the Bible
- Join a Bible study group (church, home, coffee shop, online)

Going Deeper

- Read the Bible in 365 days
- Develop a personal Bible study plan
- Take an online course: Hebrew Scriptures, Gospels, Letters of Paul
- Study and pray the Psalms as a spiritual practice

Developing a Playlist

1. **Select content and experiences** to address each faith maturing characteristic with activities for each category of discernment, e.g., Inquiring, Getting Started, Growing, Going Deeper.
 - Incorporate intergenerational experiences
 - Incorporate family experiences
 - Incorporate age-specific experiences
2. **Using a variety of settings** or environments for faith growth: independent/individualized, mentored, at home, small group, large group, intergenerational /whole church, and world
3. **Address the ways people learn** through a variety of activities: verbal-linguistic (word / book smart), logical-mathematical (number / logic smart), visual-spatial (art / picture smart), bodily-kinesthetic (body / movement smart), musical-rhythmic (music / sound smart), naturalist (nature / environment smart), interpersonal (people / group smart), intrapersonal (self / introspection smart)
4. **Use a variety of methods**
 - Read
 - Write/keep a journal
 - Engage in storytelling and create stories
 - Feature films, TV shows, videos
 - Create a media project or video

- View or create art
- View or take photographs
- Watch or engage in drama
- Listen to or create a podcast
- Listen to or create music
- Conduct a demonstration
- Experience games, simulations, video games
- Analyze or create a case study
- Develop an apprenticeship or internship
- Create an exhibit
- Experience prayer and rituals
- Take a field trip
- Participate in a mission trip
- Engage in or create a service / action project
- Develop a mentor relationship

Part 3. Publish Playlists

Publish the Playlists on a digital platform and use social media for connection, interaction, and sharing learning reflections. You can add the playlists to your existing church website or create a website just for faith formation and link it to your 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.

Worksheet: Designing a Pathways Model

1. Identify a target audience(s): children and parents, adolescents, young adults, midlife adults, mature adults, older adults.
2. Describe the life stage & religious-spiritual characteristics of your target audience.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.
 - 8.
 - 9.
 - 10.
3. Identify how you will use the Pathways model. For example:
 - ✓ Sacraments/milestones: Marriage, Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, beginning church faith formation, etc.
 - ✓ RCIA, evangelization, and new member processes
 - ✓ Gathered faith formation events and programming
 - ✓ Parenting meetings
 - ✓ Small groups: affinity groups, interest groups, Bible study groups,
 - ✓ On-ramps where people in your church might start the discipleship journey
4. Develop the characteristics of faith growth you want to use in your Pathways model. For example:
 - ✓ Option 1. Use characteristics of faith growth specific to the life stage - such as family faith practices (see example) or the content of the event (such as preparing for confirmation)
 - ✓ Option 2. Use characteristics of maturing faith (see “Faith Maturing Characteristics”) – such as adult faith formation (see example)
5. Develop a ‘discernment continuum” that gives people a way to reflect on their current growth. For example:
 - ✓ Inquiring---Getting Started---Making Progress---Going Deeper
 - ✓ How true is each statement for you: 1= not true from me , 3=somewhat true for me, 5=very true for me

Family and Parent Growth Pathways

We believe God dwells in every family and that family life is sacred. The profound and the ordinary moments of daily life—mealtimes, workdays, vacations, expressions of love and intimacy, household chores, caring for a sick child or elderly parent, and even conflicts over things like how to celebrate holidays, discipline children, or spend money—all are the threads from which families can discover God and weave a pattern of family faith.

We believe that parents are the most important religious influence on their children, and it is our responsibility as a church to support and encourage you. We know that faith is formed when there is a substantial investment of thought, time, and intimacy by parents. Our church is here to support you as a parent in developing a strong, healthy, faith-filled family life.

To help you discover areas for growth and to help us serve you better, please take a few minutes to complete the Family Practices and Parent Practices. It will help you identify strengths and areas of growth in your own life and in your family's life by identifying how frequently you (or your family) engage in particular faith practices and parenting practices.

