Faith Formation with Children

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Presentation:
Go to Practices - Children
Lifelong faith formation is a lifetime journey with Christ, in Christ, and to Christ.

Faith Formation is….

Way of the Head
Inform

Way of the Hands
Transform

Way of the Heart
Form
A Holistic Faith

**A way of the head (inform)** demands a discipleship of faith seeking understanding and belief with personal conviction, sustained by study, reflecting, discerning and deciding, all toward spiritual wisdom for life.

**A way of the heart (form)** demands a discipleship of right relationships and right desires, community building, hospitality and inclusion, trust in God’s love, and prayer and worship.

**A way of the hands (transform)** demands a discipleship of love, justice, peace-making, simplicity, integrity, healing, and repentance.

Faith Formation across the Life Cycle

View Children’s Faith Formation as part of the whole life cycle of faith formation.

Develop Children’s Faith Formation as a continuous process from birth through the end of middle school (0-14).
Holistic Faith Formation

- Intergenerational
- Family
- Peers or Life Stage

Why is 0-14 so important?
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- Young people committing to live their lives for God is one religious experience that is among the most important factors in leading teenagers into the highest levels of emerging adult religion.
- Almost 60 percent made their first commitment to live their lives for God before the age of 14. Most of these probably committed to God during the childhood years.
- Approximately 6% make a first commitment between 14-17, and another 5% between 18-23.
- 31% of young adults reported never committing to God as a teenager or emerging adult. One can expect that few of them probably ever will.

So, 85 percent of young adults who have committed their lives to God appear to have made their first commitment before age 14.

NSYR Research (Christian Smith and colleagues)

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Why is 0-14 so important?

- The religious commitments and orientations of most people appear to be set early in life and very likely follow a consistent trajectory from the early formation through the adolescent and into the emerging adult years.
- What matters for most even more is what happens religiously before the teenage years, which powerfully conditions most of everything that happens thereafter.

(Souls in Transition, Smith and Snell, 247)
Why is family so important?

- The Primary Influence on transmission of religious faith and practice are Parents & the Family.
- The key is the day-to-day religious practices of the family and the ways parents model their faith and share it in conversation, collaboration, and exposure to outside religious opportunities.
- A Secondary Influence is The Congregation and Significant Adults in the congregation.

We know the factors that make a significant difference in promoting faith in children and adolescents:

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

The best curriculum for forming children, youth, and anyone else in Christian faith is guided participation in a community of practice.

Guided participation in a community of practice puts a premium on both participation and practice. . . . We become Christian..., by acting the way Christians act, and by talking the way Christians talk. (Joyce Mercer)

Why is intergenerational so important?

A faith-forming education requires the interdependence of the generations. This involves developing sustained patterns of intergenerational learning, relationships, and mentoring that develop young people’s identification with the faith community, give them memories of hope to enliven their future, and create their sense of responsibility for the well-being of the community and the earth. (Charles Foster)
Why is intergenerational so important?

The responsibility of mentoring the faith of children and youth belongs to the whole congregation in the full range of its ministries. The clearest way of learning to be Christian is to participate with others in the practices of being Christian. Each member of a faith community may potentially mentor someone at the threshold of expertise in some shared community practice.

(Charles Foster)

What goals are guiding our work with children in promoting growth in faith & discipleship?
Transforming our Approach

FROM
Activity, classes, and programs

TO
Goals for faith maturity

Maturing in Faith
Maturing in Faith

- Developing and sustaining a personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ
- Living as a disciple of Jesus Christ and making the Christian faith a way of life
- Reading and studying the Bible—its message, meaning, and application to life today
- Learning the Christian story and foundational teachings of the Christian faith and integrating its meaning into one’s life
- Praying—together and by ourselves, and seeking spiritual growth through spiritual disciplines

Maturing in Faith

- Living with moral integrity guided by Christian ethics and values
- Living the Christian mission in the world—serving those in need, caring for God’s creation, and acting and advocating for justice and peace.
- Worshipping God with the community at Sunday worship, ritual celebrations, and the seasons of the church year
- Being actively engaged in the life, ministries, and activities of the faith community
- Practicing faith in Jesus Christ by using one’s gifts and talents within the Christian community and in the world
Whole-Life Approach

Life Stage Tasks

Life Situations

Religious & Spiritual Life

Religious Lives

*Actives*: Faith & Engagement at the Center of Life

*Occasionals*: Faith & Engagement – one among many priorities

*Uninvolved*: Spiritual but Not Religious

*Unaffiliateds*: Not Spiritual, Not Religious
10 Priorities for Maturing in Faith

