Tools for Developing Lifelong Faith Formation

John Roberto

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

Page 2 Tool #1. Purposes and Goals for Lifelong Faith Formation
Page 4 Tool #2. Lifelong Faith Formation Profile
Page 6 Tool #3. Lifelong Faith Formation Assessment Tool
Page 12 Tool #4. Models of Lifelong Faith Formation
Page 16 Tool #5. Research Guide and Surveys (Adult, Youth, and Family)
Page 32 Tool #6. Designing Faith Formation Programming
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Tool #1
Purpose & Goals for Lifelong Faith Formation

Purpose

Example #1. “Christian faith formation is a lifelong journey with Christ, in Christ, and to Christ. Lifelong Christian faith formation is lifelong growth in the knowledge, service and love of God as followers of Christ and is informed by scripture, tradition and reason” (The Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation, The Episcopal Church).

Example #2. Lifelong Christian faith formation guides people of all ages in developing a loving relationship with Jesus, embracing his Good News, and following him in their daily lives—becoming witnesses of God’s reign in the world. This type of faith formation is a way of the head, the heart, and the hands: ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Mt 22:37-39, NRSV). Jesus presented faith as a whole way of life.

Example #3. “Faith formation is at the heart of what the Christian life is all about. In many ways, we engage in the practices of our daily lives and the rituals of our faith communities—through worship, mission, working for justice and peace, evangelism, and education—so that our faith may be nurtured, enlivened, sustained, and formed. In this regard, the imagery offered by the prophet Isaiah of Potter God forming humanity, God’s created own, is an appropriate vision for how we might view the ministry of faith formation: Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Isaiah 64:8, NRSV) …. faith formation is "an engaged process of learning and practice integrated throughout all aspects of congregational and daily life.” (United Church of Christ, http://www.ucc.org/education.)

Your Church’s Purpose Statement
Goals for Maturing in Faith

Example: 10 Characteristics of Maturing in Faith
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, and its message, meaning, and application to life today.
4. Learning the Christian story and foundational teachings of one’s particular Christian faith tradition and integrating its meaning into one’s life.
5. Praying—together and by ourselves—and seeking spiritual growth through spiritual practices and 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—locally and globally.
8. Worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship and ritual celebrations, and through the seasons of the church year.
9. Being actively engaged in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community.
10. Using one’s gifts and talents in the Christian community and in the world.

Example: Eight Marks of Faith Maturing
(Effective Christian Education Study, Search Institute)
1. Trusting and Believing: People of mature faith trust in God’s saving grace and believe firmly in Jesus’ humanity and divinity.
2. Experiencing the Fruits of Faith: People of mature faith experience a sense of personal well-being, security, and peace that grows out of their faith. It is the “life in all its fullness” that Jesus offers (John 10:10).
3. Integrating Faith and Life: Mature Christian’s faith is a filter through which they evaluate everything they see, hear or think. Faith is integrated into vocational, relational, financial, political, moral, and ethnical decisions. In short, faith shapes all aspects of life.
4. Seeking Spiritual Growth: People of mature faith know that faith is a journey. They seek to grow spiritually through study reflection, prayer, and discussion.
5. Nurturing Faith in Community: In community people witness to their faith and nourish one another. In this context they support others’ faith and share their own faith story. And they experience God through these interpersonal encounters.
6. Holding Life-Affirming Values: People of mature faith believe life is good and should be affirmed. They are committed to life-affirming values and feel a personal sense of responsibility for others’ welfare.
7. Advocating Social Change: People of mature faith understand that the Christian faith involves advocating social and global change to bring about great social justice.
8. Acting and Serving: People of mature faith not only advocate social change, but become personally involved in serving, consistently and passionately, through acts of love and justice.

Your Church’s Goals for Maturing in Faith
**Tool #2**

**Lifelong Faith Formation Profile**

*Use this worksheet as a guide to developing your profile on newsprint or in digital format.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faith Maturing Characteristic</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Adolescents</th>
<th>Young Adults 20s-30s</th>
<th>Midlife Adults 40-55</th>
<th>Mature Adults 55-75</th>
<th>Older Adults 75+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living as a disciple of Jesus Christ and making the Christian faith a way of life</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading and studying the Bible—its message, meaning, and application to life today</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning the Christian story and foundational teachings of the Christian faith and integrating its meaning into one’s life</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
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<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Praying—together and by ourselves, and seeking spiritual growth through spiritual disciplines</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family Age Group</td>
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<td>Older Adults 75+ Age Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace.</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship, ritual celebrations, and the seasons of the church year</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being actively engaged in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practicing faith in Jesus Christ by using one’s gifts and talents within the Christian community and in the world</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family</td>
<td>Inter-generational Family</td>
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</table>
The Lifelong Faith Formation Assessment tool provides a way for your congregation to examine how it is forming faith through church life, age-group faith formation, family faith formation, and intergenerational faith formation. Engage the whole team (and other leadership groups) in completing the assessment tool. Compile the results of each item and analyze the results using the following guidance:

- Part 1 examines the faith forming culture of your church community. Analyze the results to determine your church’s strengths (ratings of 4 and 5), and areas that need to be strengthened or developed (rating of 3 or lower). What did you learn about the faith forming culture of your church from the assessment?
- Part 2 examines ten priorities for lifelong faith formation. Analyze the results to determine which statements are high priorities for your church (ratings of 4 and 5), and which are lower priorities (rating of 3 or lower). What did you learn about the priorities of lifelong faith formation in your church and how well it compares with the reality of lifelong faith formation?
- Parts 3, 4, and 5 examine how effectively your church implements the ten priorities in faith formation with children, adolescents, and adults. Analyze the results to determine the strengths with each age group (ratings of 4 and 5), and areas that need to be strengthened or developed (ratings of 3 or lower). Develop a list of the areas that need to be strengthened with children, adolescents, and adults.
- Parts 6 and 7 examine family and intergenerational faith formation. Analyze the results of each part to determine your church’s strengths (ratings of 4 and 5) in family and intergenerational faith formation, and areas that need to be strengthened or developed (rating of 3 or lower) in each area. Develop a list of the areas that need to be strengthened with family and intergenerational faith formation.

Part 1. Church Community

How well does each statement describe your church community? Rate how much you agree with each statement. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral/unsure, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church Vitality</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Our church has a clear sense of its mission.</td>
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<td>2. Our church is focused on living its mission.</td>
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<td>3. Our church possesses a sense of God’s living presence in everything we do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Our church is spiritually vital and alive.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Our people are growing in their faith and feel the church meets their spiritual needs.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>6. Our people are spiritually prepared to live the gospel in their daily lives.</td>
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<td>7. Our church is willing to change or adapt to meet new challenges.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Our church is willing to try something new to live its mission.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Our people are excited about our church’s future</td>
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</table>
**Worship**

10. Our people experience God’s presence, joy, inspiration, and awe in worship services.  
11. Our church celebrates worship that nurtures people’s faith and helps them with everyday life.  
12. The preaching at our church connects Scripture to daily life and inspires Christian living.  
13. The music at our services inspire prayer and worship of God.  
14. Our church offers a mix of contemporary (newer forms of worship style) and traditional services.  
15. Our church uses contemporary music in worship.

**Community Life**

16. Our church cultivates a sense of community and belonging among all members.  
17. Our church builds strong, healthy relationships among all members.  
18. Our church is a supportive community where people care for one another.  
19. Our church practices hospitality and welcomes all people.  
20. Our church seeks out and incorporates new people into the faith community.  
21. New people are invited into process and meetings/classes for those who want to join the church.  
22. New people are invited to participate in Sunday worship.  
23. New people are invited to engage in community service with the congregation.  
24. Our church contacts active members who have stopped participating in worship and church activities.

**Discipleship and Faith Formation**

25. Our church helps people of all ages come to know Jesus Christ personally and learn how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.  
26. Our church teaches people of all ages how to read and discover the meaning of the Bible for their lives.  
27. Our church teaches people about Christian perspectives on moral questions and how to apply their faith to decisions about what’s right and wrong.  
28. Our church equips people to live their Christian faith in daily life.  
29. Our church helps children and youth grow in faith and become active members of the faith community.  
30. Our church helps parents and families to practice their faith at home.  
31. Our church helps adults grow in faith and live their faith in daily life.  
32. Our church equips members to share their faith with others.