Rate each item on the following scale, based on how frequently you engage in the practice:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Rarely
- 3 = Occasionally
- 4 = Frequently
- 5 = Regularly

After you complete the review, identify areas of strength in your life as a parent and in your family life. Then identify areas that you and/or your family need to develop.

Family Practices

1. We eat together as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
1. We engage in positive communication as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
2. We have family conversations about things that are important to us.	1	2	3	4	5
3. We make decisions and solve problems as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
4. We treat each other with respect and dignity.	1	2	3	4	5
5. We support each other: encouraging, expressing care, standing up for each other	1	2	3	4	5
6. We talk about faith as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
7. We pray as a family (meal time, bedtime).	1	2	3	4	5
8. We pray as a family during times of struggle or crisis.	1	2	3	4	5
9. We celebrate meaningful traditions and rituals as a family (holidays, birthdays, accomplishments, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
10. We read the Bible as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
11. We use the Bible as guidance for how we should think and act as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
12. We serve people in need as a family..	1	2	3	4	5
13. We work to overcome injustice in our world as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
14. We engage in projects to care for the environment as a family.	1	2	3	4	5
15. We encourage children/teens to talk about their doubts and questions about faith.	1	2	3	4	5
16. We talk about faith and our religious tradition with our children and teens.	1	2	3	4	5
17. We ask about out children/teens perspectives on faith, religion, moral issues, social issues, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
18. We participate in Sunday worship as a family	1	2	3	4	5
19. We participate in church activities as a family	1	2	3	4	5
20. We celebrate the church year seasons at church (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter)	1	2	3	4	5
21. We celebrate the seasons of the church year at home (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter)	1	2	3	4	5
22. We encourage and support our children/teens to participate in church activities.	1	2	3	4	5

Areas We Are Strong as a Family (Review ratings of 4 and 5.)

Areas We Need to Grow as a Family (Review ratings 1, 2, and 3)

Parent Practices

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. I express care to my children/teens by listening to them, being dependable, encouraging them, and make them feel known and valued. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. I challenge my children/teens by expecting them to do their best and live up to their potential. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I provide support for my children/teens by encouraging their efforts and achievements and guiding them to learn and grow. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. I treat my children/teens with respect, hearing their voice, and including them in decisions that affect them. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. I inspire my children/teens to see possibilities for their future, expose them to new experiences and places, and connect them to people who can help them grow. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I demonstrate a warm and affirming parenting approach | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I create a warm, caring supportive family environment. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. I practice effective communication skills with my children/teens. | |
| 9. I work with my children/teens to manage “screen time” and social media use. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. I read and study the Bible. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. I use the Bible to discover how I should think and act. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. I encourage my children/teens to read the Bible. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. I pray to God and take quiet time to reflect and listen to God. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. I encourage my children and teens to pray. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. I am engaged in service to people in need . | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. I work to overcome injustice in our world. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. I am engaged in projects to care for the environment. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. I provide moral instruction and how to decide right and wrong. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. I take time to grow in my relationship with God as a parent | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. I take time to grow in my understanding and practice of the Christian faith. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Areas I Am Strong as a Parent (Review ratings of 4 and 5.)

Areas I Need to Grow as a Parent (Review ratings 1, 2, and 3)

Adult Faith Growth Pathway

We believe that growth in our relationship with God and in following Jesus (discipleship) is a lifelong process. We are constantly trying to grow deeper in our relationship with God and in living the Christian way of life each day. Our church is committed to helping you grow wherever you may be in your faith journey. We are committed to helping you live the Christian way of life everyday.