1. Developing and sustaining a relationship with Jesus
2. Living as a disciple
3. Reading and studying the Bible
4. Learning and integrating the Story
5. Developing a prayer life
6. Living with moral integrity
7. Living the mission in the world
8. Worshipping God
9. Being active in the faith community
10. Practicing faith by using one’s gifts

How do we develop faith formation with children and their families
Holistic Faith Formation

Intergenerational

Family

Peers or Life Stage

Developing Children’s Faith Formation

Intergenerational Focus
Support with family and age group programming

Family Focus
Support with intergenerational and age group programming

Age Group Focus
Integrate family and intergenerational programming
Inter-generational Focus

IG Program
- Family Activities @ Church
- Family Activities @ Home
- Children's Programs
- Children's Activities

IG Experiences @ Church
- Family Program @ Church @ Home in groupings
- Children's Programs
A Holistic Approach

**Intergenerational**
- Participate in several celebrations of Church year feasts & seasons
- Join the community in a service service project
- Participate in a leadership role or church ministry

**Family**
- Develop a faith practice each season: prayer, Bible reading, etc.
- Celebrate particular church year seasons (Lent, All Saints/Souls)
- Participate in two whole family programs at church
- Participate in two service projects as a family

**Life Stage Specific**
- Select one's participation in courses, workshops, retreats, vacation Bible school, service projects and mission trips, etc.
A “Menu” of Faith Formation

KF is a building model of faith learning. Rather than focusing on isolation, prayer, celebration and faith-based culture, it focuses on faith development in a family setting. The Felix Family will be a part of this model, and will bring their children with them to faith formation activities. The goals of the KF program are:

- To learn about the Jewish tradition through a family experience with prayer, celebration and education.
- To strengthen the family’s connection to the Jewish tradition and to the community as a whole.
- To build a community of learners that support each other.

Program Requirements

- Student and at least one adult family member should register for this program in the fall of 2016.
- A “Teacher” of the activity will be assigned by the Felix Family, who will work with and provide feedback for the student and adult.
- The program will be facilitated by the Felix Family.
- The program will allow for flexibility in the family’s schedule.
- The program will be open to all families.

Faith Formation Network

Westwood U

Fall/Winter Catalog October 2016-January 2017

Professional & Personal COMMUNITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS BUILDING

Westwood is open & affirming, welcoming all who seek God.
Faith Formation Network

Welcome to Westwood U!

Westwood U offers people of all ages the opportunity to gather for education, faith development, and mutual growth—kids, parents, grandparents, friends...

Westwood U is a way to nurture a whole culture — an ecosystem — of faith formation at Westwood.

We believe that heart and hands must accompany head in one’s faith journey, so in addition to the classroom, Westwood U will create opportunities for faith mentoring, faith socializing, and even faith surfing by tapping into the life experience of multiple generations. We operate under the conviction that the content of faith has no traction outside of faith-based relationships. Our faith flourishes in relationship.

What courses are offered?

There are 3 categories for the courses offered at Westwood U. Several courses from each category are offered throughout the year.

Knowledge and learning
Live-service to our neighbor and congregation
Grow-fellowship and faith nurturing experiences

How many of each should I take if I’m looking to get credit for confirmation?

While completing the required number of 15 total Westwood U courses, confirmation students are required to take a minimum number of courses in each of the 3 categories listed above. The remaining 6 credits are the student’s choice!

Example:

Year 1: 5 courses, Wednesday Night Live and Bible Milestone
Year 2: 5 courses and Wednesday Night Live
Year 3: 5 courses, mentoring and a faith statement.

WHAT IS WESTWOOD U?

Programming Ideas
21st Century Learning Methods

1. Blended Learning
2. Micro-Learning
3. Immersive Learning Environments
4. Multiple Ways of Learning
5. Multisensory Learning
6. Project-Based Learning
7. Collaborative Learning
8. Visual Learning
9. Practice-Oriented Learning
10. Storytelling

Styles of Learning: Gen Z

- authentic and meaningful experiences
- more independent; self-reliant; self-directed learners
- adept at using the new digital tools and methods to learn
- value face-to-face interaction and collaboration and co-creating
- project-based learning, active learning, and creative activities
- Videos and YouTube, short pieces that run from 60-90 seconds
A Variety of Settings for Faith Formation

- Independent
- Mentored
- Small Group
- Large Group
- Church Community
- Community and World

