



Resources to help plan

The church year may start with Advent and the fiscal year may start January 1, but for educators our year starts in September. The difficulty with that is that we either plan in the Spring (at the same time that we're wrapping everything up), or in the summer (when everyone else is at the beach) or we jump in treading water for a while and actually plan in the fall. If you haven't started planning (or even if you have and you want to do some fine tuning), I have some resources for you!

Where do I start?

- 1) **Discern:** Before looking at specifics look at what you want your education program to accomplish – and begin with prayer. [Building Faith](http://www.buildfaith.org/2011/02/17/envisioning-the-future-of-faith-formation-in-your-congregation-part-1/) an “online Christian Ed community” has a good article that may help you as you begin to imagine what you want your formation to look like.

<http://www.buildfaith.org/2011/02/17/envisioning-the-future-of-faith-formation-in-your-congregation-part-1/>



- 2) **Curriculum:** What curriculum fits the needs of your parish (children, parents, other adults, and the theology)? Church Publishing Inc. has a good article titled “Selecting a curriculum that is right for your church” that may be helpful with this.

<https://www.churchpublishing.org/media/custom/IN-Formation/ChoosingYourCurriculum.pdf>

Don't forget that we have a diocesan license for **Weaving God's Promises** (meaning that it came out of the Diocesan budget and each parish in our Diocese can use it free of charge). To sign up e-mail to Gennie Callard requesting information.

Many churches are doing a hybrid of activities, not sticking with only one time and one type of education. See the section on **non-traditional education** for some new ideas.

- 3) **Calendar:** What's already happening in your church? When are school vacations? What are the special holidays that you want to remember? That's where a calendar comes in handy. Read the section on **calendars** so you can think about going digital. The following link will bring you to a page where you can find a .doc downloadable church education planning calendar:



<http://formationjourney.weebly.com/education-planning.html>



- 4) **Teachers:** What makes up a good religious education teacher? Someone who's been in the church for a while, reliable, and interacts well with the children are good things to look at, but you may want to get together with a team of people and come up with a list of your own. To see more about what you need to do to hire your teachers, look at the **teachers** section.

- 5) **Getting others on Board:** Now that you have a wonderful program and a concrete schedule you can get others on board. Why do you need others? Look further on for more information on this.



Planning Your Program

Discernment your vision

What do you want formation and education to look like in your parish?

Educating young people in our parish is no longer only Sunday School, it can take a myriad of forms. The following article may help you as you begin to see a vision for your parish.

<http://www.buildfaith.org/2011/02/17/envisioning-the-future-of-faith-formation-in-your-congregation-part-1/>



What do you want them to know and remember when they “graduate” from Sunday School? The first thing may be to figure out what you want to teach the children and youth. Exemplary Youth Ministry conducted a study funded by a Lilly Endowment that identified congregations that consistently establish faith as a vital factor in the lives of their youth and

discovering what accounts for their effective approaches to ministry (<http://www.firstthird.org/eym/>). They identified 34 characteristics of Mature Christian Youth (<http://www.firstthird.org/eym/Characteristics-of-Mature-Christian-Youth.pdf>). You could use this or one of their other tools to help you discern what you want your young people to learn. This article may help if you want to get the input of the young people: <http://www.buildfaith.org/2012/12/26/appreciative-inquiry-youth-ministry/>

Adult formation is often unseen or underappreciated in parishes. This article may help you find some new ideas. <http://www.buildfaith.org/2012/05/28/planning-adult-ed-programs/>

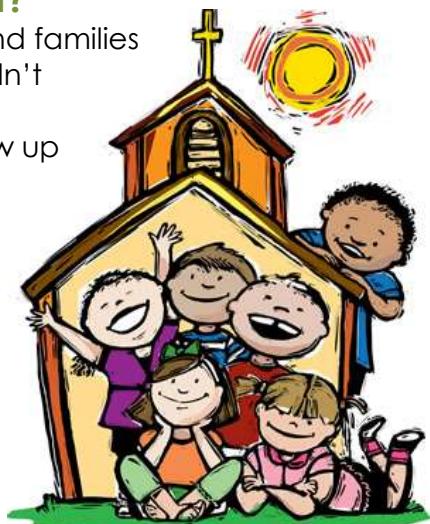
Non-Traditional Education

How can you teach outside of a traditional classroom?