**Service**

33. Our church is engaged in outreach and service to those in need, locally and globally.  
34. Our church is engaged in the work of social justice and advocacy to make our community and world a better place.  
35. Our church is a positive force in the community.
### Outreach

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36. Our church seeks out and incorporates new people into our faith community.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. Our church seeks out members who have stopped participating in worship and church activities.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Our church provides ways for new or returning people to learn about the Christian faith and join the faith community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Our church invites new or returning people to participate in Sunday worship.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Our church invites new or returning people to join the community in service to those in need.</td>
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### Communication and Social Media

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41. Our church has a website that communicates the church’s identity and mission.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Our church has a website that provides faith forming content and activities for all ages.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Our church has a website that welcomes new people into the faith community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>44. Our church uses social media (like Facebook, Instagram, etc.) to communicate and connect with people.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>45. Our church communicates with people using texting.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>46. Our church regularly communicates with all members through email newsletters about church life and activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>47. Our church has Wi-Fi access throughout the facilities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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### Part 2. Priorities of Lifelong Faith Formation

In your judgment how high or low a priority is each of the following goals for faith formation with all ages in the congregation. How well does each statement describe your church community? Rate how much you agree with each statement. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral/unsure, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48. To guide people in developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. To equip people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ and make the Christian faith a way of life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. To teach people to read and study the Bible, and its message, meaning, and application to life today</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. To teach the Christian story and the foundational beliefs of your particular Christian faith tradition and guide people in integrating its meaning into their lives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>52. To teach people how to pray and to nurture their spiritual growth through practices and disciplines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. To guide people in living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>54. To equip people to live the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</table>
55. To prepare people for worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship and throughout the seasons of the church year  
56. To engage people in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community  
57. To equip people to use their gifts and talents in the Christian community and in the world

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how effectively your church implements these ten priorities in faith formation with children. Rate each item using the following scale: 1=not at all effective, 2=slightly effective, 3=moderately effective, 4=very effective, and 5=extremely effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 58. To guide people in developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 59. To equip people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ and make the Christian faith a way of life | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 60. To teach people to read and study the Bible, and its message, meaning, and application to life today | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 61. To teach the Christian story and the foundational beliefs of your particular Christian faith tradition and guide people in integrating its meaning into their lives | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 62. To teach people how to pray and to nurture their spiritual growth through practices and disciplines | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 63. To guide people in living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 64. To equip people to live the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 65. To prepare people for worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship and throughout the seasons of the church year | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 66. To engage people in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 67. To equip people to use their gifts and talents in the Christian community and in the world | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please rate how effectively your church implements these ten priorities in faith formation with adolescents. Rate each item using the following scale: 1=not at all effective, 2=slightly effective, 3=moderately effective, 4=very effective, and 5=extremely effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| 68. To guide people in developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 69. To equip people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ and make the Christian faith a way of life | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 70. To teach people to read and study the Bible, and its message, meaning, and application to life today | 1 2 3 4 5 |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71.</td>
<td>To teach the Christian story and the foundational beliefs of your particular Christian faith tradition and guide people in integrating its meaning into their lives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72.</td>
<td>To teach people how to pray and to nurture their spiritual growth through practices and disciplines</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.</td>
<td>To guide people in living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>74.</td>
<td>To equip people to live the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>75.</td>
<td>To prepare people for worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship and throughout the seasons of the church year</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76.</td>
<td>To engage people in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.</td>
<td>To equip people to use their gifts and talents in the Christian community and in the world</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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Part 5. Practices: Adult Faith Formation

Please rate how effectively your church implements these ten priorities in faith formation with adults. Rate each item using the following scale: 1=not at all effective, 2=slightly effective, 3=moderately effective, 4=very effective, and 5=extremely effective.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78.</td>
<td>To guide people in developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.</td>
<td>To equip people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ and make the Christian faith a way of life</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.</td>
<td>To teach people to read and study the Bible, and its message, meaning, and application to life today</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81.</td>
<td>To teach the Christian story and the foundational beliefs of your particular Christian faith tradition and guide people in integrating its meaning into their lives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82.</td>
<td>To teach people how to pray and to nurture their spiritual growth through practices and disciplines</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.</td>
<td>To guide people in living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>84.</td>
<td>To equip people to live the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.</td>
<td>To prepare people for worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship and throughout the seasons of the church year</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.</td>
<td>To engage people in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.</td>
<td>To equip people to use their gifts and talents in the Christian community and in the world</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How well does each statement describe family faith formation? Rate how much you agree with each statement. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral/unsure, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

| 88. Our church helps parents (or caregivers) grow in faith and discipleship, and practice a vital and informed Christian faith. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 89. Our church helps grandparents grow in faith and discipleship, and practice a vital and informed Christian faith. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 90. Our church teaches parents the practices for forming faith at home (e.g., celebrating rituals and milestones, praying, serving, learning the Christian faith, reading the Bible). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 91. Our church teaches grandparents the practices for forming faith at home. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 92. Our church equips parents with the knowledge and skills for parenting today. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 93. Our church provides experiences for the whole family that promote growth in faith and discipleship. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 94. Our church provides families with resources to nurture growth in Christian faith and practice at home. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 95. Our church connects with families at home through social media and a website with content for family faith practices and parent formation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Part 7. Practices: Intergenerational Faith Formation

How well does each statement describe intergenerational faith formation? Rate how much you agree with each statement. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral/unsure, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

| 96. Our church builds caring relationships among the generations in the church through worship, learning, service, and community events and activities. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 97. Our church engages all generations together, including children and youth, in Sunday/weekend worship. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 98. Our church engages all generations together in learning experiences that teach the Bible and the Christian tradition, and form disciples of all ages in Christian identity. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 99. Our church nurtures the spiritual life of all generations together through the community’s prayer life, rituals, and blessings. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 100. Our church engages multiple generations together in service to the poor and vulnerable, in the works of justice and advocacy, and in care for creation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
Tool #4
Models of Lifelong Faith Formation

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

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

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

Sample Design Tasks

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

Planning Resource:

Model: Worship Focus

![Diagram of the Worship Model](image_url)

Life Stage Faith Formation Networks

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

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

Model: Thematic Focus

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

Sample Design Tasks
- Develop an annual or seasonal (4-month)theme.
- Develop networks of age-appropriate, family, and intergenerational programming on the theme that can be delivered in a variety of settings: self-directed, mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, church-wide, in the community and world, and online.
In the Life Stage Focus Model faith formation is developed around each life stage by creating networks of faith formation that incorporate *intergenerational* relationships, activities, and church life and events (including Sunday worship, *family* life—equipping and supporting *parents* and the whole *family* in sharing and practicing their faith at home, and *life stage* in activities and experiences designed to address life stage needs and situations, interests, and religious and spiritual journeys at each stage of life.

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

Planning begins with listening. Take time to conduct research on the target audience(s) that you need to reach and engage in faith formation. The Research Guide provides four tools for developing a deeper understanding of the lives of people in your community—and their religious and spiritual needs and practices—that can form the basis of developing new initiatives.

1. Community observation process
2. Interviews of church leaders
3. Focus groups with your target audience(s)
4. Sample surveys for adults, youth, and families

After you have completed your research work, use the format of the “Empathy Map” developed by the Stanford School of Design to synthesize observations and draw out insights from the research. Organize research findings into the following four quadrants: What are people saying, doing, thinking, and feeling? Do this activity as a research team and use one or more sheets of newsprint to compile the findings. If you address multiple audiences, do an Empathy Map for each audience.
Review the results of the Empathy Map and identify the most important needs, interests, issues, and concerns of each audience using the categories below. Record them on newsprint or create a report for everyone.

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

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

**Research Methods**

**1. Community Observation**

Engage the team in becoming anthropologists by observing people in the community. Develop an observation checklist (see statements 1-5 below) and ask team members to spend a month simply observing people at work, at school, at play, at stores, in coffee shops and restaurants, and so on. Watch for things like:

1. What are some of the most popular activities in the community?
2. Where do people gather outside of work and school—coffee shop, gym, mall, park, community center, YMCA/YWCA, and so on? What are they doing there?
3. Where do people work? Do most people work in the community or do they commute to another area? What types of jobs do people have?
4. What are the most popular or well-attended churches in the community?
5. Where are people on Sunday morning, if they are not at worship?

Develop your list of things to observe in your community that are relevant to each target audience.

**Compiling Observation Notes**

An “Empathy Map,” developed by the Stanford School of Design, is one tool to synthesize observations and draw out insights from the community observation. Organize findings into
the following four quadrants. Do this activity as a team and use one a sheet of newsprint to compile the findings for each quadrant.

