



NCCL

Parents & Families

AT THE CENTER OF **FAITH FORMATION**

Guide for Parish Teams

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NCCL's *Parents and Families at the Center of Faith Formation Project* is a Lilly Endowment grant-funded project designed to explore how to strengthen faith transmission at home in the first two decades of life, and create parish communities that intentionally accompany and support parents and the whole family.

NCCL's *Parents and Families at the Center of Faith Formation Project* will establish a solid foundation of knowledge about how faith transmission is (or is not) being practiced in Catholic families so that new approaches and strategies can be designed that are reflective of the family research and current thinking on faith transmission. The Project seeks to build on how Catholic families are already transmitting faith and values so that new approaches and strategies support parents. The new approaches and strategies will be developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive, personalized to diverse parental religiosities, and responsive to diverse family structures.

NCCL's *Parents and Families at the Center of Faith Formation Project* will guide parish leaders in strengthening the parish community to accompany parents and the family in forming faith; and in designing a seamless approach to faith formation from birth through high school graduation by addressing the unique developmental and faith growth needs of young children, grade school children, young adolescents, and older adolescents. New resources and approaches will be created to guide parish communities in accompanying parents and developing a seamless approach to faith forming at home and in the parish community.

Project Timeline

2024 – Preparation Year

June 2024	Parishes complete the Parish Information Form online at SurveyMonkey.
June 2024:	Parish Coordinators participate with their Cohort in a Project Orientation (on Zoom).
Summer 2024:	Parishes develop their parish teams to participate in the Project.
Fall 2024:	Parish Coordinators participate in three cohort meetings on Zoom to prepare for the 2025 year of workshops, planning, and implementation. (Sept, Oct, Nov)

2025 – Year 1: Workshops, Planning, and Implementation

Parish teams will participate in three on-site workshops, conducted in their diocese, and monthly online Zoom meetings. Throughout 2025 parish teams will create and begin implementation of a three-year plan with new approaches in faith formation, guided by the research and resources from the Project.

Winter 2025:	Cohort Workshop #1 (1 day) for Coordinators and Teams
	Monthly Online Cohort Consultation Meetings for Parish Coordinators
Spring 2025:	Cohort Workshop #2 (1 day) for Coordinators and Teams
Summer 2025:	Monthly Online Cohort Consultation Meetings for Parish Coordinators
Fall 2025:	Cohort Workshop #1 (1 day) for Coordinators and Teams
	Monthly Online Cohort Consultation Meetings for Parish Coordinators

2026 – Year 2: Workshops and Continued Implementation

Parish teams will participate in two workshops, conducted in their diocese/region, and monthly online Zoom meetings. Throughout 2026 parish teams will implement their three-year plan; and evaluate, improve, and sustain their new initiatives.

Winter 2026:	Monthly Online Cohort Consultation Meetings for Parish Coordinators
Spring 2026:	Cohort Workshop #2 (1 day) for Coordinators and Teams
Summer 2026:	Monthly Online Cohort Consultation Meetings for Parish Coordinators

Fall 2026:	Cohort Workshop #1 (1 day) for Coordinators and Teams Monthly Online Cohort Consultation Meetings for Parish Coordinators
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2027 – Year 3: Workshop and Continued Implementation

Parish teams will participate in one workshop, conducted in their diocese/region, and monthly online Zoom meetings. Throughout 2027 parish teams will continue to implement their three-year plan; and evaluate, improve, and sustain their new initiatives.

Winter 2027: Monthly Online Cohort Consultation Meetings for **Parish Coordinators**

Spring 2027: Cohort Workshop #2 (1 day) for **Coordinators** and **Teams**

Summer 2027: Monthly Online Cohort Consultation Meetings for **Parish Coordinators**

Fall 2027: Monthly Online Cohort Consultation Meetings for **Parish Coordinators**

2028 – Evaluation year

Parish teams will continue to implement their plan. The Project will conduct an evaluation with parishes to collect models that parishes created and assess the effectiveness of models and approaches.

Key Responsibilities of the Parish Team

1. Participate in the six one-day workshops (over 3 years): Winter-Spring-Fall 2025, Spring-Fall 2026, and Spring 2027.
2. Work collaboratively with parish team members in planning meetings to design and implement a family faith formation plan in the parish.
3. Serve as a leader in one or more of the programs, activities, or experiences designed as part of the parish's family formation plan.
4. Serve as advocates for the vision of family faith and the parish's planning for family faith formation.

Team Covenant: Responsibilities to Each Other

In our **general interactions** with each other, here is what is important to us:

- We value open-mindedness and a non-judgmental approach to others.
- We value and respect the dignity of each team member and are receptive to his/her comments and questions.
- We value each team member as a resource who represents multiple other resources for our success.
- We value clear boundaries that are consistently honored and being respectfully “called out” when we cross an agreed-upon boundary.
- We value dedication to the success of the group over our individual agendas.
- We value change that grows from deep listening.
- We value the diversity of team members as a strength.