To help you discover areas for growth and to help us serve you better, please take a few minutes to complete the Adult Faith Growth Pathway. It will help you identify strengths and areas of growth in your own life. Use these statements to assess where you are honestly and prayerfully. Rate “How true each statement is for you” using the rating scale: 1 = Rarely true of me, 2 = Sometimes true of me, 3 = Occasionally true of me, 4 = Almost always true of me, 5 = Always true of me.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. I am growing in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. My faith shapes how I think and act each and every day. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I make the Christian faith a way of life by integrating my beliefs into the conversation, decisions, and actions of daily life. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. I am aware of God present and active in my own life, the lives of others, and the life of the world. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. I have a real sense that God is guiding me. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I seek 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. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I devote time to reading and studying the Bible. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. I use the Bible to discover how I should think and act. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. I pray to God and take quiet time to reflect and listen to God. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. I am growing spiritually through spiritual practices such as contemplation, <i>lectio divina</i> , praying Scripture, daily Examen (reflection), and meditation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. I can articulate the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. I am growing in my understanding of the Christian faith—beliefs, traditions, and practices. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. I exercise moral responsibility by applying Christian ethics, virtues, and values to making moral decisions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. My faith helps me know right from wrong. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. I live a life of service by caring for others and reaching out those in need. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. I am involved in ways to promote social justice and address injustice in the world. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. I am involved in actions to care for creation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. I share the Good News of Jesus through my words and actions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. I participate actively and regularly in the worship life of the church community. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. I participate in the life, ministries, and leadership of the church community. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Ways I Can Grow

- Areas Where I Need to “Get Started” (look at the numbers 1 and 2)
- Areas Where I Need to “Grow” (look at the numbers 2 and 3)
- Areas Where I Want to “Go Deeper” (look at the numbers 4 and 5)

Additional Adult Faith Formation Topics

Use the following topics to provide more specific adult faith growth content for a Pathways model.

Bible

- ✓ Study and read the Old Testament: The Pentateuch –to discover its message and meaning for life today
- ✓ Study and read the Old Testament: The Prophets – to discover the message and meaning of the prophets for our world today
- ✓ Study and pray the Psalms as a spiritual practice
- ✓ Study and read the four Gospels to discover the life, ministry, and message of Jesus and how it applies to our lives today
- ✓ Study and read the Letters of Paul to discover how his message to the first Christians applies to us today

Relationship with Jesus

- ✓ Discover how to begin (or begin again) my faith journey by exploring the heart of Christianity: Jesus, the Gospels, the church, and spiritual life
- ✓ Learn how to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ and explore what it means to be a disciple today in daily life – at home, at work, in the world

Christian Faith and Tradition

- ✓ Learn more about what we believe as a (religious tradition) today and why
- ✓ Explore how contemporary theologians present what it means to be a Christian in today's world, and how that can inform our experience of the God in our daily lives
- ✓ Become familiar with the great teachings of Christianity (its creeds and doctrines)
- ✓ Learn the richness of the Church's tradition, explore the theological and cultural heritage in which faith is expressed, and gain perspective on contemporary events and trends through an understanding of church history
- ✓ Learn the Church's teaching on the nature and mission of the Church,.

Worship

- ✓ Understand, live, and bear witness to the paschal mystery, celebrated and communicated through the sacramental life of the Church.
- ✓ Acquire the spirituality, skills, and habits of full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy, especially the eucharistic liturgy.
- ✓ Appreciate and appropriately participate in the Church's daily prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours, and learn to pray the psalms, "an essential and permanent element of the prayer of the Church."

Prayer & Spirituality

- ✓ Develop spiritual practices to sustain my life as a Christian
- ✓ Learn the stages of spiritual growth and experience spiritual practices to deepen my spiritual life
- ✓ Explore a spirituality for the second half of life and how to sustain and deepen the spiritual life
- ✓ Learn and practice ways to pray and meditate as part of daily life
- ✓ Get away for a retreat experience to reflect and deepen my spiritual life
- ✓ Receive spiritual guidance from trained spiritual directors who will help me on my faith journey

- ✓ Explore the history and meaning of Christian worship and how to get the most out of Sunday morning worship.
- ✓ Become familiar with the diverse forms and expressions of Christian prayer.
- ✓ Experience and appreciate the richness of the Catholic ascetical-mystical tradition as it has taken form across the centuries in diverse historical and cultural settings.
- ✓ Develop a regular pattern of personal prayer and spiritual reflection, recognizing vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer as basic and fruitful practices in the life of a disciple of Jesus.