Digital Methods

1. Extend a church event or program
2. Design a program, offer it in multiple platforms
3. Prepare for and follow-up a program
4. Flip a gathered program
5. Integrate online & gathered
6. Create online only
7. Use webinars, podcasts, etc. to deliver programming directly to people
One Program in Multiple Formats

Preparation

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

Experiencing

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

Living

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

Build on an Event/Experience
Extend the Event

Church Event or Program

At Home & Daily Life

Blended & Online Learning

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

@ The Program
Applying the Content: Create – Practice - Perform - Participate
Webinar & Streaming

Family Ideas
Family Programming

Connect Home & Church
- Provide activities/resources to expand faith forming

Infuse and Enhance
- Add a family strategy/activity into an existing program

Redesign and Relaunch
- Take an existing program and redesign it into a family program

Design New Programming
- Introduce a new family or parent program

Reaching Families

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

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

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

Through the lifecycle: milestones and rites of passage

Finding the spaces and times in family life
Family Methods & Media

Practical Strategies

1. Family Experiments
2. Faith Practice of the Month
3. Connect to Sunday worship
4. Seasons @Home and @Church
5. Whole Family Programs
6. Sacraments & Milestones
7. Family Life Skills
8. Parent Programming
9. Family faith formation website
7-Day or 30-Day Family Experiments

- Add a faith practice(s) or a family life skill into a family's daily routine.
- Learn together with resources provided by the church (print, video, audio, etc.).
- What if there was a daily text, email, video?
- Instagram #, Facebook Group, etc. to share experiences, post photos

The Family Faith Moments: 7-Day Start-Up Plan will help you:

- add family faith moments into your daily routine
- learn new spiritual practices alongside your kids; no previous religious experience necessary
- teach your children to appreciate religious diversity with time-tested non-Christian and Christian spiritual practices

1. Get Ready: Create a Sacred Space
2. Imagination
3. Gratitude Cafe
4. Anxiety: Wash Away Worries
5. Bubble Prayers
6. Wind Prayers for the World
7. Daily Office: Morning & Evening Prayer
Ideas Bible Story of the Month

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.

Then provide online resources for parents to reinforce the Bible story online: reading the story, watching the video, discussing the story.

Ideas Prayer Practice of the Month

Teach a different form of prayer, and/or experience a prayer practice each month during the class or program: contemplative, Scriptural, intercessory, praise (adoration), thanksgiving, etc.

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.
Ideas Practice of the Month or Season

Incorporate faith practices throughout the year by teaching the practices through experiential activities in children and youth programs, for example:

• Eating Well
• Forgiving
• Generosity
• Hospitality
• Keeping Sabbath
• Praying
• Reading the Bible
• Stewardship / Care for Creation
• Transforming the World

Then invite parents to reinforce the practice through continued at-home experiences that you provide online for easy access.

Ideas Connect Sunday Worship

Incorporate preparation and/or reflection for Sunday in children and teen programs, and then deepen 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.

• family conversation questions,
• weekly table ritual
• podcast or video of the sermon with a study guide for the parents,
• children’s creative Bible activities
• storybooks
• videos presenting the Bible story,
• daily prayer
• weekly family devotion
Ideas
Celebrate the Seasons

Identify a monthly seasonal event 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 in the event.

- Jan: ML King Jr. (working for justice and peace, serving)
- Feb: Valentine’s Day (loving)
- March: Lent (praying, serving/almsgiving, fasting)
- April: Earth Day (caring for creation)
- May: Mother’s Day (loving, caring)
- June: Father’s Day (loving, caring)
- July: Independence Day (freedom, justice)
- August: Back to school (new beginnings)
- Sept: Fall harvest (grateful, generosity, care for the earth)
- Oct: St. Francis (care for creation / animals)
- Nov: Thanksgiving (grateful, serving, hospitality)
- Dec: Advent and Christmas

Incorporate family programs throughout the year – on seasonal themes, family life themes, etc.

Substitute an age group program for a family program: Weeks 1-4 - Age Groups + Week 5 – Family Program.

Redesign VBS as a family program or with family components

Design extended time (half-day, full day) immersion experiences—at church or in the community—where families can experience the Christian faith firsthand, such as hospitality at a homeless shelter or serving a meal at a soup kitchen or caring for creation by planting a garden.
Example: Called to Pray

Gathering and Opening Prayer

All Ages Learning: I’m Ready God, Where Are You? (Drama)

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

Part 4. Sharing Learning Experiences and Home Application

Part 5. Closing Prayer

Themes

Christian Beliefs
Christian Practices
Morality
Justice & Service
Prayer
Bible
Liturgy / Church Year
Family Life Practices & Skills
Family Camp

Join us for an intergenerational “Adventure Rooted in Christ.” This special camp provides grandparents and grandkids with adventure-filled days to pray and play together. Life-long memory-making adventures can be expected!