**Empathy Map**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAY</th>
<th>DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you hear your target group saying?</td>
<td>What actions and behaviors do you notice in your target group?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THINK</th>
<th>FEEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What might your target group be thinking? What does this tell you about their beliefs/convictions?</td>
<td>What emotions might your target group be feeling?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review the results of the “Empathy Map.” Reflect on what other insights you have gleaned from your community observation that relate to your work with your target audience, and develop a report of the major findings and insights from these observations and your reflections.

2. **Interviews of Church Leadership**

Conduct 5-6 one-to-one interviews with church leaders (pastor, church staff, council leaders, and other leaders related to your target audience) to obtain a leadership perspective on church life and faith formation with your target audience. Ask each interviewee for 30 minutes.

Use the following questions as a guide for developing interview questions for church leaders. Adapt the questions based on the selection of your target audience(s). Every interviewer needs to ask the same questions so that comparisons can be made across the groups.

**Introduction by Interviewer:** Thank you for your positive response to our invitation to be interviewed as part of our research for new faith formation initiatives. This conversation is an important element in our congregation’s desire to better serve its people and its surrounding community. I am: (name); I’m one of the task force members. I have a few questions for us to discuss. During this discussion, I will be taking a few notes so that we can more accurately recall our conversation. While this information will inform our study, no names will be attached to any of this information.

**Sample Interview Questions**

1. How would you describe your understanding of our target audience in key words or phrases? What are some of the important life issues that our target audience is experiencing today? What are the significant spiritual issues that our target audience is experiencing today?
2. Can you tell me about how our church helps our target audience grow as Christians? How does the church support, strengthen, and challenge their faith?

3. How would you describe the community life at our church? Do you see people experiencing a life-giving spiritual community of hospitality, welcoming, love, and support?

4. How do you see people experiencing worship at our church? What words would you use to describe the worship experience? Do they speak of it as engaging? Is worship at our church easy to understand? Does it seem relevant to daily life?

5. How is our church engaged in service and mission to the community and the world? What do you see people in our church doing to live out our mission and service to the community and world?

6. How does our church nurture the faith life of the whole family? How does our church equip parents/grandparents to share faith and live faith practices at home?

7. How can our church help our target audience to continue growing as a Christian? Be specific. Name some of the things you would like to see our church offer this target audience?

**Compiling and Analyzing Interview Results**

*Use the following process to find the key themes that have emerged from the interviews (The goal is to “make as much sense as you can” out of what you have heard):*

1. Compile the responses for each question from all of the interviews.
   - Enter all your notes from the interviews into a computer file. Then collate all of the responses from the separate interviews into one document, question-by-question.
   - Print the collated responses to each question on separate newsprint sheets. Place the newsprint sheets on the wall.

2. As a team review the responses to each question.
   - If you find responses to a question that are identical in language or similar in content, give these identical or similar items the same number beginning with #1.
   - Continue to do this for all related items. Some items will not relate to any other items...let them stand alone.

3. Next place blank sheets of newsprint on the wall. Name and write in one phrase or sentence the core content of each of the most frequently mentioned responses. These are themes.
4. Develop a summary report for each question that focuses on the top priority themes but also includes all the items. For some questions this may only be 4 or 5 themes; for other questions there may be as 8 or 10 themes.

5. Finally, summarize these themes in a single narrative report organized around the questions and themes with the clustered responses as descriptive information filling out the themes.

3. Focus Groups with Target Audience

An excellent way to gather information about people in the congregation and community is through focus groups. Organize at least two focus groups of eight to twelve people from among the target audience. Select a diversity of people in each focus group, reflecting ethnic/cultural diversity, socioeconomic diversity, and spiritual and religious diversity (from the actively engaged to the “churchless” thus some of the members of the focus groups may be from the congregation and some from the community).

Meet for about one hour in different locations and times. Remember that people who are not involved in church may be hesitant to come to a meeting at church. Have two people lead each focus group—one to record (on a computer or tablet is preferable) and one to ask the questions. The recorder can also ask follow-up questions as appropriate.

Introduction by Focus Group Leaders: Thank you for your positive response to our invitation to be in this focus group discussion. This discussion is an important element in our congregation’s desire to better serve its people and its surrounding community. I am: (name); I’m one of the task force members. I have a few questions for us to discuss; during this discussion, we will be taking a few notes so that we can more accurately recall our conversation. While this information will inform our study, no names will be attached to any of this discussion.

Use the following questions as a guide for developing your focus group interviews – adapt the number and character of the questions based on the selection of your target audience(s). Each focus group needs to ask the same questions so that comparisons can be made across the two groups. Keep the group moving through the questions; don’t get “stuck” on any one question. The goal is to surface lots of information from group members, not to conduct a group discussion of the questions.

Sample Focus Group Questions
1. How would you describe our target audience (age group, families, whole community) in key words or phrases? What are some of the important life issues that our target audience is experiencing today?
2. **What are the significant spiritual issues** that our **target audience** (age group, families, whole community) is experiencing today?

3. **What is most important to you about being a Christian today?**

4. **How do you live your Christian faith?** Name some of the ways you **put your faith into practice.**

5. Can you tell me about **how our church helps** you [and your family when appropriate] grow as Christians? How does the church support, strengthen, and challenge your faith? What practices and/or experiences are of importance to you and your faith?

6. **How would you describe the community life at our church?** Do you see people experiencing a life-giving spiritual community of hospitality, welcoming, love, and support?

7. **How do you see people experiencing worship** at our church? What words would you use to describe the worship experience? Do they speak of it as engaging? Is worship at our church easy to understand? Does it seem relevant to daily life?

8. **How is our church engaged in service to the community** and the world? What is our **target audience** doing to live out our mission and service to the community and world?

9. **For parents:** How does our church nurture the **faith life of the whole family?** How does our church equip parents/grandparents to share faith and live faith practices at home?

10. How can our church help you to **continue growing as a Christian?** Be specific. Name some of the things you would like to see our church offer for your age group?

**Compiling and Analyzing Focus Group Results**

*Use the following process to find the key themes that have emerged from the focus groups: (The goal is to “make as much sense as you can” out of what you have heard):*

1. Compile the responses for each question from both of the focus groups.
   - Enter all your notes from the each of the focus groups into a computer file, thus collating all of the responses into one document for each focus group, question-by-question.
   - Print the collated responses to each question on separate newsprint sheets. Place the newsprint sheets on the wall. (Do this and the following processes for each of the two focus groups).

2. As a team review the responses to each question.
• If you find responses to a question that are identical in language or similar in content, give these identical or similar items the same number beginning with #1.
• Continue to do this for all related items. Some items will not relate to any other items...let them stand alone.

3. Next place blank sheets of newsprint on the wall. Name and write in one phrase or sentence the core content of each of the most frequently mentioned responses. These are themes.

4. Develop a summary report for each question that focuses on the top priority themes but also includes all the items. For some questions this may only be 4 or 5 themes; for other questions there may be as 8 or 10 themes.

5. Next, compare the themes and items from each of the focus groups with each other. Look for commonalities and differences.

6. Finally, summarize these themes, referencing commonalities and differences in a single narrative report organized around the questions and themes with the clustered responses as descriptive information filling out the themes.
We are planning now for the future of the church's youth programs. We need your input. If our youth programs are going to be successful they must respond to your interests and concerns. So we need your help in identifying topics that should be included in the church's youth programs. Please check the topics in each category that are of greatest interest to you. Check as many items as you want. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your ideas are important to us!

* 1. Please tell us which age group you are in.
   - Middle School
   - Grade 9
   - Grade 10
   - Grade 11
   - Grade 12

* 2. Please tell us which activities you are involved in during the year.
   - Sports
   - Music/Band
   - Art/Photography/Filmmaking
   - Drama/Theater/Dance
   - Academic Clubs at School
   - Working for Pay
   - None of these

Please list other activities you are involved in that are not included on the list above.


* 3. Please indicate how often you attend Sunday or Wednesday worship at Holy Trinity.
   - At least 3 times per month
   - At least once per month
   - Several times per year
   - Never

* 4. Please check all of the topics you would be interested in seeing Holy Trinity Church provide young people.
   - Being part of a church that accepts me and makes me feel like I belong
   - Being part of a group of youth at church who accept me and make me feel like I belong
   - 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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to deal with issues of drugs and alcohol use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding my sexuality and its role in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding ways to deal with bullying – in person and online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to manage my life and relationships online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving guidance in how to make life choices (about college, career, relationships)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding ways to improve my relationship with my parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepening my relationship with Jesus Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and what it means for my life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to live as a fellow of Jesus today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to talk about my faith with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in a small group Bible study with other youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to make the Bible relevant to my life today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding my Christian faith better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the Lutheran tradition: history, beliefs, and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to apply my Christian faith to life today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in a retreat program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving guidance on how to grow spiritually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and practicing ways to pray and meditate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praying with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being part of a spiritual support group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in youth-oriented worship services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Christian concepts of right and wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to make moral decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how to respond to justice issues as a Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being involved in projects and actions of service to those in need in our community and region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being involved in projects and actions of service to those in need in our world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in mission trips to serve those in need in our country and around the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being involved in a leadership role in my church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being involved in leadership with other youth in my church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are there other topics you are interested in?
# Adult Survey

**Adult Faith Formation Survey**

As an essential element of planning for the future of faith formation, we are conducting a survey to identify the interests of adults in a wide variety of topics that the church can address through adult faith formation programs. Please check the topics in each category that are greatest interest to you. Check as many items as you want or "not interested." Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your ideas are important to us!

