

Adults at the Center... a roadmap

Issue: Catholic parishes place a high priority on the faith formation of children and youth, far fewer treat adult faith formation as a priority.

Challenge: Shift the focus of parish faith formation from primarily child/youth sacramental preparation to adult spirituality and discipleship.

Goal: Adult disciples who take on responsibility to accompany adults to deepen their faith.

Vision: ***ENGAGE** with the hearts of adults; **BUILD** them up in the faith; **SEND** them into the world as disciples.*

Leadership of parishes creates the kinds of communities that adults feel at home in. Adults feel they are welcomed and their faith life and their experiences are honored and accepted as they are. Parishes make it a priority to accompany adults to move forward on their lifelong journey of faith to follow Jesus Christ.

Trained diocesan and parish leadership become change leaders to:

- **ENGAGE** the hearts of adults
 - Build relationships by creating bridges of trust, accompaniment, and befriending in a safe space.
- **BUILD** them up in the faith
 - Arouse spiritual curiosity. Raise questions that pose the ultimate question, “Who do you think Jesus is?” “Where have you been? Where are you now? Where do you want to get to? How do you plan to get there?” Ask questions, tell stories, and respond to questions in appropriate doses.
 - Provide formation that is an apprenticeship of the entire Christian life (Word, Worship Witness) which promotes the following of Christ. Invite them to meet with other Christians. Recognize, honor, nourish and support the work of the Holy Spirit in their heart.
 - Provide catechesis that connects faith and life. Help them focus on the person of Jesus and the central challenges of the Gospel.
 - Help them to pray seriously and embrace the need for personal repentance and conversion. Help them to explore the vast array of prayer within the Catholic Church.
 - Deepen adults understanding and commitment to Eucharist through catechesis and mystagogical reflection.
- **SEND** them into the world as disciples
 - Invite them to make a conscious commitment to follow Jesus in the midst of his Church as a disciple and to reorder one’s life accordingly.
 - Give adults/families ways and practices to share their faith and serve others in their lives.

Adults at the Center... a roadmap

Strategic Areas: 1. **Worship/Ritual/Prayer**

- Foster appreciation and participation in Sunday Eucharist.
- Teach adults/ families to pray; guided meditations, prayers of gratitude.
- Provide adult/family retreats for sacraments.
- Provide adult/family faith formation gatherings around the liturgical year.
- Use life cycles and transitions as opportunities for faith formation.
- Provide stronger formation for parents during children's preparation for sacraments of initiation.
- Ritualize important adult/family moments and honor milestone experiences.
- Promote household meals and faith practices.

2. **Word/Faith Sharing**

Adults/Families learn about one's faith in ways that are interesting and relevant.

- In small groups of adults/parents
- In small groups of families
- In the home, connect the family story to the Good News and allow the active and gracious presence of God to permeate their household activities.
- Provide opportunities to hear the Good News as a source of freedom and healing.

3. **Witness/Service**

- Integrate service into all faith formation processes. (prepare for and reflect back upon)
- Give adults/families opportunities for authentic, genuine witness as they participate in Word, Worship and Service activities.
- Give adults tools to share their faith with other adults and their families.
- Live the value of dignity and respect for all people, practice radical hospitality, recognize and nurture our interdependence and work to heal the world.

For more on Word, Worship and Witness: See: <http://teamrcia.com/2016/08/qa-do-you-have-a-list-of-resources-for-teaching-catechumens/>

Tools:

- Adult/Parent/ Family Faith Conversation Starters: initial and sustained conversations
- Adult Spirituality Faith Survey: identify the spiritual needs of adults
- Family Faith Inventory
- Mystagogical Reflection Process
- Diocesan Sacramental Guidelines
- Catechetical Process: Intentionally utilize the four movements of the catechetical process focusing on the human experience, discovery/reflection/integration and response movements to teach the Good News.
- Evaluation Tool for Parish Faith Formation

Adults at the Center... a roadmap

Resources:

- [*Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States*](#), USCCB
- [*Follow the Way of Love, A Pastoral Message to Families*](#), USCCB
- [*The Joy of the Gospel \(Evangelii Gaudium\)*](#), USCCB
- [*The Joy of Love \(Amoris Laetitia\)*](#), USCCB
- [*The Art of Change: Faith, Vision and Prophetic Planning*](#), John Reid, Liguori Publications
- [*Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples*](#), Sherry A. Weddell, Editor, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.
- [*A Church on the Move*](#), Joe Paprocki, Loyola Press
- [*Families at the Center of Faith Formation*](#), Lifelong Faith Associates
- [*Finding God Together, An Intergenerational Events Kit*](#), Loyola Press
- [*Fruitful Discipleship: Living the Mission of Jesus in the Church and the World*](#), Sherry A. Weddell, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.
- [*Redeeming Conflict: Strategies for Working Through Ministerial Challenges*](#), Ann M Garrido, Ave Maria Press
- [*Strong Catholic Family Faith*](#), diocesan curated faith formation website
- [*Teaching for Discipleship*](#), Mike Carotta, EdD Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.
- [*The Wounded Healer*](#), Henri J. M. Nouwen
- [*Deepening Faith, Adult Faith Formation in the Parish*](#), Janet Schaeffler, OP
- [*V Encuentro*](#), resources for the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry
- [*21st Century Adult Faith Formation*](#), John Roberto, Lifelong Faith

“The success of programs for children and youth depends to a significant extent upon the words, attitudes, and actions of the adult community, especially parents, family and guardians.” NCD 188 1979

“Whatever we can do in Catholic parishes and diocese to encourage lifelong involvement in church life and faith formation will bear fruit in strengthened Christian community and mission.” OHWB p 43. 1999

"This is the mission of the Church: the Church that heals, that cares [for people]. I sometimes describe the Church as a field hospital. True, there are many wounded, how many wounded! How many people who need their wounds to be healed! This is the mission of the Church: to heal the wounded hearts, to open doors, to free [people], to say that God is good, God forgives all, that God is our Father, God is tender, that God is always waiting for us ... " – Pope Francis