## Family Faith Formation at Church

## Chat Questions & Comments

The question for me is: How do you reconcile the reality that as a parish we want to work WITH the family/parents and be understanding, compassionate and flexible...yet, the family/parents don't want to meet us even halfway?

**Atlanta Family Program**

<https://www.evangelizationatl.com/families-forming-disciples>

Spanish <https://www.evangelizationatl.com/familias-formando-discipulos>

FFD has not been submitted for review by the USCCB. It is a resource in development to support a shift to family faith formation, with the support of our local archbishop. We've been given permission to create 5 years of content (in year 3). We will be discerning next steps as we move forward (and we hope more publishers will step and support family catechesis).

With your experience, during the in-person meetings, are the families together (with the kids), or are the kids in another room?

Generally speaking, is FFD Year One started each year a new or do new families simple enroll in FFD regardless of what year is being presented?

We usually share a meal and the families mingle with each other.

We recommend families being together (with kids) for FFD, though Patrice can speak more about variations. Also, to clarify my answer to the USCCB question--we've been given permission by our archbishop (not the USCCB) to create the content.

We have not included specific sacramental prep but encourage folks to use existing resources and incorporate a family approach where possible. Parishes will use FFD and supplement with specific sacramental prep sessions.

Right now, our accountability for FFD is framed in more of an accompaniment model, where families have "at-home missions" they need to share about in the next gathering of families. We are still learning here re: accountability as well as in assessment--these areas need to be rethought and renewed in an evangelizing, discipleship path approach (distinct from a traditional school model, even though aspects of school-type assessments are still helpful and can be incorporated).

We do Family Catechesis together. It's once a month, and our Sunday curriculum has a family component to it online in conjunction with formed.org

Our family sessions have families learning together. We create what we call Family Learning Centers which are like stations that the families visit on family formation days.

We do that as well Maryellen! And we make it fun....liturgical calendar scavenger hunt, All Saints Day with catechists acting out the Saints, Holy Week, etc...

We do parents and children together. They even bring their younger toddlers and such.

What are best ways to include intergenerational parishioners whose families are now grown, i.e. the singles, aged, grandparents, new empty nesters?

How have parishes moved from the traditional Sunday school model to family formation model despite push back from old timers who like things as they are? How do we reduce the obstinance to change?

I am looking more for that whole community catechesis

Are there any requirements for Virtus when you have parents coming together in the parish for faith formation with many children?

We allow the parents to move among the learning centers at their own pace. They can spend as little or as long w/ us on Family Days as it is appropriate for their family.

I have found that the key is to not diminish the role of the catechist, that is where most of the push back has come from. They have to be engaged and given a role...

Sophia Press for Teachers has a wonderful resource for family catechesis.

We keep families together as they move through 3 different activities areas within an hour - meeting in between mass times one Sunday a month

Activities like the one pictured gets a little expensive. Our budgets need to reflect those changes. Books and then activity supplies, like all the candles or wood banner display you showed in the image.

I feel like all these family lessons need a catechists pay catechists site to curate all the ideas

Has anyone integrated the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd with the Family Faith Formation model.? CGS has a parent and child session set for the Sacraments. Some of these family projects sound like they could mesh well with CGS

Kathie Amidei: Is it active? Does it teach something? Is prayer involved? Do people discuss with each other? Is it fun?

Teachers Pay Teachers has lots of Catholic resources

We also offer families workbooks, online learning activities, video lessons and over 30 family Faith ideas too. Multiple ways for them to choose what fits in their lifestyle

Can you please give some ideas for in-person intergenerational activities?

How do you incorporate families without children and singles? More of a Whole community catechetical model.

Awesome! I started Family Faith Formation in my parish this year! At first they weren't real excited about it but now they mostly love it! My biggest challenge is that we have many parent who only speak Spanish. We are working it out but that is a challenge.

Did you have all the families attend at the same time? What were your volunteer needs for the family sessions?

At my last parish we just invited single people, older adults to sit with families. At my current parish, we have a group for adults that meets during the family activity time. They are able to share together.

NFCYM has begun a new 5 year, 3-fold initiative called Partnering with Parents. <https://nfcym.org/lilly> grant-foundation-announcement. The initiative will start out in English and Spanish; and builds on the research by Christian Smith cited in this session.

Give them an experience of it before you roll it out or even introduce it. This way they don’t imagine it as hard as they think it would be.

Do you do the family sessions on the weekends or week nights?

Powerful quote: If we don't involve parents, we won't have another generation of faithful adults. I agree so much with you Kathie! THANK YOU!

Amen! Have been saying that we have to teach parents and children at the same time for years or we will not have a faithful adult population...

Another lane we need to change is moving from "education" language to "formation" language. For example from learning to experiencing, from classes to sessions, from curriculum or material to faith facts

We offer both models as well

We have families of Elem-JH come and we have one main presenter (me-director) and catechists are walking around helping them (especially our Spanish speakers).

And just a thought: In a catechetical age, we ask parents to pass on faith. In an evangelical age, we (with the help of the Holy Spirit) seek to inspire conversion. I think we're in the latter.

There is much we can learn from Hispanic Ministry, this population has been on their own for so long, and many have kept their faith

Family Faith Formation is very attractive to families who are new to the area. They often have apprehension about dropping their kids off with people they don't yet know well.

While we need to meet families where they are at, we need to be ok with them walking away. They will start coming back! We have done our family formation for about 3 years now too and it we are just finally really seeing amazing fruit and acceptance. We still resistance as well, but not like before. Change is hard. I think as long as you and your team are praying through it and inviting God to guide families and your team through it, then it will all work.

