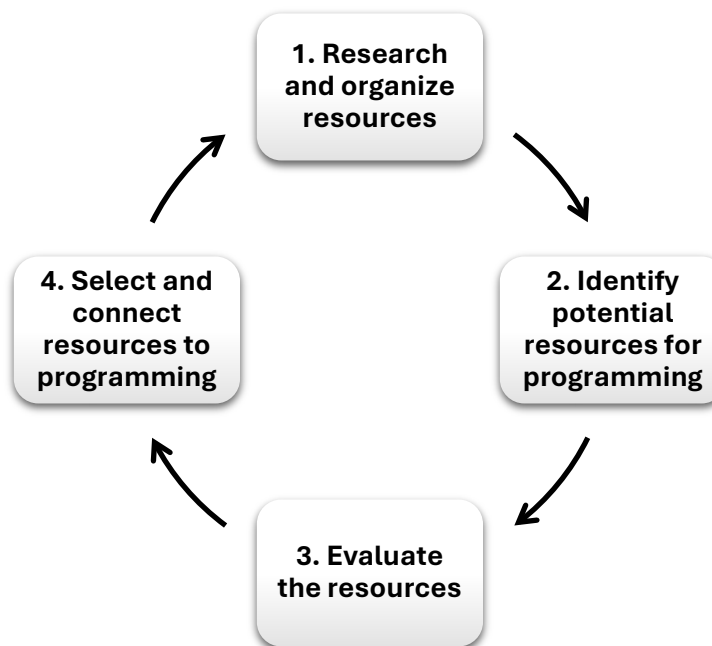


# Handout 9 – Identifying Resources and Creating a Budget to Implement and Promote a Family Faith Formation Plan

In the new digital world of abundant resources, the role of the faith formation leader is shifting from *creating* religious content and activities to *curating* religious content and experiences for all ages. Today's catechetical leader is a faith formation curator who 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 and program. The resources can come in many forms: people resources, programs at church and in the community, and media resources (print, audio, video, online, digital).

We can identify four primary roles in the process of curating faith formation resources:



## Step 1. Finding Resources for Your Plan

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 as possible for faith formation. Finding the right resources can sound like a daunting task, given the abundance of resources available. Here are five categories of resources to explore:

1. **People resources.** Research the people in the parish, community, diocese, church agencies, colleges and seminaries, church-related organizations, and more that can be utilized in programming. Develop a list of people and the knowledge and skills they offer.
2. **Community resources.** Research the programs and activities in your community and area: other churches, community agencies, religious organizations, retreat centers, museums, colleges and universities, and more. Develop a list of these organizations and the types of resources they provide. Be sure to check on their website for digital programs and activities, such as webinars and video programs.

3. **Catholic publisher resources.** Research the print, audio, and video resources that Catholic publishers produce and the free digital resources on their websites.
4. **Online and digital resources.** Research online resource centers that provide print, audio, video, and digital content: art, music, e-books, audio podcasts, videos, apps, webinars, small group studies, online courses, online activities, and much more. Research the variety of online faith formation content offered by dioceses, colleges, seminaries, and Catholic organizations.

## Step 2. Connect Resources to Your Plan

Take each program or activity in your faith formation plan and identify resources that could be used to develop programming. No need to select the ones you are going to use at this point. Just catalog them. Once this is done, the resources can be evaluated and a decision made on which resources to use.

## Step 3. Evaluate Resources

When evaluating resources for parents and families, it's essential to assess their faithfulness to Church teachings, educational/formational effectiveness, practicality for family life, ability to support spiritual growth, and their ability to engage parents and family in living their faith. Here are some key questions to use in reviewing faith formation resources for parents and families. (Not all of the questions apply to every resource you are reviewing.)

### Theological and Biblical Formation

*Many resources from Catholic publishers have been reviewed and approved by a bishop and receive imprimatur and nihil obstat to ensure doctrinal soundness. Catholic textbooks are reviewed and approved by the Subcommittee on the Catechism at USCCB.*

- ✓ Does the resource align with the teachings of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*?
- ✓ Is Scripture used accurately and in harmony with Catholic interpretation?
- ✓ Does the resource promote knowledge and appreciation of the Catholic tradition?
- ✓ Does the resource present Catholic teachings in a way that is appealing and relevant to contemporary life?
- ✓ Is the theological and biblical language clear and understandable for the intended audience?
- ✓ Does the resource avoid overly technical or ambiguous theological language?
- ✓ Are the key theological and biblical concepts explained in a way that fosters deeper understanding and practice of the Catholic faith?

### Faith Formation

- ✓ Does the resource encourage parents and families to encounter Jesus Christ and grow in their relationship Christ?
- ✓ Does the resource provide guidance to parents for raising children/teens in the Catholic faith at different developmental stages?
- ✓ Does the resource incorporate prayer and reflection?
- ✓ Does the resource foster a sacramental life, particularly participation in the Eucharist?
- ✓ Does the resource engage (or encourage) people in the celebration of the Church year feasts and seasons?
- ✓ Does the resource offer practical and realistic strategies for living out the Catholic faith in daily life today?
- ✓ Does the resources include ways to engage in the works of service and justice?
- ✓ Does the resource address the diverse ways of learning among children, adolescents, and parents?

