

Many Ways to Do Adult Faith Formation

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We live in a world of many choices. We live in a world of diversity. We live in a world of varied needs.

We know that people learn in different ways. We know that people need different helps at different times of their lives.

One size doesn't fit all.

The US Bishops' pastoral plan for adult faith formation, *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*, is keenly aware of this reality and encourages that we, as catechetical leaders, use many and varied forms and methods for adult formation.

As you plan the year(s) ahead:

Count the ways you're already doing adult faith formation:

- Catechist formation
- Sacramental preparation with families as well as the candidates
- RCIA sponsor formation
- Parish Pastoral Councils and Commissions (In addition to the formation piece of their meeting, the experience of serving on a Commission or Council is teaching these parishioners what it means to be church.)
- Liturgical preparation for the celebration of weddings and funerals
- Support groups around everyday life issues: parenting, marriage, grief, etc.

- Weekly parish bulletin
- Home-makers' daytime program with baby-sitting
- Combination of social event with an educational/formation component
- Homilies which challenge to authentic discipleship
- Opportunities at the parish that might not be seen as adult faith formation (Socials, card parties, etc. but will bring people in the door and, then, because of your hospitality, will bring them back for formation opportunities.)
- Involvement in action for justice
- Stewardship education (time, talent, and treasure)
- Home component in children's catechetical program
- An enthusiastic parish music program (The words of our hymns and songs teach much about what we believe.)
- The hospitality/greeting of the parish secretaries (For many people, this first encounter with the parish is a concrete expression of much about Catholicism.)
- Parish bulletin boards
- Showing a video during coffee hour
- Parish seasonal celebrations

Have you thought about these opportunities:

- "Convoy learning" (or more commonly known as field trips): Gather people into their vans and travel: to historic sites, to places of service, to situations to provide service, etc.
- Lending parish library (Include CDs and videos as well as books and magazines.)

- Go to people where they are: to a workplace for a pre-work or lunch-hour conversation; to a mall; rent a store to provide a place for resources, reflection, and conversation.
- Intergenerational programs (Bring the parents in for various opportunities already scheduled for children and youth.)
- Design Internet chat rooms on topics that relate faith to life
- Multi-cultural celebrations and experiences
- Ask the parents of your young sacramental candidates what they would like to explore and deepen their learning
- Alert parishioners to web sites that offer learning opportunities, chances for prayer and reflection
- Movie (contemporary ones) discussion nights
- Book discussion club
- Programs and support for returning Catholics
- Theology on Tap
- Hand-outs for people who are not able to come to the parish
- Open parent sacramental meetings to all parishioners
- Ecological education and practices
- Vocation awareness for all vocations
- Spiritual direction available
- Book Fairs after week-end Mass
- Distance education

- Pastoral visits to parishioners
- Set up a cable TV series for your local station
- Programming for life transitions (e.g. retirement)
- Discussion groups on Catholic social teaching
- Advent and Lent (and Christmas and Easter) reflection books for home use
- Invite people to get involved in a task (e.g. Habitat for Humanity, parish census, liturgy planning) and then take time for catechesis before and reflection after.

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