



Family Formation Models – Archdiocese of Atlanta

These models are designed for Parish Catechetical Leader (PCL). They are intended to provide options for Pastors and PCLs in directing a comprehensive Faith Formation Program. Parish Catechetical Leaders along with their pastor may design other models or use any combination of those listed below. The Office of Formation and Discipleship can provide consultation and resources as needed by the parish to develop a family centered catechetical model.

| Model | Liturgical (Children’s Liturgy of the Word) | Faith Formation Session Parent Support | Seasonal Family Gatherings | Topical Family Gathering | Family Faith Fest | Parent Catechist Model | Parish Directed Home Study | Homeschool | Annual Family Event (Vacation Bible School, Camp, Retreat) |
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| Focus | Liturgy- Sunday readings in the context of the Mass | Regular communication about faith formation sessions | Themed- Based on a faith topic | Themed- Based on a faith topic | Liturgical- Sunday readings, sacramental, or topical | Catechetical curriculum | Catechetical curriculum | Catechetical curriculum | Seasonal-Themed special topic |
| Frequency Frequency may be adjusted for each option depending on parish needs and goals | Weekly -To enhance regular weekly religious education | Weekly, monthly or seasonally For example: Bring your parent to faith formation day -To enhance regular weekly religious education | A few times each year: -To enhance regular weekly religious education | Monthly: -To enhance regular weekly religious education -As primary source of faith formation along with sacrament preparations to increase parent participation. | Monthly or a few times each year -To enhance regular weekly religious education -As primary source of faith formation along with sacrament preparations to increase parent participation. | Monthly at the parish with weekly home sessions -As primary source of faith formation | Daily- Weekly Families determine frequency as needed to cover lesson -As primary source of faith formation | Daily- Weekly Families determine frequency as needed to cover lesson -As primary source of faith formation | Annually To enhance regular weekly religious education |



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| Description | | | | | | | | | |
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| <p>Description</p> | <p>Children dismissed from mass for Liturgy of the Word. Materials connected to the Gospel distributed as handouts to children or electronically to families after mass for home use.</p> | <p>Children attend regular faith formation sessions.</p> <p>Parents receive regular communication about faith formation of their children through a variety of delivery methods. Information includes connecting home with church.</p> | <p>Families gather for learning about liturgical seasons or feasts.</p> <p>This may effectively be used to enhance weekly faith formation.</p> | <p>Families gather regularly. Topics are chosen by parish staff.</p> <p>This may effectively be used to enhance weekly faith formation.</p> <p>Sacrament Preparation may be presented to children and parents in this model.</p> | <p>Gather families for a meal and faith sharing about Sunday readings or a faith formation topic.</p> | <p>Parents and children gather for a meal, prayer and separate monthly sessions.</p> <p>Parents receive weekly lesson plans. Parish selects curriculum and trains parents to provide instruction for their children.</p> | <p>Parish staff and pastor selects curriculum, prepares materials and conducts meetings to train parents for home faith formation.</p> <p>Sacrament preparation in an additional parish program may be required by the Pastor.</p> | <p>Parents submit a homeschool plan for pastor approval.</p> <p>Parents select catechetical materials.</p> <p>Parents also provide sacrament preparation or Sacrament preparation in an additional parish program may be required by the Pastor.</p> | <p>Parents and children participate in a fun and relaxed setting.</p> <p>This may effectively be used to enhance any faith formation model especially during the summer or during breaks.</p> <p>This is not designed as primary faith formation but as a supplemental opportunity for families to gather and enjoy faith activities.</p> |