### **Responsive to the Diversity of Families Today**

- ✓ Does the resource address the diversity in religious faith and practice among parents and families (active believers, believers, inactive believers, inactive nonbelievers)?
- ✓ Is the resource relevant to the diversity of family styles today?
- ✓ Does the resource demonstrate ethnic-cultural appropriateness? Is it inclusive of the ethnic backgrounds, traditions, and needs of parents and families in your community?
- ✓ Is the resource responsive to special needs of families who have children and adolescents with disabilities?

## **Step 4. Select the Resources and Connect to Programming**

Select the best resources for each program and use them to design the program or activity, to create (or provide) resources for parents and families, to publish resources in digital form (newsletter, website, etc.), and more.

When using a resource (or publishing an activity online), be sure that permission is granted for its use. If explicit permission is not given, just write to the source to request permission. For content like YouTube videos, permission is already given to play a video and link to it from your website. The same is true when linking to a resource on another website. There is no copyright issue when there is a link to the content on someone else's website. Be sure to give proper attribution to all resources: who produced it, where it was published, a website address where it can be found, etc.

### **Curation Resource Centers**

There are a number of websites that curate Catholic content for parent and family faith formation that can assist parishes in finding and select Catholic resources for programming. Here are two websites to check out:

NCCL Catholic Families Project: <https://www.ncclcatholicfamilies.org/curated-resources>

Strong Catholic Family Website: <https://www.catholicfamilyfaith.org>

## Determine a budget for the family programs, family activities, and leader preparation materials.

To develop a budget for implementing an annual curriculum plan, determine your expenses and income (e.g., parish budget allocation, registration fees, and/or fundraising projects). Among the standard expense items that should be included in a budget are the following:

- ✓ **Participant Handouts and Materials:** While each family program is different, there will probably be a need for some type of participant handout, and, perhaps, other activity materials (paper, markers, craft materials, etc.).
- ✓ **Facilitator/Catechist Materials:** There will be some expenses to provide catechists with resources (articles, booklets, etc.) so that they can prepare to teach a program. Since there is no teachers' manual, these materials are very important and should be included in the overall budget.
- ✓ **Program Materials:** There may be additional program materials that are necessary for teaching family programs. Many programs require the use of a video as integral to the learning experience; other programs may require the purchase of books, symbols, candles, prayer resources, etc.
- ✓ **Publicity/Promotion:** Most parishes produce a brochure or booklet describing their plan for the year with a calendar and registration form. Some parishes also produce posters, banners, or displays. Your budget should include expense items for design work, printing, and mailing. Many parishes produce a full color information brochure. It is best to produce large quantities of a color brochure to keep your per unit cost low. These parishes usually produce a brochure without any dates (and then insert an annual calendar) so that they can print a large quantity and use them for multiple years.
- ✓ **Family Home Activities:** Parishes develop family application materials – created by the team or and purchased – so there are costs for printing and/or purchasing materials.
- ✓ **Meal and Refreshments:** Food costs will vary depending on whether it is morning refreshments or an evening meal. These costs can be offset by charging a meal fee (per person or per family) or by contacting parish organizations to request that they contribute funds toward the meal expenses or that they actually prepare a meal for the group.

## Determine registration/material fees for households and individuals.

When you have determined your budget for the programs you can determine your fees for families. (Many parishes call it a materials fee rather than a registration fee.) The registration or materials fee should not include meals (this is a per person expense, not per household). The fee should be determined by computing your fixed expenses and per household expenses (home activities). It is best to charge for the meal at the time of the program. Some programs provide the food free or involve parish organizations in donating meals.

To determine your per household fee: use the following calculations:

- Add all of the total fixed expenses for the year and divide by the projected (or minimum) number of participating households. This figure represents each household's share of the fixed expenses.
- Take the above figure and add the cost of home materials for the year.
- This figure now represents the minimum household fee for conducting the family programs and creating home kits for the year.

Parishes can develop two types of fees: annual and individual program:

**Annual Fee** (“Season Ticket Holders”): Traditionally, there is an annual fee for childhood programs and, sometimes, for adolescent programs. Continue the practice of an annual fee, determining the amount of the fee based on your budget calculations for the entire family or household.

**Individual Program Fee** (“Single Game Ticket”): There also needs to be a per program fee for all of the participants (especially adults) who are not accustomed to an annual fee and who may participate in selected family programs each year. Over time their participation will become more regular and they may opt for an annual fee.

Develop a promotion and registration plan.