*1. Please tell us which age group you are in.
   - □ 20-29
   - □ 30-39
   - □ 40-49
   - □ 50-59
   - □ 60-69
   - □ 70-79
   - □ 80 and over

2. **Just for Parents**: Please indicate the ages of your children (check all items that apply).
   - □ Children (0-11 years old)
   - □ Teenagers (12-19 years old)
   - □ Single Young Adults (20s-30s)
   - □ Married Young Adults (20s-30s)

3. **Just for Grandparents**: Please indicate the ages of your grandchildren (check all items that apply).
   - □ Children (0-11 years old)
   - □ Teenagers (12-19 years old)
   - □ Single Young Adults (20s-30s)
   - □ Married Young Adults (20s-30s)

*4. **Worship**: Please indicate how often you attend Sunday at church.
   - □ At least 3 times per month
   - □ At least once per month
   - □ Several times per year
   - □ Never

*5. **Programs**: Please indicate how often you participate in adult education programs at church each year.
   - □ 6 or more times per year
   - □ 2-5 times per year
   - □ At least once per year
   - □ Never

6. **Parents Only**: Does your child (0-11 years old) participate in children's programs at church?
   - □ Yes
   - □ No
   - □ No children between 0-11 years old

7. **Parents Only**: Does your teenager participate in youth programs at church?
   - □ Yes
   - □ No
   - □ No teenagers between 12-19 years old
8. **Interest in Studying the Bible:** Please check the topics you would be interested in.

- 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
- Not interested in any of these topics

Are there other Bible topics you are interested in?

---

9. **Interest in Learning about the Christian Faith:** Please check the topics you would be interested in.

- 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
- Learn more about what we believe as Christians 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 God in our daily lives
- Experience the Christian faith through music and singing
- Experience the Christian faith through faith through religious art from the first century to today
- Experience the Christian faith through food by cooking and eating together
- Not interested in any of these topics

Are there other Christian faith topics you are interested in?
* 10. Interest in Spirituality & Worship: Please check the topics you would be interested in.

- 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 after 60
- 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.
- Not interested in any of these topics

Are there other Spirituality topics you are interested in?

* 11. Interest in Service & Mission: Please check the topics you would be interested in.

- 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
- Not interested in any of these topics

Are there other Service topics you are interested in?
* 12. **Interest in Personal Growth:** Please check the topics you would be interested in.

- [ ] 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
- [ ] Not interested in any of these topics

Are there other Personal Growth topics you are interested in?

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13. **Interest in Family Life:** Please check the topics you would be interested in.

- [ ] Develop a strong marriage and learn how to grow as a couple
- [ ] Gather with other families for family-centered experiences and activities of eating together, praying, sharing stories and faith, and supporting each other
- [ ] Develop family faith and spirituality that helps all family members experience God and grow in the Christian faith
- [ ] Learn how to be a better parent and develop skills and practices for parenting children today
- [ ] Learn how to be a better parent and develop skills and practices for teens today
- [ ] Learn how to raise my children as Christians and practice our faith at home
- [ ] Learn how to be a grandparent and nurture the faith of my grandchildren
- [ ] Learn how to care for aging parents
- [ ] Join with a group of married couples for support, storytelling, and faith sharing
- [ ] Participate in a support group with those experiencing divorce or separation
- [ ] Not interested in any of these topics

Are there other Family Life topics you are interested in?
Family Survey

1. Tell us about a little about yourself. (Answer as many as apply)
   - I am currently a parent of children (birth to age 12)
   - I am currently a parent of teens (ages 13-19)
   - I am currently a parent of a young adult or adult
   - I am a grandparent
   - I am an active member of a Christian church community

2. Please select up to 10 practices from the list below that you consider the most important family practices for helping children and teens grow in faith. You can select less than 10 practices, but please don't select more than 10.
   - Praying as a family (meal time, bedtime)
   - Praying as a family during times of struggle or crisis
   - Encouraging teens to pray alone or with peers
   - Reading the Bible as a family
   - Encouraging teens to read the Bible alone or with their peers
   - Celebrating rituals and holidays at home
   - Serving people in need as a family
   - Serving people in need as individuals (parents, teens)
   - Eating together as a family
   - Having family conversations
   - Talking about faith as a family
   - Watching videos, movies, or TV shows with religious content or themes
   - Encouraging teens to talk about their doubts and questions about faith
   - Talking about faith and your religious tradition with your children and teens
   - Asking your teenager's perspectives on faith, religion, social issues, etc.
   - Providing moral instruction
   - Demonstrating a warm and affirming parenting approach
   - Taking time to grow in your own faith as a parent
   - Engaging in positive communication with children and teens
   - Encouraging children and teens to pursue their talents and interests
   - Spending one-on-one time with children and teens
   - Participating in Sunday Worship as a family
   - Inviting friends of your teenager to join in family practices (going to church, serving others, celebrating holidays)
   - Celebrating the church year seasons at church (e.g. Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter)
   - Celebrating rituals and sacraments at church as a family
   - Participating in church life activities as a family
   - Encouraging and supporting your teenager to participate in church activities with peers
3. Thinking about yourself as a parent of children or teenagers today (or when you were a parent of children or teens), please rate how often you engage (or engaged) in the following family practices in a typical month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely (once a month)</th>
<th>Occasionally (a few times a month)</th>
<th>Frequently (1 or 2 times a week)</th>
<th>Regularly (3 or more times a week)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Praying as a family (meal, bedtime)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrating rituals and holidays at home</td>
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<td>Participating in Sunday Worship as a family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participating in church life activities as a family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraging and supporting your teenager to participate in church activities with peers</td>
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</table>

4. Are there other faith practices that your family engages in (or engaged in) that were not listed above in question #3? Please share with us these practices in the box below.

5. What are the two or three biggest challenges your family faces (or faced) in trying to live these faith practices? Please share with us these challenges in the box below.

Thanks so much for completing our Family Faith Practices Survey.
Tool #6
Designing Faith Formation Programming

Step 1. Select a Life Stage
Use this process to address one life stage or a combination of two life stages, such as midlife through mature adults. If you want to focus on families, specific which life stage you want to research, e.g., families with young children, grade school children, young adolescents, older adolescents, or some combination of these.

Step 2. Add Current Faith Formation Activities
Use the “Faith Formation Profile” from Planning Step #3 to identify all of the current programming for your target audience that will continue to be offered. Use the “Network Planning Form” to record all of your programming: intergenerational (or whole church) faith forming experiences (ministries, programs, activities, parent and family faith formation activities at church and at home, and current age group programming.

Step 3. Generate New Faith Formation Ideas
Review your summary report from Planning Step #5 with ideas for strengthening or improving faith formation, expanding or extending programming, and new initiatives to address new needs.

Use the Point of View statements and the key research findings from Planning Step #7 to generate ideas for innovative faith formation programs, activities, and/or strategies to address the lives of each target audience. Program ideas can include:

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

The Generating Program Ideas guide (at the end) provides four creative thinking activities to generate ideas: 1) “What If” You Used Your Imagination, 2) Perfect World, 3) Brainwriting Sheets, and 4) “How Might We?” Use one or more of these to generate program ideas for a target audience.