2018 FAMILY CAMPS

Imagine a place where everyone can be themselves and have fun—without limits. Where family and friends can come together to create memories that will last a lifetime. Where each day is filled with laughter, adventure, and new friendships.

We gather together as a community to share in the fun and create lasting memories. Our goal is to provide an experience that will leave you and your family with a sense of belonging and purpose.

Click on the link below for more information on how to register.

Family Camp 2018 Schedule

Family Camp @ 4
June 21-22, 2018
Registration:
With: Ryan Irmler, Pastor, & Jana Sherwood, Director
Special activities include:
- Worship on Friday Night

Family Service

- Gather together as a community to share in the fun and create lasting memories.
- Our goal is to provide an experience that will leave you and your family with a sense of belonging and purpose.
- Click on the link below for more information on how to register.

Family Camp 2018 Schedule:

Family Camp @ 4
June 21-22, 2018
Registration:
With: Ryan Irmler, Pastor, & Jana Sherwood, Director
Special activities include:
- Worship on Friday Night
Family Learning

Family Worship
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
- 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.

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

**Content**

- Parental Faith Formation
- Faith Forming Skills & Practices
- Knowledge & Skills for Parenting

**Parent Programming**

1. Develop a progression of parent workshops, webinars, or courses through the life cycle
2. Incorporate parent formation and education into church events
3. Add a parallel parent experience to the existing child/teen program
4. Add a parent component to VBS
5. Design laboratory experiences
6. Develop parent mentors
7. Create life cycle or affinity groups
8. Provide a website or online group
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.** They want a plan that will give them a system of support, consistent influence, and a steady flow of relevant information.
- **Show me how it works.**
- **Tell me what to do today.** We have to give them specific instructions or resources to use this week. Give parents a map and a schedule.

### Parent Practices & Skills

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

Intergenerational Strategies

Utilize  Infuse  Connect  Create
IG Strategies

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

Infusing IG Learning

1. Age Group Programming
2. Sacramental and Milestone Celebrations
3. Church Year Feasts & Seasons
4. Vacation Bible School
5. Mission Trips & Service Projects
6. Retreat and Camp Experiences
Family & Inter-generational Programs

Meal and Community Building

Part 1. Gathering and Prayer

Part 2. All Ages Learning Experience

Part 3. In-Depth Learning Experience

Part 4. Sharing Learning Experiences and Home Application

Part 5. Closing Prayer

II-life: Navigating Life with GPS God's Proven System

Gatherings for 2009-2010

Rules of the Road – God's Commandments

Wednesday September 9
Thursday September 10
Friday September 11

Respect and Protect All Life

Wednesday October 14
Thursday October 15
Friday October 16

Give Way with Mercy and Forgiveness

Wednesday November 18
Thursday November 19
Friday November 20

Stay on the Straight and Narrow Path of Fidelity

Wednesday February 4
Thursday February 5
Friday February 6

Navigating with Integrity and Honesty

Wednesday March 10
Thursday March 11
Friday March 12

Be a Good Steward of All God's Gifts

Wednesday April 14
Thursday April 15
Friday April 16

Wednesday & Friday Gatherings are for all ages.
Thursday Gatherings are for adults & teens.
HI-life Gatherings...

Our Hi-life gatherings are community catchalls focused on living a HI Life. Our themes in this year revolve around understanding the bigger message of sharing the love of Jesus. The theme for this year is "Elements of LOGOS." These gatherings will focus on 4 areas:

1. **Bible Study**
2. **Family Time**
3. **Worship Skills**
4. **Recreation**

These gatherings will include times of worship, teaching, and sharing. They are open to all ages and will be held at various locations. Check the website for more information.

**Elements of LOGOS**

1. **Bible Study**
2. **Family Time**
3. **Worship Skills**
4. **Recreation**

**GenOn Ministries**

[www.genonministries.org](http://www.genonministries.org)
Messy Church

- A flexible, relaxed arrival time with drinks and snacks
- Creative exploration of a Bible story/theme through 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/theme together
- A short but explicit time of worship with story, music and prayers that builds on the creative exploration.
- A generous welcome and hospitality is expressed through a delicious home-cooked, sit-down meal with others