**Develop a plan and materials for promoting family faith formation to the parish community.**

- ✓ Informational brochure or flyer and calendar for the year
- ✓ Invitation letters with brochure and calendar to targeted audiences
- ✓ Presentation at the weekend Masses
- ✓ Presentations after Mass with coffee and donuts
- ✓ Presentations to parish leadership committees and organizations
- ✓ A skit at the weekend Masses or in a separate presentation
- ✓ Information meetings with targeted audiences, e.g., parents of children and teens
- ✓ Announcements at the weekend Masses and in the bulletin
- ✓ Information in the parish newsletter
- ✓ E-mail invitations and information on the parish web site.
- ✓ Display with announcement, photos, calendar (A display is especially effective after each family program. Be sure to take lots of pictures.)
- ✓ Posters
- ✓ Phone call reminders to targeted audiences
- ✓ Post card reminders
- ✓ Facebook page for network announcements, updates, stories, and photos from people engaged in faith formation.
- ✓ Instagram for visual promotion, and for stories, images, and videos of people’s experience of participating
- ✓ Posters or other visuals throughout church facilities
- ✓ Video (or audio) testimonials that communicate people’s stories of the benefits and blessings that are coming to them from participating (upload them to Facebook, Instagram, the church’s YouTube channel, and the church website)

**Design your printed materials.**

- ✓ Create a logo or symbol. Use the logo to communicate an identity; and use it consistently.
- ✓ Make it visual. Use pictures, artwork/clip art, and color.
- ✓ Make it catchy. For example, print (or stamp) a catchy line on an envelope to build interest.
- ✓ Make it attractive. Use proper design and layout procedures.
- ✓ Make sure your typefaces, pictures, humor, illustrations, names and descriptions attract your target audience(s)—families, singles, young adults, seniors—or for whomever the publicity is intended.
- ✓ Make it easy to read. Identify the most important information and make it stand out through big type or layout or boxes. Use simple language that creates interest and invites further reading.
- ✓ Make it hard to throw away. If you create a calendar that is attractive, chances are the households will hang it up and refer to it.

- ✓ Make it diverse. Publicity should have variety. Try to make it look different each time, even if all you do is change paper stock or typeface.

**Consider the following information to include in your promotional materials.**

- ✓ What will you call it? You may want to give the family program a distinctive name, such as “Family Faith Festivals,” “Adventures in Faith,” “Growing in Faith Together,” “Living in Faith Together,” “Journey in Faith,” etc. There is no need to give it a name. A symbol or logo is important can be very helpful.
- ✓ Where will the program take place?
- ✓ When (dates) will the program take place?
- ✓ When will the program begin and end?
- ✓ What is the cost (materials fee and meal fee)?
- ✓ When is the deadline for registration?
- ✓ What do people need to bring?
- ✓ What is the name of the church, address, and phone number?
- ✓ Who can people contact for more information?

**Present the philosophy of family faith formation and the benefits of the program.**

- ✓ Present the vision/philosophy and goals: How it is compatible with the Catholic faith, the Church’s catechetical vision, the parish mission and values, and the needs of parents and families?
- ✓ Describe the benefits and advantages.
- ✓ Present the key features. For example:
  - Everyone is welcome – all ages and all generations.
  - The whole family participates.
  - Everyone receives support for practicing their faith at home.
  - It builds community among the families.
  - It’s fun, interactive, and enriching.
- ✓ Keep the presentation/description simple. Eliminate jargon.
- ✓ Use graphics and pictures in print or in a PowerPoint presentation.
- ✓ Consider using a question and answer format (“frequently asked questions”)

**Talking Points**

You have to customize your presentation/description to different audiences, e.g., whole congregation, parents, adults, et al. Work with your team to develop a series of talking points about your vision and parish plan. For example, here are several key points for talking to parents.

Our new family program...

- gives you a way to build up the faith of your family and to grow in faith as parents and as children.
- is a better model of learning because parents are learning with their children – it’s easier to carry the learning home with you.
- builds up the confidence and ability of parents to share faith and values with their children.
- provides assistance to help families share faith at home and nurture the faith and values of their children through in-home resources.
- provides an opportunity for families to spend time together every month—and once per month means they have time to do activities at home, rather than driving to classes each week.
- encourages your participation in church life—Sunday Mass, church events, etc. which is where the whole church gathers, celebrates, and lives their faith. If we want our children and teens to become lifelong Catholics and members of the church we have to start now by involving the whole family in the life of the church.

**Develop a registration procedure and form.**

- ✓ Develop a timeline for registrations and, if space is limited in your programs, indicate that it is first come, first served. Be sure that people indicate the first, second, and even third choices.
- ✓ Develop procedures for registering individuals and households (letters, phone calls, post cards, e-mail and web site, etc.).
- ✓ Develop a plan for confirming participation for those who register—confirming their choice for a program and the details for the program.
- ✓ Develop a registration form with:
  - Household name, address, phone, e-mail
  - People registering: number of people, name with ages of children or boxes to check if you are a parent, teenager, young adult, adult, older adult, et al.
  - Program selection: first choice, second choice, third choice for the day and time to participate in a family program
  - Sacrament information if someone in the family is preparing for a sacrament this year: Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, Confirmation, RCIA