Children today learn differently than they did even 10 years ago, and families structure their lives in ways that our parents and grandparents couldn't imagine. We no longer have Sunday set aside for church and Wednesday evenings for education as Allegan (the town that I grew up in) did when I was a child. And this is the reality in which we live, so how can we change things in our church to meet the needs of our children?

Some opportunities may include

- Acolyte training
- Alter guild training
- Choir training



- Seasonal activities: preparing and learning about
 - Advent Wreath or other Advent activities
 - Lenten activates
 - Pentecost activities
 - All Saints activities
 - In church the bulletin could contain information
 - Lesson Plans that Work is a free Episcopal curriculum, that also includes easily understood background information for the lectionary lessons:
<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/lesson-plans>
 - The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education is a book filled with resources for the lectionary, from <https://www.churchpublishing.org/>
 - Sermons for Kids has downloadable activities: <http://www.sermons4kids.com/>
 - An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church has definitions of terms that we commonly (and uncommonly) use, you can have a word of the week:
http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/109399_79309_ENG_HTM.htm
 - Or have a Saint of the Week (using Holy Women, Holy Men, a book from
<https://www.churchpublishing.org/>)
 - Intergenerational: Church is one of the few places where we can be multi-generational – we need to utilize this gift.
 - Children can be paired with adults in either a mentoring role or a mutual learning role.
 - High school students attending “Adult Formation”: Many high school students have the reading level of adults, so book studies and bible studies may be appropriate for this group.



Calendars

Planning your year

Do you do the same thing every year? Do you know when school vacations are or when the annual meeting is? These are all good things that you may want to know before you planning your program year.

This is a good article to help you begin planning for the new year:

<http://www.buildfaith.org/2011/05/17/planning-for-christian-education-formation/>

Things to make sure are on your calendar:

- Holidays
 - School vacations
 - Events that “always happen” (pageants, tag sales, VBS, retreats, etc.)
 - Other things that occur in church (vestry and other committee meetings, etc.)
 - Recognition days (Baptisms, Confirmation celebration, Teacher recognition, etc.)
 - Diocesan events (such as youth activities, education events and Diocesan Convention)

Calendars

How do you organize and lay things out so that you can find them easily and other can understand them? If you're still trying to write things in those little boxes in wall calendars, or are using scraps of paper, why not look at a new way to do calendars. Here are two options.

Digital: Google calendars is my favorite. I can create multiple calendars, color code them, share them, and copy events from other google calendars. If you don't have one, you can go here to see what it's all about: <https://www.google.com/calendar>

Google calendar



If you look at our Diocesan calendar page, you can get a sense of one.

http://edwm.org/news_and_events.html On the top right of the calendar you can click to view it in week, month or agenda.

Some calendar you may want to add to your google calendar

- **The liturgical calendar:** <http://www.lectionarypage.net/Resources/LiturgicalCalendar.ics>
To add go to your Google Calendar and next to "Other Calendars" click the arrow and click "add by URL", then paste the above link and click "Add Calendar".
- **The Episcopal Church calendar:**
https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=2kyle2it9mc2euapfr1lr2103s@group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/Los_Angeles
To add go to the webpage and click the logo on the bottom right.

Note

- Make sure that you have that calendar visible on your own calendar page (you can tell a calendar is visible because the box on the right is colored – you can also change the color to make it easy for yourself).
- You can then add any of those "events" to your own calendar by clicking on the event and then clicking "copy to my calendar"



Analog (or Paper): There are many options out there, but I'd recommend making it something that people can easily see and access!

Teachers



Recruiting volunteers – hiring teachers

Whether you recruit, ask for volunteers or go through an intense interview process for your Sunday School teacher, volunteers and youth mentors, you are actually hiring people – they are all employees (whether paid or volunteer). The following is a resource from the creators of Journey to Adulthood (J2A) that may help you discern who you want for teachers:

http://leaderresources.org/sites/default/files/youth_ministry_discernment_process_0.pdf

According to our Diocesan Best Practice Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth (http://edwm.org/safeguarding_gods_children_policies.pdf), there are some things that need to be done to screen, select and certify all people working with children and youth in the diocese.