Use the “Network Planning Form” as a guide to record all of the new ideas. You can create newsprint sheets designed using the format of the worksheet. If you use Post-It notes people can attach their ideas to the appropriate “box” on the newsprint sheet.
## Network Planning Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faith Formation Goals</th>
<th>Intergenerational Faith Formation</th>
<th>Family Faith Formation</th>
<th>Age Group Faith Formation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To guide people in developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ.</td>
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<td>2. To equip people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ and make the Christian faith a way of life.</td>
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<td>3. To teach people to read and study the Bible, and its message, meaning, and application to life today.</td>
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<td>4. To teach the Christian story and the foundational beliefs of one’s particular Christian faith tradition and guide people in integrating its meaning into their lives.</td>
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<td>5. To teach people how to pray and to nurture their spiritual growth through practices and disciplines.</td>
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<td>6. To guide people in living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. To equip people to live the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace—locally and globally.</td>
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<td>8. To prepare people for worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship and ritual celebrations, and throughout the seasons of the church year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. To engage people in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. To equip people to use their gifts and talents in the Christian community and in the world.</td>
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</table>
Step 4. Incorporate Digital Methods and Media
How can you use digitally enabled strategies to improve, expand, or create new faith formation programming? Identify specific ways you can integrate digital methods and media into your plan.

1. *Extend programming.* Which current programs can you extend using online programming? Identify the kinds of content you would provide online to extend each program.

2. *Flip the program using online content.* Which programs are good candidates for flipping the content? Is there high-quality digital content (audio, video, visual, print) available in an online format? Identify the programs you could flip. What will be available online? What will the gathered session look like when the content is online?

3. *Online programming.* What types of programs can you create online? How can you deliver programming online (webinar, streaming presentation)? How can you develop an online resource center as a portal to curated content?

4. *Multiformat programming.* Which programs are good candidates for multiformat programming? What would a design look like for one multiformat program?

5. *Prepare and follow-up programming.* Which programs can you use a digital strategy to prepare people online for an event or program and then follow up with online content and activities? What would a design for one program look like?

Step 5. Create an Annual Plan for Faith Formation with Seasonal Offerings
Create a plan for the year that provides intergenerational, family, and age-appropriate faith formation content, experiences, programs, and activities, guided by the ten goals of maturing in faith. The goal is to provide a holistic year of faith formation for your target audience.

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

**Tasks**
1. **Determine** which ideas need to be developed for the ten goals that will best address the needs of people in the target audience (that you learned from your research work). Use the ideas on the “Network Planning Form” of current and new programming to select programs and activities that you will offer.

2. **Develop** an outline of annual plan for faith formation with programming for the entire year.

3. **Design** a seasonal plan with programming from the annual plan.
Designing a Seasonal Plan

Design a season of programming: January–April, May–August, and September–December. All of the content from the annual plan does not need to be introduced in the first season of programming. Over the course of a year (three seasons) content areas and programming can be added so that the complete plan is finally implemented by the third season. Some of the programming will be consistent in every season, while other programming will be specific to a season.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seasonal Plan</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Audience:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Season:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programming:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Develop a “Menu” of Faith Formation**

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

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

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

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

Westwood Lutheran Church in Minneapolis uses a menu approach to confirmation by blending **know**—hands on learning, **live**—service to our neighbor and congregation, and **grow**—fellowship and faith nurturing experiences. They organized the menu similar to a college program by asking the young people to take a minimum of three courses (in a variety of formats—one-day to multiple sessions) in each of the three categories. Over three years young people take 17 credits: four in each of the three categories are required; the remaining five credits are electives. (Go to [http://www.westwoodlutheran.org/Westwood-U.](http://www.westwoodlutheran.org/Westwood-U.))
Tool #7
Generating Program Ideas

Use the Point of View statements (and the key research findings) to generate ideas for innovative faith formation programs, activities, and/or strategies to address the lives of each target audience. Use one or more of the following creative thinking activities to generate ideas. Before you begin generating ideas, it might be helpful to remind people of the rules:

- Defer judgment.
- Encourage wild ideas.
- Build on the ideas of others.
- Stay focused on one topic.
- Pursue one conversation at a time.
- Go for quantity.

Activity: “What If” You Used Your Imagination

Use imagination to generate ideas. The easiest way to begin is by saying: “I need fresh and novel ideas to solve my challenge. I will suspend all judgment and see what free and easy ideas I can think up. It doesn’t matter how weird or offbeat they are.” Allow your team the freedom to conceptualize without judging ideas in terms of the real world. Ask team members to list as many “what if” statements as they can on sticky notes (e.g., “What if we developed a community café to reach people who are spiritual, but not involved in the church community?”). Ask them to complete the “What if...” statement personally, writing one statement per sticky note. After several minutes, ask people to place their sticky notes on a sheet of easel paper. Then cluster similar ideas together. When ideas are grouped based on common characteristics or themes, an organization and structure begins to arise from the information. More ideas are generated as people begin to see the structure and fill in the gaps. A sense of priority is often revealed as one or more of the clusters claim the energy and interest of the group. Move on to evaluation.

Activity: Perfect World

In “Perfect World” a group can visualize what the perfect situation would be in five years and then work backwards from that point, identifying where they would need to be at the end of each year. Think about what it would look like if you had the perfect solution to your challenge. In a perfect world what would your idea, program, activity, or resource look like? In a perfect world, cars would never break down, never get dirty, never need gas or oil, never go out of style, and so on. Look at each “perfect” criteria and generate ideas about how to achieve it or use it. One of the benefits of Perfect World is the consensus that is generated when people think about the future. Looking at the possibilities generates excitement and enthusiasm.
Generate as many ideas in the time allotted, cluster similar ideas together. move on to evaluation.

**Activity: Brainwriting Sheets**

Brainwriting is a simple technique that can be used to break through the group participation barrier in brainstorming and to stimulate the power of divergent thinking. It is basically a way to brainstorm on paper while allowing the anonymous contribution of ideas. Speed and quantity are emphasized and the fear of being judged is reduced by the anonymous input. The brainwriting form is a sheet of paper divided into twenty-one squares (three across and seven down). There should be one more sheet than the number of group members. In a few minutes of brainwriting, a group of six people can easily generate 147 ideas (twenty-one ideas per sheet, seven sheets).

1. One sheet per person plus one. Each person receives a brainwriting sheet and one additional sheet is placed in the center of the table where everyone can reach it.
2. Three ideas then switch. Each person writes an idea in the three top-most empty boxes and then places the sheet in the center and takes an available sheet and writes three more ideas on that sheet, again in the three top empty boxes.
3. List ideas once. The process is continued until all the sheets are filled or until everyone is out of ideas. Have enough blank sheets on hand to keep the process going if there are lots of ideas being generated.
4. Bounce. When ideas begin to slow, people should scan the previous ideas and try to bounce off of them or create variations and new directions.

The sheets can be cut into the idea squares for clustering. The individual ideas are laid out on a table and people can walk around the table looking at the ideas, moving them into categories and removing redundancies. This process generally generates new ideas or variations, so someone should be prepared to capture new ideas. Once a structure begins to emerge from the ideas, the idea squares could be taped to sticky notes and placed on a large piece of paper for selecting the one or more priority ideas. move on to evaluation.

**Activity: “How Might We?”**

Brainstorm responses to the question: “How might We?” Distribute sticky notes and pens/markers to everyone on the team. ask them to start their opportunity statements with “How might We . . .” and abbreviate on sticky notes to “HMW.” Go for quantity, not quality at this point. Post all of the ideas on sheets of easel paper. Together as a group select three to five HMW opportunity statements through discussion or the use of voting (see below). You might want to cluster HMW statements before discussion and voting. after selecting the three to five HMW statements, write each of the selected statements on a separate sheet of easel paper and brainstorm ideas for turning the opportunity into a practical project. Cluster similar ideas and select the best ideas for each HMW statement. move on to evaluation.
Tool #8
Ideas for Intergenerational Programming

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.

#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 teaching 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 an 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 a particular justice issue 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 its 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 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 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.

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.

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

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.
Tool #9
Ideas for Family Programming

The family 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 at home. Among the most important practices are:

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

What approaches can we use to equip and support parents and families in embedding these practices into their daily life so that they become “habits of faith?” Here are several strategies for nurturing faith practices at home that involve both infusing practices into our current parish and school programming and creating new initiatives to equip and support faith practice at home. We begin with three foundational strategies and then move to more “programmatic” ideas.

1. Create a digital platform, using the parish/school website or by building a family faith formation website. To reach parents we need to use digital tools and methods, and a website focused on families is essential today. The website is the resource center and portal (i.e., links to other online resources) for the faith forming content (resources and activities in print, audio, and video) for families to engage in a practice at home. A parish or school can develop a family faith formation website that features each of the faith practices with engaging activities—print, audio, video, apps, and more—tailored to families with young children, older children, young adolescents, older adolescents, and the whole family, including “how to” information and videos for parents.

2. Provide “how-to” assistance to parents so they feel confident and competent to engage in faith practices at home with their children and teens. Provide parents with online practical information (print, audio, video) on the practices with actual activities to do at
home. One simple way to do this is to create a short video of the children or teens experiencing the practice or activity, and then make it available on the website and/or on a special YouTube channel for your families.

