



Faith Formation and Sacramental Preparation

Basic principles

The process of becoming one family will take time. Meanwhile, life goes on even as we implement significant changes to how our parishes operate. We must continue to evangelize; we must continue to make disciples. Nothing else should draw attention away from this core mission of the Church and of our parishes.

Eyes on the prize

The ultimate goal of Partners in the Gospel is to revitalize parish life and to allow us to focus more attention, more energy, and more resources on our mission. Throughout the coming years, remember that being able to focus more energy – *not less* – on discipleship, including faith formation for all ages and sacramental preparation, is the goal of this process.

This is an opportunity to re-envision parish life and to do things differently. What would you do that you're not doing because of a lack of time, resources, or space? Where are the gaps in your own ministry where you need help or vision? Take time to brainstorm both on your own and with others in the parish family. Dare to dream!

Opportunities in Phase 1

Parishes in a family will have access to additional resources, both in terms of personnel and in terms of space. Knowing both your weaknesses and strengths can help you to see what's possible with the larger parish family. What can you offer to other parishes in the family? And where can you benefit from their strengths?

Consider:

- Adult faith formation
- Adult and youth catechumenate
- Bible study
- Funeral ministry
- Life, justice and peace
- Youth and young adult ministry
- Sacramental preparation for baptism, confirmation, first Communion, marriage

Awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in your own programs will help you see opportunities to join in offerings at one of the other parishes in the family and share resources.

Coordinate calendars

Make it possible for members of each parish to participate in events at other parishes by coordinating calendars. If Bible study is seasonal, make sure not every parish is offering Bible study at the same time. Stagger the starts so that offerings are spread out through the year.

Entry points

In preparing the calendar for faith formation opportunities and OCIA, give special consideration to entry points. People join our parishes or inquire about becoming Catholic throughout the year. Are they able to jump right in, or do they have to wait? Consider providing “entry points” for people and families all year round.

Possibilities for shared formation

During Phase 1, we are dipping our toe into the water. Think about simple ways of sharing formation and bringing people together as part of a wider parish family.

Ideas include:

- A joint celebration of first reconciliation for the whole parish family
- A shared retreat for the confirmandi or elect
- A shared celebration of confirmation
- A shared youth night, monthly or seasonally