It would probably depend on the space you are able to use. We had all families at the same time. You can catechists, people to help with set up/clean up, and snacks.

What day of the week did you do the family meeting sessions? was it on Sunday or another day?

Sunday after Mass and Monday nights

We meet on Sundays. We meet the first Sunday of the month at night & the 3rd between our Masses.

Invite to an experience, not just another meeting

Can you just do families and not include other parishioners? Is it still fruitful?

We are having to do our Family Faith Formation in the Church because it's the only space large enough. This is good for many things but when it comes to some activities we need to be at a table and not in the Church.

Using the term "family" is sometimes off-putting especially to singles

We have a challenge getting Catholic School families into parish family formation. They expect the school to teach the faith without their direct involvement. Not much different from the religious drop off model.

Does this model work well with sacramental catechesis. Do you include extra sessions in preparing for a sacrament

How can implement this model with working parents who are unable to come to the family meeting?

Households vs. families?

Parishioners vs. families

Has anyone considered that just as learners learn in many ways and we talk about multiple intelligences so too families are varied and are at many places along the spectrum of faith. How can we all be more family centered and think of things like Fowler's work on Stages of Faith applied to our development of Family Models.

You talked about generational stories of faith, which could be powerful. Any thoughts or experience in leveraging 'remote/virtual' options to engage generations across a family

We are just beginning but will be doing Sunday mornings once a month with supplemental activities on Sundays or Mondays

Also, a single parent with children is still a family. Families come in all different shapes and sizes,

Do y'all have bilingual meetings? Or do the Spanish and English meet separately?

Or just "everyone" instead of family. I really like when naming a program using community or whole community

I don't find this to be the case with singles because right at the beginning we make very clear that we are ALL a family as a parish and also they are a family with their children even if not a couple. Families look different and that's okay.

Do they see their work with parent in this time and age as being primarily catechetical or evangelization ministry?

Am I understanding correctly that an entire family attends together, no matter how varied the age ranges?

Any thoughts on forming parents as adult disciples before forming them as evangelizing catechists of their children?

We use the term household. So that whoever makes up the household is welcome.

Thank you for your thoughts, unfortunately, in my parish, Generations of Faith has been the formation process for over 20 years. It is failing because of the parents and their view of "it's the easy way out." There is no real commitment, or desire to be actively engaged...majority, not all! We do have some families who are committed and they are wonderful!

We do regular grade classes with adult ed on Sundays, with on Sunday per month as family sessions...

We have parents & kids meet at the same time but kids go to separate rooms but are all learning the same thing. We do have times where middle/high school meet with parents sometimes depending on speaker/topic. Then, 4 times a year we meet & move through the night as full families (opening session, advent, lent & closing session).

Yet sometimes they don't live in the same household. Sometimes dad or grandma brings them but they don't live with them. Families can live in different houses but they are STILL family. The term "family" is better.

How do you work sacramental preparation into the family formation model?

Sacramental prep is separate and we have some sessions together but most are separate adults in one room learning on their level and children elsewhere learning on their level.

Once a month and seasonally, I have a parent coffee/session that provides a topic reflection which is awesome to bring the families together to grow in faith as well.

St. Francis de Sales parish in Holland is doing that, using Alpha - in both English and Spanish - to form adults, especially parents - to foster the faith of the children and young people in the parish.

We have four FHC retreats with the family...3 hours each

Do you track family completion of the lessons at home? Is there any accountability?

"Separate" from regular Family Faith Formation sessions.

With Discover (St. Mary's Press) my dashboard shows who is completing the virtual lessons

When meeting only 2x per month on Sunday, did you find the families attending mass on the in-between weeks?

For Confirmation, I have parents do different talks and activities throughout the weekend retreat.. kids find it powerful to hear their parent's faith journey.

This depends on the parish and family situations. In our parish, kids K/1-5 are generally the ones served with their parents, though there is no restriction on younger or older kids attending. The parish offers Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (pre-K to K) and a middle-school offering simultaneously to assist with larger age-ranges. There are various ways this can be approached.

I know I sound like a "Debbie Downer" and that is not my intention. I am committed to true family formation because I have seen the successes first hand. And I am grateful for the lifelong formation website and all the materials that help me write my monthly lessons.

It's not a "program" but a shift in the format of how we do Faith Formation.

We have a video based curriculum and most parents did not use it.

We have mandated Child Safety curriculum in our Archdiocese. Have you incorporated something similar in your family model?

How do you implement family model for families with 3 or 4 children at different ages and grades?

Family Formation is Wednesdays, Sacramental Prep is Sundays

We dedicate one of our monthly meetings to do Safe Environment with the kids, and do a stewardship lesson with the parents on that day

I have been doing intergenerational for years. Had to pivot a little with covid. One thing that came out of covid was that slowing down and weaving faith into family life throughout the year was a big take away. Sacramental formation is also with a parent(s) and separate from faith formation.

Our starting point for whole community formation is weekly Mass attendance. Our mantra is " More Mass less class" Our Catholic school students attend Mass during the week with their class. Some families then opt out on Sundays.

We start with a theme/lesson and then adjust it up or down for families. We have a room with middle/high school, an early childhood room, and mix room for the other families

Some of the models have every child in the family doing the same activity, others split kids out into grade level classes after an initial introduction. We use one of the latter programs, and it keeps kids at grade level appropriate activities

Can we set up monthly zoom group so we can mentor and learn from other parishes?