3. **Communicate regularly with parents** using a family email newsletter or texting to highlight activities and videos online. Use social media to reinforce and spread the practice. For example, set up an Instagram account for faith formation and photos of the children and teens engaging in the practice in the program or class; and then invite them to post photos of their family engaging in the practice.

4. **Incorporate faith practices throughout the year** by teaching the practices through experiential activities in children and youth programs, and then inviting parents to reinforce the practice through continued at-home experiences that you provide online for easy access. This strategy can reap huge rewards from childhood through the teen years. Imagine families focusing on one Bible stories each month or one prayer practice each month for ten years. What a difference this simple strategy can make. Here are two examples:

   - **Reading the Bible:** Develop the “Bible Story of Month” plan to introduce children and teens to important stories and teachings in the Bible by teaching then the practices for reading, interpreting, praying, and applying the Scriptures to their lives. Select 12 of the most relevant and developmentally appropriate Bible stories for each age—from age 5 to 18. Integrate the Bible teaching into one session or program each month; use videos to assist you (Check out the animated videos at The Bible Project: [https://thebibleproject.com](https://thebibleproject.com) and Jelly Telly: [https://www.jellytelly.com](https://www.jellytelly.com)). Then provide online resources for parents to reinforce the Bible story online: reading the story, watching the video, discussing the story. Be sure families of children have a good Bible: *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name* by Sally Lloyd-Jones (ZonderKidz) and *The Catholic Children's Bible* from St. Mary’s Press are great resources. Here is another free resource to help: *Reading the Bible – Family Guide and Children’s Workbook* from *Living Well: Christian Practices for Everyday Life* (Go to: [https://www.lifelongfaith.com/faith-formation-in-christian-practices.html](https://www.lifelongfaith.com/faith-formation-in-christian-practices.html)).

   - **Praying:** Develop the prayer life of children, teens, and families by focusing on learning Catholic prayers, teaching the different forms of prayer, and/or experiencing a prayer practice each month during the class or program. Have children and teens experience the different types of prayer: contemplative, Scriptural, intercessory, praise (adoration), and thanksgiving. Develop a short video of the children or teens praying so that parents can see prayer in action. Provide prayer activities and resources online for parents to continue the “prayer of the month” at home. There are excellent online prayer resource to make available to parents. Here is a free resource to help: *Praying – Family Guide and Children’s*
5. **Celebrate the seasons of the year** at home by identifying a monthly seasonal event, reflecting the calendar seasons and the church year seasons, and publish the activities on the family website. Incorporate Scripture, prayer, learning, service/action, ritual, and family conversation into each seasonal event. Highlight a Christian practice that will be communicated and experienced through the event. Each event, for example:

- January: Martin Luther King Jr. (working for justice and peace, serving)
- February: Valentine’s Day (loving)
- March: Lent (praying, serving/ almsgiving, forgiving)
- April: Earth Day (caring for creation)
- May: Mother’s Day (honoring parents, loving caring)
- June: Father’s Day (honoring parents, loving, caring)
- July: Independence Day (working for justice)
- August: Back to school (celebrating new beginnings)
- September: Fall harvest (being grateful, generosity, caring for the earth)
- October: St. Francis (caring for creation, caring for animals, living simply)
- November: Thanksgiving (being grateful, serving, living hospitality)
- December: Advent and Christmas (celebrating rituals, praying, serving)

A parish or school can develop seasonal family festivals and gatherings to support the seasonal plan using the four seasons—fall, winter, spring, and summer—or the church year seasons—Advent-Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost.

6. **Connect families to Sunday worship** by incorporating preparation and/or reflection for Sunday in children and teen programs, and then deepening the Sunday worship experience at home through activities, practices, and resources from a variety of age-appropriate and whole-family digital content on the website. These activities can include: family conversation questions, weekly table ritual, podcast or video of the sermon with a study guide for the parents, children’s creative Bible activities, storybooks, videos presenting the Bible story, daily prayer, and weekly family devotion.

7. **Create family immersion experiences** on faith practices. Design extended time programs (half-day, full day) that teach faith practices through immersion experiences—at church or 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. Combine the at-church experience with activities for families to do at home. Substitute an age group program for a family program or add three or four family programs throughout the year that teach a practice by having the whole family experience it together.
8. **Develop family life skills** by adding a parent-child/teen component to age group faith formation or by adding special parent-child/teen programs throughout the year. Focus on the types of skill-building that will strengthen family life, and parent-child/teen relationships, such as: communicating effectively, discussing tough topics, making decisions and solving problems as a family, learning how to build strong relationships and express care for each other, supporting each other (encouraging and praising, giving feedback, standing up for each other), and treating each with respect and dignity. Many of these skills can be developed using movies selected for their positive messages. An example of a movie that provides a foundation for follow-up activities is Disney/Pixar’s *Inside Out* about the emotional life of child growing up.

Over the next year try one or more of these ideas in your parish or school. There’s nothing more important in faith formation today than equipping and supporting parents and the whole family in becoming communities of faith practice.

**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.

   - 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
   - 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 program to the existing children and adolescent program where parents can gather occasionally while their children are in age-specific programs.
   - Add a parent component to vacation Bible school in the evenings or online.
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 identity 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).

6. **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.

7. **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.

8. **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—to offer a diversity of programs as well as to offer the same program content in multiple learning environments. This provides parents with more options to participate and broadens the scope of parent formation and education offerings.

9. **Use online platforms and digitally enabled strategies.** 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.

10. **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.

**Free Download**

Tool #10
Ideas for Life Stage Faith Formation

Multiple Environments for Faith Formation

Faith formation incorporates seven learning environments, in online spaces and physical places, to provide a variety of ways for people to learn and grow in faith that respects their preferred styles of learning, their life situations, and their time constraints. The seven environments provide a way to offer a diversity of programs in different learning environments, as well as to offer the same program content in multiple learning environments—all of which provides people with more options to participate in faith formation and broadens the scope of faith formation offerings. A variety of learning methods can be used with each of these seven learning environments. Creating this variety of learning environments is aided by the development of an online platform that integrates, delivers, and communicates the faith formation offerings.

1. **Independent (on your own, self-directed)** programming provides maximum flexibility for the person—when to learn, how to learn, where to learn, and what to learn. With the increasing number and variety of books and printed resources, audio podcasts, video presentations, video programs, online courses, and online resource centers, independent learning offers a 24/7 approach to faith growth and learning for busy people. Congregations can serve as guide to helping people find the best learning format and content to address their learning needs, and then deliver that programming online at the church’s faith formation website.

2. **Mentoring** provides a one-to-one relationship for faith formation that can be utilized as an individual program option, such as a spiritual director/guide with an individual, or as a component in a larger program, such as having mentors for each person in the Christian initiation process or for those who want to explore Jesus and Christianity after leaving church earlier in life. Mentoring works older to younger, but also younger to older as in the case of young people mentoring older adults on the use of digital tools and media.

3. **At Home** programming provides individuals and whole families with faith formation programs, activities, and resources designed for use at home or in daily life, and delivered through a faith formation website. This can include a wide variety of digital media and online programs and resources, such as online learning programs, resources for the church year seasons, Sunday worship resources, online communities and support groups, and links to online faith formation resources and resource centers.
4. **Small Group** programming provides an excellent way to address the diversity of needs by organizing a variety of small groups with each one targeted to a particular need or topic. Small groups also provide lots of flexibility in schedule and location. Groups can meet at times and places that best fit their lives, such as group that meets for breakfast weekly at the local restaurant or for coffee at a local coffee shop. Small groups create an accepting environment in which new relationships can be formed. It is not always necessary for the congregation to sponsor small group programs. Congregational leaders can provide resources, support, and training for leaders, thereby enabling people to organize their own small groups. Small group programming learning can take many different forms including:

- Discipleship or faith sharing groups or study groups such as Bible study groups, theological formation study groups, theme or issue oriented study groups, Sunday lectionary-based faith sharing groups, book study groups
- Practice-focused groups such as prayer groups and service/faith in action groups
- Support groups such as parent groups, caregiving groups, life transition groups
- Ministry groups involved in leadership in the church and world

Study-action small groups combine study with an experiential hands-on action project. One type of study-action model focuses on engaging people in the ministry of justice and service, weaving together study, small group learning, retreat experiences, and action projects. A second type of study-action model involves ministry or leadership groups that prepare for their particular ministry or leadership role through study accompanied by actual involvement in their ministry or leadership role. This type of learning involves a continuous cycle of study-action-study-action, as the involvement in action generates new learning needs.

