



Youth
**FAITH
FORMATION**

JUNE 2022



Cardinal's Vision

Faith formation implies more than education in the faith, but an invitation to develop and grow one's Catholic identity through encountering Jesus in prayer, the Scriptures, the Sacraments, and service, increasing knowledge in the teachings of the faith, developing a Catholic sensibility in discernment of vocation and life choices, being accompanied by faith mentors, and instilling a hunger to share the Gospel through word and action.

Last summer His Eminence shared his new vision for parish faith formation and the Department of Youth Faith Formation to be creative and bold in forming our young people and their families in their faith. His vision for included:

- Beginning at formation of parents for the Sacrament of Baptism, inspiring and empowering them to be effective as the first witnesses of the faith;
- Engaging families in the early childhood years to support them in growing a family of faith;
- Implementing models of religious education that reflect the gifts and needs of the local parish community;
- Fostering increased engagement of middle school youth in their own faith formation and in the parish community;
- Providing the support and apprenticeship of young people post-Confirmation as they continue to grow and live their Catholic faith.



*"Catechesis manifests the
action of the Holy Spirit, who
communicates God's saving
love in Jesus Christ"*

Directory for Catechesis, 2

Boldly

Forming Children

Each parish has its own unique charism and needs. This is also true for the families of that parish community. To meet these needs, parishes are encouraged to examine their religious education efforts and discern if modifications, a new model, or a whole new approach is needed.

The Department of Youth Faith Formation has identified a multitude of potential models for parishes. Below are some models along with the names parishes that are either currently implementing or will be implementing in the next formation year.

- **Traditional model**— a classroom model with a small group of children working with a catechist using a textbook as a primary tool. Classes typically meet weekly during the academic year.
- **Integrated traditional model**—traditional model with extensive opportunities for service, parent/guardian formation, and other activities. Example: St. Columba Parish, Hopewell Junction.
- **Family-centered models**—parents/guardians are formed to become the primary catechists of their young people. This model usually includes a monthly formation for parents and youth separately, packets to take home and complete over the month, and family liturgies. Example: St. Marianne Cope, Cornwall on Hudson. Will be implemented at St. Michael the Archangel, Co-op City.
- **Catechumenal-inspired model**—focus on Word, worship, community, and service. Monthly themes are guided by the content of a chosen textbook series and the liturgical season. One week is family formation; second is formation in grade levels; third week is service-focused, and the last week is worship-focused. Will be implemented at St. Francis de Sales, E. 96th Street.
- **Summer-intensive model**—young people gather on a daily basis for one to two weeks for an intensive immersion experience that intentionally includes liturgies, music, etc. Prior to the summer program, families gather regularly to prepare, deepen, and reinforce the summer formation. (Currently seeking pilot parishes for this model)
- **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd**—using Montessori educational principles, this program is non-graded but has three levels: Level 1: ages 3-6, Level II: ages 6-9, Level III: ages 9-12. Example: St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Catherine of Siena, E. 68th Street.
- **Afterschool model**—partnering with the local charter or Catholic school, parish would offer faith formation either daily or multiple-times a week as part of an afterschool program. (Currently seeking pilot parishes for this model)
- **Flipped/gamification model**—using either a website or an app, young people complete lessons at home before joining the in-person class. In-person sessions allow the catechist to supplement and reinforce the materials learned, respond to questions, and deepen their understanding.



Boldly

Engaging Middle School

Middle school is a critical season of young peoples' lives. It is when they are seeking out who they are and Whose they are! Ministry with middle school youth needs to engage them in ways that help them tie their lives more deeply to their faith. Several parishes are opting to forego traditional religious education to a middle school youth ministry. Examples: St. Lawrence O'Toole, Brewster, and St. Anthony of Padua, Bronx.

In 2023, Youth Faith Formation will be hosting a Middle School Rally for the young people of the archdiocese.

*A young person stands on two feet as adults do,
but unlike adults, whose feet are parallel, he
always has one foot forward, ready to set out,
to spring ahead.*

Always racing onward.

Christus Vivit, 140



Boldly

Building Young Disciples

Research shows that young people leave the Church at 13 years old. Often that is because many parishes do not have any formal ministry for and with them. Youth Ministry is not just youth group. It is a mindset of the parish to respond to and journey with young people as they grow in faith, relationship with the Church, and live as disciples in the world. Most parishes want to engage young people post-Confirmation but are not sure how. Youth Faith Formation can help parishes determine the best way to walk with your young disciples. They can also help identify, form, and support the adult team in the church community.

Boldly Forming Leaders

Formation for Directors/Coordinators of Religious Education, Youth Ministry Coordinators, catechists, and adult youth ministry team members is a vital part of the work of Youth Faith Formation. As each formation program is evaluated, changes are being made to strengthen the adult faith formation leaders in our parishes in their faith and in their skills. Ministry formation will also be more accessible with courses in English and Spanish, opportunities for in-person learning throughout the archdiocese, live online courses, and soon on-demand self-directed courses will be available in our online learning portal, ArchNYLAB.

Boldly New Structure

The Department of Youth Faith Formation had formerly consisted of the Catechetical Office and the Office of Youth Ministry. These two offices have now been completely integrated into one department with several new directors and regional specialists. The Director of Children's Faith Formation oversees ministry from baptismal formation to fifth grade. The Director of Youth Ministry works with grades six to twelve, including formation for Confirmation. The Director of Ministry Formation oversees the leadership formation for all areas.

Each regional specialist now supports approximately 30-35 parishes from baptism to 12th grade, providing resources, tools, and guidance based on the parish needs and goals.

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