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| Resources | | <p>Textbook publishers often provide templates that may be sent electronically or copied</p> <p>Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Parent Letters http://www.cgsusa.org/parentresources.aspx</p> | | | | <p>Early Catholic Family Life Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis</p> | | | |
| Personnel Volunteers may need training in relevant skills as listed for each option. The Office of Formation and Discipleship can assist you in finding training resources. | <p>Parish staff or trained volunteer leader and staff.</p> | <p>Parish staff or trained volunteer prepares information.</p> | <p>Parish staff or trained volunteer to plan, set up and oversee activities.</p> | <p>Parish staff or trained volunteer to set schedule and establish plan plus adequate volunteers to carry out the plan.</p> | <p>Parish staff or trained volunteer to plan, provide meal, and lead faith sharing.</p> | <p>Parish staff or trained volunteers to plan, provide meal and lead faith sharing, and lead catechetical sessions.</p> | <p>Parish staff to plan and conduct meetings. Minimal volunteer needs.</p> | <p>No staff or volunteer necessary. Parents submit plans directly to pastor or pastor appointed leader.</p> | <p>Parish staff or trained volunteer to plan, set up and oversee activities.</p> |



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| <p>Skills Volunteers may need training in relevant skills as listed for each option.</p> <p>The Office of Formation and Discipleship can assist you in finding training resources.</p> | <p>Training in Children’s Liturgy of the Word</p> <p>Catechist certification recommended</p> | <p>Organizational and administrative skills to reproduce publisher information.</p> <p>Trained staff member or knowledgeable volunteer to write original material.</p> | <p>Event coordination and planning skills</p> <p>Knowledge of Liturgical topic</p> <p>Catechist certification recommended</p> | <p>Event coordination and planning skills</p> <p>Knowledge of topic</p> <p>Catechist certification recommended</p> | <p>Facilitation and event coordination and planning skills</p> <p>Catechist certification recommended</p> | <p>Event coordination and planning skills</p> <p>Catechetical background</p> <p>Catechist certification recommended</p> | <p>Catechetical background, meeting facilitation skills</p> <p>Catechist certification recommended</p> | <p>Administrative skills</p> | <p>Event coordination and planning skills</p> <p>Knowledge of topic</p> <p>Catechist certification recommended</p> |
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Helping parents to Engage in Family Faith Formation (Patrice Spirou)

Every parent encounter is an opportunity for evangelization! If you are planning a parent session at your parish, you may find the following suggestions helpful.

1. **Get the message out** using every means possible, bulletin, email, social media, etc. Hopefully word will spread and you will have a great turn out!
2. **Scheduling is key.** Choose a day and time that works with family schedules. Provide childcare and more than one session time from which to choose.
3. **Hospitality is extremely important.** Physically preparing the space to be as warm and welcoming as possible will go a long way to effectively evangelizing. Individually greet each person as he or she enters. If their expressions or responses are not as cheerful as you would like, don’t be put off. Keep in mind that parents may be feeling apprehensive and uncomfortable. For many it may have been years since they attended a “church session.” Offering refreshments goes a long way in creating a welcoming atmosphere and showing you care.
5. **Pray for the participants** while you are planning the meeting. Then begin and end the session with prayer. You will need the Holy Spirit to speak to every heart in the room including your own. So offer all the concerns that the parents may have for their children and themselves to God. Ask God to bless their families.
6. **Have parents introduce themselves** and share basic information such as their names, how many children they have, how long they have been in the parish, etc. Providing a space for them to articulate just a little about themselves is a first step in fostering a sense of belonging. Be sure to model the activity yourself, by answering the questions first. This will help create a comfortable, safe, accepting space for adults. Remember to respond positively to the adult sharing.
7. **Never put parents on the spot.** No one wants to be exposed for what they don’t know or what they are not doing correctly as parents. The goal of the session is to form a partnership with parents, and partnerships require trust and respect.
8. **Be clear. Be concise.** Today’s families are on tight on time, so keep the length of the session to about an hour. Write an agenda and stick to it. Hopefully parents will know that their parish appreciates how much work it is to raise a family, especially in a faith-centered way, and that they are loved!

References: <http://www.21stcenturycatholic evangelization.org/evangelization-blog/setting-the-stage-for-evangelizing-parents-patrice-spirou-office-of-formation-discipleship-archdiocese-of-atlanta>