5. **Large Group** programming provides a way to serve a large number of people on topics that appeal to a wide audience. Here is a sampling of large group programming:

- Multi-session programs
- One-session program, such as a monthly session on a theological topic
- Speaker series, such as a multi-evening or multi-week program focused on a particular theme
- Parent parallel learning program at the same time as their children’s program
- Workshops targeted to specific life issues
- Film festivals that explore key religious, spiritual, and life-task themes
- Field trips, such as visiting an art museum or attending a musical or theatrical performance
- Retreat experiences in an evening, one-day, or weekend format at church or at a retreat center
- Intergenerational programs for all ages in the congregation
6. **Congregational** programming focuses on the events already present in the life of the church: Sunday worship, the feasts and seasons of the church year, sacramental and ritual celebrations, works of justice and acts of service, prayer experiences, spiritual traditions, and events that originate within the life and history of an individual congregation. Faith formation can provide experiences for people to prepare—with the appropriate knowledge and practices—for participation in the central events of church life and the Christian faith; and to guide their participation and reflection upon those events. Congregational programming includes leadership and ministry in the congregation and to the world—providing the opportunity for faith formation to prepare people for leadership and ministry, and to reflect upon their engagement.

7. **Community and World** programming provides a way for congregations to utilize existing programs and activities outside the church as part of a faith formation plan. This involves researching the resources and programs being offered locally in the community (programs, courses, clinics, workshops, presentations, and more) at community colleges and universities, retreat centers, YMCAs, libraries, bookstores, and more; and nationally/globally through national organizations, religious organizations, online resource centers, and more. This is an important environment for developing initiatives for serving, working for justice, and caring for creation. Many organizations—locally, nationally, and globally—have already created programs that be adopted by the congregation.
Tool #11
Personalizing Faith Formation

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

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

**Approach One: Personalize the Faith Pathways for People**

A *Pathways Guide* 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* 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 maturing faith—identifying characteristics of faith maturing that can be used for people to discern their faith journey and chart a path for growth.

Approach One uses the ten faith maturing characteristics (or similar characteristics from your Christian tradition) to create a *Pathways Guide* to help people discern their faith growth needs, and then design *Playlists* of content and experiences that address each characteristic. The
Pathways Guide incorporates a rating scale for discerning faith growth needs, for example: Getting Started, Growing, Going Deeper.

Playlists of content and experiences are developed for each characteristic with activities targeted to each rating on the discernment continuum (getting started, growing, going deeper). There are Playlists for each “level” on the continuum. Playlists incorporate a variety of programming including gathered programs at church, small groups, online learning and resources, mentoring, and more. The Playlists are published on a digital platform to make it easy for people to access them. They can also be connected to an online classroom like Google Classroom or Edmodo.

Approach One works well around major milestones and sacrament preparation, providing a way to connect with people where they are in their faith journey and personalizing their preparation experience. Create a Pathways Guide for Christian initiation and new member formation, marriage, baptism, first communion, confirmation. A Pathways Guide can be used at the beginning of a new year of gathered faith formation programming to provide a more personalized experience for people. A Pathways Guide can be used with parents to discern the growth needs of parents and the whole family at parent meetings and family-centered programming. It works best in an environment where you can guide people in discerning their faith growth needs and connecting them to Playlist that is designed for them.

Design Process
1. Identify a target audience.
2. Identify how and where you will use the Pathways Guide.
3. Develop the characteristics of faith growth you want to use in your Pathways Guide. Use the ten characteristics of maturing faith or use characteristics of faith growth specific to the content of the event or program (such as preparing for confirmation).
4. Develop a ‘discernment continuum” that gives people a way to reflect on their current growth. Use a faith growth continuum: Getting Started, Growing or Making Progress, Going Deeper; or a rating scale: How true is each statement for you: 1 = not true from me, 3 = somewhat true for me, 5 = very true for me.

Approach Two: Personalize the Faith Formation Offerings

A second approach to personalizing faith formation, when you cannot use a Pathways Guide with people, is to offer a variety of content, experiences, and activities developed around the ten characteristics or the program’s content, and tailored to the different faith growth needs of people (getting started, growing, going deeper). In Approach Two the Playlists provide the way to personalize faith formation. For example, to help children, adolescents, parents, or the whole family read and study the Bible, we can offer three different types of Bible content and experiences for those who are getting started, growing, and going deeper. These activities can
be online, gathered, small group, family-centered, and more. All of the content and experiences are published on a digital platform for people to access.

**Faith Formation Playlists**

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 Getting Started, Growing, Going Deeper. Each playlist provides a variety of ways for people to learn and grow in faith.

*Playlists* incorporate intergenerational, family, age group, and online/digital faith forming content, experiences, and activities. In Chapters Two through Four you identified an abundance of current and new programming that can be utilized in creating *Playlists* of content, experiences, programs, and activities for children, adolescents, parents, and the whole family. Here’s a checklist for designing *Playlists*.

**Design Process**

1. Develop *Playlists* for a target audience: children, adolescents, parents, or the whole family.
2. Select content and experiences to address each faith maturing characteristic with activities for each “level” of discernment, e.g., Getting Started, Growing, Going Deeper. Use the four types of content and experiences in your *Playlists* as appropriate: intergenerational, family age-specific, and online and digital. Some of the resources and programming will apply to multiple “levels” of faith growth needs. Review the “Curating Resources” section to develop a process for finding, reviewing, and using resources, especially digital resources, in designing your *Playlists*.
3. Using a variety of settings or environments for faith growth: independent, mentored, at home, small group, large group, intergenerational /whole church, and world.
4. 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).
5. Use a variety of methods: reading; writing/keeping a journal; storytelling and creating stories; watching feature films, TV shows, videos; creating a media project or video; viewing or creating art; viewing or taking photographs; watching drama or acting; listening to or creating a podcast; listening to or creating music; conducting a demonstration or exhibit; experiencing games, simulations, video games; analyzing or creating a case study; developing an apprenticeship or internship; experiencing prayer and rituals; creating prayer experiences; taking a field trip; participating in a mission trip; engaging in or creating a service/action project; developing a mentor relationship; and more.
6. 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, Wix, and Squarespace. All three have easy to use features and very reasonable subscription fees. For advanced users WordPress 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.

Sample Pathways

1. Adult Faith Growth Pathway
2. Family Faith Growth Pathway
3. Parent Faith Growth Pathway
4. Adolescent Faith Growth Pathway
Example: Adult Faith Growth Pathway Model

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 every day.

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 = not true from me, 3 = somewhat true for me, and 5 = very true for me.

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

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.

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 “How true each statement is for you” using the rating scale: 1 = not true from me, 3 = somewhat true for me, and 5 = very true for me. 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.

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

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) . . .
**Example: Parent Pathway Model**

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 “How true each statement is for you” using the rating scale: 1 = not true from me, 3 = somewhat true for me, and 5 = very true for me. 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.

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

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) . . . .
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 every day.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know that Jesus Christ is the son of God who died on a cross and rose again.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live my life and make moral decisions guided by moral values that tell me what is right or wrong behavior.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am optimistic, trusting, and I am convinced that I can do much to make the world a better place.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am involved in actions to serve those in need.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God cares for me in a special way.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My faith helps me know right from wrong.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel God’s presence when I serve people in need.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel God’s presence in prayer.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am keenly aware of the presence of God in my life.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see evidence that God is active in the world.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I accept opportunities to learn how to speak naturally and intelligently about my faith.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I speak out publicly against specific social injustices.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a real sense that God is guiding me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a religious person.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel God's presence in my relationships with other people.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My faith shapes how I think and act.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My religious faith is important in my life today.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek out opportunities to help me grow spiritually.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask sincere and searching questions about the nature of a life of faith in God.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel God's presence when I worship (at school, at church/synagogue/mosque)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My life is committed to Jesus Christ.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tool #12  
Curating Resources for Faith Formation

One of the essential skills for developing Playlists of rich content and experiences is learning how to *curate* high quality faith formation content in all forms and media that can engage people in learning and growing in developmentally appropriate ways targeted to their faith growth needs.

Curation may be a new word for many, but it has a long history. The term *curator* comes from the Latin word *curare* meaning “to care for.” Every time we visit a museum we experience the work of museum curators who acquire, care for, develop, display, and interpret a collection of artifacts or works of art in order to inform, educate, and entertain us. Museum curators are subject-matter experts who guide a museum’s overall art collection. Librarians have a similar curation task—they curate books and media in a variety of forms, including digital—to inform, educate, and entertain us. Like museum curators, librarians have done this for centuries. The Library of Alexandria (Egypt) in the ancient world have had curators over two thousand years ago!

