



Faith Formation Task Force Recommendations and Feedback Questions

Recommendation # 1 - Lifelong formation

Concretely, this means that we all must:

- Recognize that a vision limited only to forming elementary and high school students is not sufficient.
- Shift the culture of the whole diocese to view faith formation as a life-long process. It must encompass all age groups, including those beyond elementary school and high school age.
- Shift the culture of parish life to be more attuned to the needs of every age group.
- Encourage collaboration to support more effectively our youth and young adult ministries, campus ministry, and ministries to married, retired, homebound, etc.
- Include people of every age in the daily life of the parish and be welcoming of them.

Some questions for your feedback:

- *Who might currently be falling through the cracks?*
- *How might your parish move in this direction?*
- *How can the diocesan offices help?*

Recommendation # 2 – Vision

Concretely, this means we must expand our vision to understand that:

- Almost everything we do in one way or another forms people in the faith.

- We must strive to capture the hearts as well as the minds of those we are forming in the faith.
- Faith formation is a life-long process. It will not only embrace existing programs such as religious education and youth ministry, but also faith formation efforts yet to be developed. It will be directed toward all age groups as well as to the needs of various audiences.
- Religious education programs are but one part of faith formation. They will remain a vital education ministry, but now be considered as part of an overall and expanded faith formation effort.
- Many other existing efforts are also part of life-long faith formation. Pre-Cana and Engagement Encounter, e.g., should be understood under the umbrella of faith formation.
- Worship, service, and community are also part of life-long faith formation.

Some questions for your feedback:

- *What areas of parish life can be enhanced by this expanded vision of faith formation?*
- *How can the diocesan offices help?*

Recommendation # 3 - Parish leadership

Concretely, this means that:

- Every parish should be able to call on the help of a trained professional. These individuals will be trained to **coordinate**, **promote**, and **assist** in parish ministries or apostolates, whether involving youth, young adults, religious education, worship, sacramental preparation, campus ministry, ministry to couples, ministry to the sick, etc.
- The trained professional must understand the vision of life-long faith formation and be committed to implementing it at the parish level.
- Religious education programs will remain an important part of parish life, but they will be part of a much broader vision of life-long faith formation.
- The DRE and the trained professional could be the same person, or two separate people. We have criteria in place for the education and certification of DREs, but

we need to explore practical ways to help parishes ensure that their people are getting the training they need.

- Collaboration is widely encouraged. Not every parish needs, or can afford, a full-time trained professional. Collaboration, especially among smaller parishes, can make access to a trained professional possible.
- We will need to develop funding models that include more effective utilization of existing funding sources as well as consideration of new funding sources. Just as with schools and parishes, the changes we're calling for may require investment.

Some questions for your feedback:

- *What do you need to implement this vision?*
- *What does your parish need to implement this vision?*
- *How can the diocesan offices help?*

Recommendation # 4 - Diocesan leadership

Concretely, this means that the diocese will:

- Develop and provide diocesan standards for the selection, hiring, training and supervision of professionals in faith formation under the supervision of the appropriate diocesan staff position.
- Certify properly trained professionals.
- Establish salary ranges for trained professionals.
- Oversee the role of professionals, through appropriate diocesan guidelines, and provide appropriate professional support to these individuals.
- Help to coordinate collaboration between parishes, ministries, etc.

Some questions for your feedback:

- *How would this work for you?*
- *Can you help us distinguish what should be done at the parish level versus what should be done at the diocesan level?*
- *What does the diocese need to implement this vision?*

Recommendation # 5 - Role of the family

Concretely, this means that we all must:

- Seek to involve parents in all aspects of their child's faith formation.
- Recognize the diverse family structures existing in our parishes, schools, etc.
- Recognize the need for flexibility in our efforts, remembering that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work. Programs and approaches must adapt to various needs and abilities. We must be willing to bend when necessary.
- Encourage families to maintain or develop faith traditions and rituals in their home.

Some questions for your feedback:

- *How can the parish support the family?*
- *How can the diocesan offices help?*

Recommendation # 6 - Lay ministry

Concretely, this means that:

- Regarding leadership, we will need to train lay people to assume leadership positions in various ministries in collaboration with their pastors.
- Regarding ministry in general, we must encourage training and development for anyone involved in ministry.
- Encourage collaboration for every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by a local parish. This, too, may require some restructuring of funds or new investment.

Some questions for your feedback:

- *What training does your parish already offer?*
- *What training does your parish need to offer?*
- *How can the diocesan offices help?*