- 1) Be at least age 18 and out of high school (those under 18 who wish to serve in this way must still go through the screening, selection and certification process, but there must still always be 2 adults present with the children – you will be serving as a “helper”)
 - 2) Complete a standard application
 - 3) Have a background check completed for them (and not have a civil or criminal record of child sexual abuse or admit prior sexual abuse)
 - 4) Be interviewed in person (by the rector or designee)
 - 5) Be a member of the parish for at least a year (there are a few exceptions, but this is the norm)
 - 6) Be certified in Safeguarding God's Children
 - 7) Serve with another adult (always 2 adults present with any young person or group of young people)
 - 8) Be supported by the clergy and vestry and have a supervisor that he or she meets with regularly. You can find a good article on supporting your team of teachers here: <http://www.buildfaith.org/2011/08/12/equipping-your-ministry-team/>
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Getting Others on Board

We can't do ministry alone, AND the children and youth must be part of the wider church.



Why do we need to get other adult on board with children and youth ministry?

First off, **YOU need support**. Those of us who work with children and youth know how isolating it can be (especially if it's held at a time when the other adults are gathering). Having more adults around takes some of the pressure of you.

We can always use more adults (even if they only come in every now and again). They can come in for specific projects (things that use their gifts) or to supply when a regular teacher is out sick or simply to be another adult present.

Also remember the **Children and Youth need support**. Children and youth ministry shouldn't exist in a vacuum. One of the goals for ministry with young people should be to get them involved in other parts of the church and one way for that to happen is to have other adults get to know them and invite them. The statistics have shown that the more involved young people are in the church (as a whole, not simply “youth ministry”) the more likely they will stick with their religion as they grow up. To read more about that, Soul Searching is a good book: <http://www.amazon.com/Soul-Searching-Religious-Spiritual-Teenagers/dp/0195384776>

And lastly, **when you speak of “the church” you shouldn't only be speaking of the adults – young people are also “the church.”** The adult parishioners need to know what's going on with the younger generations, so let them know! If your parish really is separated by ages then during the service perhaps you can make announcements about what's going on, or including something in the bulletin or newsletter. Show pictures, have stories written by the children or presentations by the youth about what they're up to. Do what you can to make sure the adults know that the children should be both seen and heard, and that the young people know that they are important, valued, and would be missed if they weren't there.

Upcoming Events



For adult leaders in the church: Fall Teambuilding Workshop

<http://goo.gl/yKcT5> - online registration form

<http://goo.gl/3NF8I> - flyer with event description and information

Middle School Youth Event

<http://goo.gl/74XN7> - online registration form

http://edwm.org/children_youth_middle_school_event_2013.pdf - flyer with information

http://edwm.org/children_youth_middle_school_event_2013_permission.pdf - permission slip

High School Overnight

<http://goo.gl/731FJ> - online registration form

http://edwm.org/children_youth_senior_high_overnight_2013.pdf - flyer with information

http://edwm.org/children_youth_senior_high_overnight_2013_permission.pdf - permission slip

For Everyone: The Consecration of the new Bishop

<http://edwmsearch.org/consecration-of-our-9th-bishop-will-be-september-28-2013/> - for

more information

Resources

Websites

<http://www.buildfaith.org/> - Building Faith: an online Christian community

<http://prayingincolor.com/> - Praying in Color: welcome to a new way to pray

<https://www.churchpublishing.org/> - Church Publishing: the publishing house of The Episcopal Church

<http://www.firstthird.org/> - First Third – Cultivating Faith in the First Third of Life, from Luther Seminary

<http://www.lifelongfaith.com/> - Lifelong Faith – resources, articles and ideas for all generations

<http://www.vibrantfaith.org> – Books, videos and more for parishes and families

<http://vibrantfaithathome.org/> - FREE resources to help you and your parishioners bring your faith home and into the family – for ALL ages and family make ups



New Book

God of My Heart: A Prayer Book for Youth by Connie Wlaschin Ruhlman and Shannon Kelly - <https://www.churchpublishing.org/products/index.cfm?fuseaction=productDetail&productID=9732>