A content curator is someone who continually finds, groups, organizes, and shares the best and most relevant content on a specific subject to match the needs of a specific audience. Content curators provide a personalized, high-quality selection of the best and most relevant content and resources available. They do not create more content, but make sense of all the content that others are creating.

How does curation apply to faith formation? When faith formation was a matter of selecting the right print resource or program from the right religious publisher, there was little need for curation. Leaders simply selected the right resource. But even in the era of “the resource is the curriculum,” many faith formation leaders were curators. To design home-grown programming they would search through print resource, films, and music to design a retreat or a youth meeting or an adult topical series or a parent workshop. They never thought of themselves as curators, but that is what they were doing—searching through a variety of resources, selecting the most appropriate resources to match with the needs of the people and the program, and then using the resource in the program design.

We now live in an era where there is an abundance of religious content in digital form—audio, video, apps, e-books, websites—and in print form. We are benefiting from the rise of online resource centers with freely accessible, high quality religious content and experiences that congregations, families, and individuals can access. In the new digital world of abundant resources, the role of the faith-formation leader is shifting from *providing* religious content and programming to *curating* religious content and experiences for all ages.
So what is a faith formation curator? A faith formation curator is a trusted guide who continually finds, groups, organizes, and connects the best and most relevant content and resources on a specific subject to match the needs of a specific audience. The resources can come in many forms: people resources, programs at church and in the community, and media resources (print, audio, video, online, digital). Curation is the way that faith formation leaders connect programming with high quality resources.

We can identify three steps in the process of curating faith formation: 1) research and organize resources, 2) evaluate resources, and 3) connect the resources to programming. The research and organize phase of the process is continuous. Good curators are always searching for new resources and organizing them for future use.

**Step 1. Research and Organize the Resources**

The first step in the curation process is researching and reviewing resources. This is the collection phase. There’s no need to select or evaluate resources at this stage—the key is to collect as many high-quality resources for faith formation.

It is helpful to develop a list of trusted expert curators to assist you in researching and evaluating resources. We all know people in faith formation who make it part of their work to stay current with the best resources. Make a list of these people and invite them to be part of the curation support system.

It is also helpful to develop a list of high-quality online resource centers with high-quality content. Be selective—this does not have to be a long list of websites. Select resource centers with well-produced content. Review websites from national and regional denominational agencies, religious publishers, churches, and religious organizations online faith formation content. For a list of online resources for faith formation go to the “Curation” section of the LifelongFaith.com website.

Be sure to subscribe to faith formation blogs and newsletters that review faith formation resources to make it easier for you to keep up-to-date on what’s new. Blogs and newsletters are produced by individuals, denominational offices, seminaries, religious organizations, and religious publishers. A good example of a faith formation blog (and online resource center) is *Building Faith* (www.buildfaith.org) from Virginia Theological Seminary.

Here is a checklist of the types of resources to research:

- People: teachers, mentors/guides, program leaders, small group leaders, guest presenters
- Community programs: churches, agencies, organizations,
- Educational institutions: colleges, seminaries, educational organizations
- Retreat and spiritual life centers, monasteries
• Regional and national denominational programs, events, and websites
• Museums
• Books (with study guides) and e-books
• Apps
• Audio podcasts and audio learning programs
• Videos, feature films, and TV shows; and video learning programs
• Online courses and online activities

One of the easiest ways to develop a library of faith formation resources is to create homegrown resources by saving and archiving church programming. Develop a plan for recording presentations and programs at church in audio/and or video format. Think of all of the opportunities throughout the year for recording program that can be used in other learning formats such as self-study or small group study. Consider weekly sermons, presentations, special events, concerts, and more. Develop a YouTube channel for the congregation to store and categorize all of the video recordings.

**Step 2. Evaluate Resources**

Every faith formation curator needs standards for evaluating faith formation resources that reflect their Christian tradition and the needs of their congregation. A set of evaluation standards needs to be developed locally. Consult denominational resources for evaluating curriculum resources. Most denominations have evaluation standards for assessing educational resources or textbooks. This can serve as a basis for developing the congregation's evaluation standards.

Here are ten categories for developing a resource evaluation checklist. Add one or more focusing questions to each category. Try to keep the checklist short so that it is easy to use. Use the evaluation criteria to review potential resources.

1. Biblical content and interpretation
2. Theological content and emphasis
3. Developmental appropriateness
4. Ethnic-cultural appropriateness
5. Inclusive of diversity
6. Respect for diverse ways of learning
7. Appearance and visual appeal
8. Ease-of-use
9. Quality of experience
10. Ability to be incorporated into daily and home life

**Step 3. Select Resources for Playlists**

Select the best resources for your target audience to match with each faith maturing characteristic on your Pathways Guide and with the different “levels” of faith growth. Select content and experiences for your Playlists that include intergenerational, family age-specific, and online and digital.
A program evaluation can be as simple as embedding an evaluation onto the website with individual programs and activities so that people can complete an evaluation as soon as the program or activity concludes. It is also easy to develop an evaluation form on SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com) and provide a link on the website to the online evaluation. SurveyMonkey compiles the results of the evaluation and produces a report of the results that can then be printed. (There are sample evaluation tools on SurveyMonkey that can be adapted.)

A seasonal evaluation reviews both programming and the website design and usability. The seasonal evaluation combines face-to-face evaluation meetings with online evaluation tools such as SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com).

For the face-to-face seasonal evaluation: gather small groups of people (twelve to twenty) who participated in programming and utilized the website. Conduct this activity twice: once to get feedback on the content of the network—what people participated in, and second for the design and usability of the faith formation network. Make a copy of the four-quadrant grid below on newsprint or a whiteboard to capture people’s feedback in four different areas. Draw a plus in the upper left quadrant, a triangle in the upper right quadrant, a question mark in the lower left quadrant, and a light bulb in the lower right quadrant.

- The upper left quadrant is for things people liked or found notable (in the programming and website).
- The upper right quadrant is for constructive criticism.
- The lower left quadrant is for questions that the experience raised in the lives of the people.
- The lower right quadrant is for ideas that the experiences spurred.
For **online seasonal evaluation**: Develop an evaluation form on SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com) and provide a link on the faith formation website and church website to the online evaluation. Design the online evaluation in two sections: an evaluation of seasonal programming and an evaluation of the website design and usability. Be sure to have people indicate if they did not participate in a program by adding a response to each question such as “did not participate.” Send an email to all those who participated in one or more programs and activities in the season and ask them to go online to complete the evaluation.

Here are examples of evaluation questions that can be used to construct an evaluation form or a survey instrument. For a survey, try to limit the number of essay questions. People prefer the multiple choice/rating scales.

**Sample Reaction Questions**

How did participants react to the program, or better, what is the measure of their satisfaction?

1. What is your overall feeling after participating in this program/activity? (Circle all that apply.) Enthused, Astounded, Satisfied, Indifferent, Ambivalent, Encouraged, Uneasy, Threatened, Discouraged, Affirmed, Challenged, Enriched.
2. I was pleased by/with . . .
3. I was disappointed by/with . . .
4. One thing I found most helpful in this program/activity . . .
5. One of the biggest benefits from participating in this program/activity was . . .
6. This program/activity was . . . very helpful, somewhat helpful, not very helpful, not at all helpful.
7. What recommendations would you make for improving the program?
8. Circle the number that best represents your evaluation of the program/activity. Use a rating scale of 1—strongly disagree, 2—disagree, 3—agree, and 4—strongly agree or a rating scale of: 1—not satisfied, 2—somewhat satisfied, 3—satisfied, 4—very satisfied, and 5—extremely satisfied.
   - I feel that I will be able to use what I learned.
   - The program/activity was interesting and engaging.
   - The program/activity encouraged participation, questions, and practical application.
   - The schedule and length of the program was appropriate.
   - The program/activity respected my learning style.
   - The program/activity offered a variety of learning activities and a variety of ways to learn.
   - The program/activity helped me apply my learning to daily life.
   - (Add specific features and content of the program/activity for people to evaluate.)
Sample Application Questions

To what extent has learning occurred? This includes understanding the content presented, changing attitudes, developing behaviors, and so forth.

1. One way I can personally use what I learned from my participation in this program/activity is . . .
2. One way this program/activity had an impact on my life . . .
3. What understandings, skills, tools, or ideas do you have now that you did not have at the beginning of the program/activity?
4. List three actions you would like to undertake as a result of your participation in the program/activity.
5. As a result of your participation in this program/activity, what do you want to learn or do next?