In our **conversations** with each other, here is what we will do:

- We will express our thoughts clearly, concisely, respectfully, and honestly.
- We will bear in mind that the meaning of what is being communicated resides in the listener differently than it resides in the speaker. For this reason, we will offer feedback for clarification before we express an alternative or opposing opinion; and we will seek feedback to verify that what we are saying is being understood clearly.
- We will bear in mind that communication is more than words. We will listen for emotional energy fluctuations and observe body language to understand each other better.
- We will be open to correction when we misunderstand another team member.
- We will pause in our conversations and be comfortable with silence to allow each other to integrate and process what is being discussed.

In our **communications and actions outside of our meeting times**, here is what we will do:

- We will honor confidentiality when it is requested.
- We will faithfully communicate the agreed-upon message in our communication plan.
- We will not gossip about team members or others.
- We will accomplish all tasks that are assigned during meetings according to the timeline we agree upon.
- We will deepen our friendships with each other to increase levels of trust among team members.

When we **make decisions**, here is what we will do:

- We will be clear about the goals, issues, strategies, etc. that we are discussing.
- We will engage in brainstorming so that all opinions can be heard.
- We will evaluate brainstormed ideas using the wisdom of all team members.
- We will support and work for team decisions even if the decision is not one’s preferred decision.

When we **disagree with each other** during discussions, here is what we will do:

- We will speak openly, honestly, and respectfully about any areas of disagreement.
- We will engage in disagreements as a means for creative problem-solving.
- We will be patient with each other and offer positive regard, assuming that others are acting with good intentions.
- We will take the opinions of those who disagree with us seriously.
- We will second guess our first thought when we are tense, knowing that our first thought under pressure is usually formed in fear and can be defensive.
- We will discuss issues without attacking personal character.
- We will understand, appreciate, and work with each person’s unique communication style.

Team Diversity: Characteristics that Complement Each Other

One of the greatest challenges of team building is fostering appreciation for diversity on the team and utilizing the unique gifts of each team member at the most opportune moments in the process of an unfolding project. The following is a brief listing of the unique characteristics, talents, or strengths that team members bring to a project. Each talent set can be engaged at different times as a project unfolds over time. Wise leaders know their team members and how best to leverage what they have to offer. Team members who are free to do their best work based on what they have to offer tend to report higher levels of work satisfaction than team members who are expected to be jacks of all trades.

Visionaries: Those who see the future and love to develop high-level plans to move into it. **Visionaries...**

- Love to learn.
- Love to engage in broad philosophical discussions.
- Love to develop strategies and goals.
- Can tend to avoid making decisions.
- Can tend to be averse to critique or evaluation.
- Dislike the status quo.

Relators: Those who love the experience of connection. **Relators...**

- Love to build and sustain personal relationships.
- Love to experience deep connection with others.
- Love to explore the interconnections that exist in all of creation.
- Can tend to avoid conflict.

Designers: Those who love to tinker and experiment to turn an idea into something workable. **Designers...**

- Love to run experiments, do pilot projects, engage in simulations, or develop prototypes.
- Love expressing their creativity.
- Love to brainstorm.
- Love to get feedback and constructive critique.
- Dislike the status quo.

Implementers: Those who love detail work and polishing a final product. **Implementers...**

- Love to tend to the fine details of a project such as room environment, registration procedures, program outlines, project flow, etc.
- Love to create a “Wow!” affect when they offer something to others.
- Love to create lists and cross items off the list as they are accomplished.
- Appreciate stability.
- Can be impatient with “all talk and no action.”
- Can tend to be averse to critique or evaluation.

Influencers: Those who love to promote something they believe is wonderful. **Influencers...**

- Love to brag about a project they are involved in.
- Love to pull people into involvement and win people over to a cause.
- Love to make decisions and act on those decisions.
- Love to take control of a situation that seems directionless.
- Are skilled at putting ideas into words and enjoy talking to people.
- Can tend to be averse to lengthy philosophical discussions.

Characteristics of Strong Teams

- Team members openly admit their weaknesses & mistakes.
- Team members quickly and genuinely apologize to one another when they say or do something inappropriate or possibly damaging to the team.
- Team members are passionate and unguarded in their discussion of issues.
- Team meetings are compelling and not boring.
- During team meetings, the most important—and difficult—issues are put on the table to be resolved.
- Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.
- Team members leave meetings confident that their peers are completely committed to the decisions that were agreed on, even if there was initial disagreement.
- Team members know what their peers are working on & how they contribute to the collective good of the team.
- Team members challenge one another about their plans and approaches.
- Team members are deeply concerned about the prospect of letting down their peers.
- Team members call out one another's deficiencies or unproductive behaviors.
- Morale is significantly affected by the failure to achieve team goals.
- Team members are slow to seek credit for their own contributions, but quick to point out those of others.
- Team members willingly make sacrifices for the good of the team.

Adapted from *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team Model, Lencioni, p. 188