Moral Living

- ✓ Study the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the moral catechesis of the apostolic teachings, and live in accord with them.
- ✓ Study the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person in its social doctrine, including its respect-life teaching
- ✓ Appreciate the dignity, destiny, freedom, and responsibility of the human person, together with the reality of sin and the power of God's grace to overcome it.
- ✓ Learn how to acquire and follow a well-formed conscience in personal and social life, clarifying current religious and moral questions in the light of faith, and cultivating a Christian discernment of the ethical implications of developments in the socio-cultural order.
- ✓ Live a lifestyle reflecting scriptural values of holiness, simplicity, and compassion.

Service & Justice

- ✓ Explore major social issues and the responsibility of Christians to transform the world
- ✓ Engage in projects and actions of service to those in need in our community and region
- ✓ Engage in projects and actions of service to those in need in our world
- ✓ Participate in mission trips to serve those in need in our country and around the world

Life Issues

- ✓ Discover my strengths as a person (gifts and talents) and how to utilize them to develop my “calling” in life
- ✓ Figure out how to balance the many commitments in my life: relationships, family, work, and more
- ✓ Develop life skills such as coping with stress, communicating effectively, managing my time, dealing with anger and sadness,
- ✓ handling conflict, and more
- ✓ Develop a financial “plan” by learning the skills and tools for creating savings, develop a personal/family budget, planning for the
- ✓ future (college, retirement), investing wisely, reducing debt, and more
- ✓ Discern my purpose in life as an adult: what am I committed to, where I am spending my time, what are my goals for the future,
- ✓ and more.
- ✓ Learn how to develop healthy relationships and let go of unhealthy ones
- ✓ Learn how to plan for life after retirement—relationships, finances, spiritual life, contributing to the church and the community, and
- ✓ more
- ✓ Join with a group of single adults for support, storytelling, and faith sharing
- ✓ Participate in a support group with those recovering from an addiction

Example: Adolescent Faith Growth Pathway

We believe that growth in our relationship with God and in following Jesus (discipleship) is a lifelong process. We are constantly trying to grow deeper in our relationship with God and in living the Christian way of life each day. Our church is committed to helping you grow wherever you may be in your faith journey. We are committed to helping you live the Christian way of life everyday.

To help you discover areas for growth and to help us serve you better, please take a few minutes to complete the Faith Growth Pathway. It will help you identify strengths and areas of growth in your own life. Use these statements to assess where you are honestly and prayerfully. Rate "How true each statement is for you" using the rating scale: 1 = Rarely true of me, 2 = Sometimes true of me, 3 = Occasionally true of me, 4 = Almost always true of me, 5 = Always true of me.

1. I know that Jesus Christ is the son of God who died on a cross and rose again. 1 2 3 4 5
2. I live my life and make moral decisions guided by moral values that tell me what is right or wrong behavior. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I am optimistic, trusting, and I am convinced that I can do much to make the world a better place. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I am involved in actions to serve those in need. 1 2 3 4 5
5. God cares for me in a special way. 1 2 3 4 5
6. My faith helps me know right from wrong. 1 2 3 4 5
7. I feel God's presence when I serve people in need. 1 2 3 4 5
8. I feel God's presence in prayer. 1 2 3 4 5
9. I am keenly aware of the presence of God in my life. 1 2 3 4 5
10. I see evidence that God is active in the world. 1 2 3 4 5
11. I accept opportunities to learn how to speak naturally and intelligently about my faith. 1 2 3 4 5
12. I speak out publicly against specific social injustices.
13. I have a real sense that God is guiding me. 1 2 3 4 5
14. I am a religious person.
15. I feel God's presence in my relationships with other people. 1 2 3 4 5
16. My faith shapes how I think and act. 1 2 3 4 5
17. My religious faith is important in my life today. 1 2 3 4 5
18. I seek out opportunities to help me grow spiritually. 1 2 3 4 5
19. I ask sincere and searching questions about the nature of a life of faith in God. 1 2 3 4 5
20. I feel God's presence when I worship (at school, at church/synagogue/mosque) 1 2 3 4 5
21. My life is committed to Jesus Christ. 1 2 3 4 5

Additional Faith Formation Topics

Use the following topics to provide more specific faith growth content for a Pathways model.

- ✓ Developing friendship-making and friendship-maintaining skills
- ✓ Discovering my unique gifts and talents, and how to use them in life
- ✓ Learning how to deal with stress
- ✓ Learning how to manage my time and activities
- ✓ Developing skills for communicating effectively
- ✓ Learning how to deal with anger and sadness
- ✓ Developing skills for handling conflict
- ✓ Learning how to deal with issues of drugs and alcohol use
- ✓ Understanding my sexuality and its role in life
- ✓ Finding ways to deal with bullying – in person and online
- ✓ Learning to manage my life and relationships online
- ✓ Receiving guidance in how to make life choices (about college, career, relationships)
- ✓ Finding ways to improve my relationship with my parents
- ✓ Developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- ✓ Deepening my relationship with Jesus Christ
- ✓ Learning about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and what it means for my life
- ✓ Learning how to live as a follow of Jesus today
- ✓ Learning how to talk about my faith with others
- ✓ Participating in a small group Bible study with other youth
- ✓ Learning how to make the Bible relevant to my life today
- ✓ Understanding my Christian faith better
- ✓ Being able to apply my Christian faith to life today
- ✓ Participating in a retreat program
- ✓ Receiving guidance on how to grow spiritually
- ✓ Learning to prayer
- ✓ Praying with others
- ✓ Being part of a spiritual support group
- ✓ Participating in youth-oriented worship services
- ✓ Learning Christian concepts of right and wrong
- ✓ Learning how to make moral decisions
- ✓ Raising my awareness about social justice issues in our world
- ✓ Understanding how to respond to justice issues as a Christian
- ✓ Being involved in service projects in our community
- ✓ Going on a mission trip to serve people in need
- ✓ Being involved in projects that serve people around the world
- ✓ Be involved in a leadership role in my church
- ✓ Be involved in leadership with other youth in my church

KEF

Building relationships

with God, family and other congregants.

Building connections

to Torah, Shabbat, holidays, Israel.

Building knowledge

of Hebrew, history, music, ethics.

Building community

within our Temple and Los Angeles.

KEF is a bold new model of Jewish learning.

Rather than studying *about* Judaism, prayer, celebration and Jewish culture, or reading *about* Jewish literature, the Bible and what makes a Jewish community, participants in KEF will *experience* it all and be a part of building their own Jewish community.

The goals of the KEF program are:

- to learn about the Jewish tradition through family experiences with prayer, celebration and *tikkun olam*;
- to strengthen the family's connections to one another, to the Jewish tradition, and to the congregation as a whole; and
- to build a community of learners at Temple Emanuel.

The participation of the family as a whole, including younger and older siblings, is welcomed. Families will come together in a *K'vutzah*, the Hebrew word for group. Each *K'vutzah* will have its own *Rosh K'vutzah* (group leader).



Program Requirements

Student and at least one adult family member shall participate in the following activities in the course of a year:

- 4-6 *K'vutzah* activities, including orientation, Shabbat dinners, 2 class-age based programs, book club discussions and the culminating Torah activities;
- 10-12 Shabbat services;
- 6 holiday celebrations or commemorations held at Temple Emanuel; and
- 3-4 cultural programs (in the congregation or around the city).

In addition, each family will be responsible to:

- read books from a selected reading list. (the types and number of books would vary with the students' age);
- devote 12-18 hours doing work related to *tikkun olam* (repairing the world); and
- do a Torah project (Each year there will be a theme for these Torah projects, e.g., Genesis, Exodus, mitzvot in the Torah, the prophets, and the Writings).

What the program will provide:

- a *Rosh K'vutzah* for each Havurah (the rabbi, educators and coordinators will serve as *roshei K'vutzah*), who will meet with each family individually at least twice and with the entire *K'vutzah* several times during the year;
- orientations to worship services and holidays;
- a Torah-related program for children (during the time the adults participate in Torah reading and text study);
- *K'vutzah*-based activities;
- book discussion groups; and
- a Torah project.

