



# Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth

A Three-Part Faith Formation In-Service Program  
Developed by NFCYM Training In-Services



*The research on teens and faith cannot be clearer: parents matter... a lot! So what is the Church doing to engage and partner with parents in supporting them in their rightful role as primary formators of faith for their family? And what can parents do to take ownership for leading their children and teens toward a vibrant faith that embraces discipleship?*

**To respond to these questions, NFCYM has created a three-part training program like no other:**

- A two-hour evening parent program designed to model for parish leaders and local trainers how to engage and partner with parents in the lifelong process of faith formation.
- A half-day (3 hour) morning training for diocesan/parish/school leaders.
- A half-day (3 hour) afternoon training of the trainers session to prepare local trainers to replicate the parent sessions in parishes and schools throughout the diocese.
- The complete parent session PowerPoints and a host of family faith resources are given to the diocese with full copyright permission to use throughout the diocese.
- An excellent tool for use with all sacramental preparation programs, faith formation events and adult formation gatherings.

**Part 1: Evening Parent Session** - a two-hour session for parents which models for local leaders (diocesan, parish, school, trainers) how to replicate these sessions in their own communities. Outcomes include...

1. To communicate the reality of current religious beliefs, attitudes and activities of teens today using contemporary research and to highlight the critical impact of the parents' faith, beliefs and actions on that of their children/teens.
2. To listen attentively to parent's hopes, needs and concerns concerning the faith formation of their children and what is needed from their faith community to support them in their efforts.
3. To create an urgency for change in both parents and parishes to seek new ways to begin comprehensively forming children and teens in their Catholic faith.
4. To assist parents in assessing individual and family faith needs and to model practical ideas, strategies and resources for family faith growth and engagement.

**Part 2: Morning Program for Diocesan/Local Leaders** - a three-hour in-service for pastors and parish/school leaders and future parent session trainers. Outcomes include...

1. To identify the limitations of a "consumer-provider model" of faith formation and how it may be hindering the desired outcomes for faith growth stated in our Church documents.
2. To identify the new vision, models, roles, and relationships required to bring about the change that is necessary to strengthen the Catholic faith of the next generation of believers.
3. To advocate for a fundamental shift within the faith formation system, highlighting the steps necessary for long-term change in how young people are formed in faith.

**Part 3: Training of the Trainers** – a three-hour program for local trainers (designated by the diocese) to review the presentation issues and nuances associated with this comprehensive training program.

**Cost: \$1500 plus travel and lodging for presenter – Now Booking Dates for 2010**

**To schedule this program in your area, contact Michael Theisen at [miket@nfcym.org](mailto:miket@nfcym.org) or 202-674-4209**

# FAMILY FAITH INVENTORY

*Take a moment to consider each of the actions and attitudes listed below and circle the number which best describes how you currently experience that area of family faith. When done, use the left hand column to note if you are satisfied with the rating, or if you or your family would like to begin working on developing that area more in the coming year.*

<u>Rating Satisfaction</u>
<input type="radio"/> OK <input type="radio"/> Change
<input type="radio"/> OK <input type="radio"/> Change
<input type="radio"/> OK <input type="radio"/> Change
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## A. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

**1. Eating dinner together is a priority in our family schedule.**

Never	Very Little	Some	Fairly Often	All the Time
1	2	3	4	5

**2. Being Catholic/Christian is an ongoing part of our family identity.**

Never	Very Little	Some	Fairly Often	All the Time
1	2	3	4	5

**3. We participate in social and community events at our parish (outside of mass).**

Never	Very Little	Some	Fairly Often	All the Time
1	2	3	4	5

**4. Religious art, images and bibles can be found throughout our home.**

Never	Very Little	Some	Fairly Often	All the Time
1	2	3	4	5

**5. We attend mass together on a regular basis.**

Never	Very Little	Some	Fairly Often	All the Time
1	2	3	4	5

**6. I pray on my own (outside of mass).**

Never	Very Little	Some	Fairly Often	All the Time
1	2	3	4	5

**7. We pray together regularly as a family (outside of mass).**

Never	Very Little	Some	Fairly Often	All the Time
1	2	3	4	5

**8. Family members take turns leading prayer.**

Never	Very Little	Some	Fairly Often	All the Time
1	2	3	4	5

**9. We celebrate the seasons of the liturgical year (e.g., Advent, Lent) with special prayers, actions and rituals at home.**

Never	Very Little	Some	Fairly Often	All the Time
1	2	3	4	5

**10. Special family occasions are usually marked with blessings and/or prayers.**

Never	Very Little	Some	Fairly Often	All the Time
1	2	3	4	5

Program Sample Only

Rating Satisfaction

OK  Change

**C. FORMATION**

**11. I read scripture on my own.**

Never    Very Little    Some    Fairly Often    All the Time  
1            2            3            4            5

OK  Change

**12. We read scripture as a family regularly.**

Never    Very Little    Some    Fairly Often    All the Time  
1            2            3            4            5

OK  Change

**13. We put a high value on learning more about our Catholic faith.**

Never    Very Little    Some    Fairly Often    All the Time  
1            2            3            4            5

OK  Change

**14. I participate in faith formation opportunities (e.g., classes, spiritual reading, and spiritual direction).**

Never    Very Little    Some    Fairly Often    All the Time  
1            2            3            4            5

OK  Change

**15. I make sure my kids participate in faith formation opportunities (e.g., youth ministry, religious education, retreats, etc.).**

Never    Very Little    Some    Fairly Often    All the Time  
1            2            3            4            5

Program Sample Only

OK  Change

**16. We discuss current events in light of the values and beliefs of the Catholic faith.**

Never    Very Little    Some    Fairly Often    All the Time  
1            2            3            4            5

OK  Change

**17. I model Christian discipleship (following Jesus) for my children.**

Never    Very Little    Some    Fairly Often    All the Time  
1            2            3            4            5

OK  Change

**18. In our family, we talk about morality, and how to judge between right and wrong.**

Never    Very Little    Some    Fairly Often    All the Time  
1            2            3            4            5

OK  Change

**19. I am involved in regular Christian service in the parish and/or wider community.**

Never    Very Little    Some    Fairly Often    All the Time  
1            2            3            4            5

OK  Change

**20. We expect family members to be involved in parish ministry or service in addition to mass and religious education (lector, usher, catechist, choir, VBS, etc...).**

Never    Very Little    Some    Fairly Often    All the Time  
1            2            3            4            5



## Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth Parent to Parish Response Form



*Completing this form does not obligate you to anything nor add you to any mailing list*

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

Parish \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Check those that apply:

- I am interested in meeting with other parents for sharing ideas and support. Please contact me as groups begin to form.

*My meeting preferences are as follows (checking these do not commit you to those choices).*

- Frequency Preference (check all that apply)
  - Daily
  - Weekly
  - Bi-Weekly
  - Monthly
  - 1-2 times
- Time Preference (check all that apply)
  - Noon
  - Evening
- Day Preference (check all that apply)
  - Sun.
  - Tues.
  - Wed.
  - Thurs.
  - Fri.
  - Sat.

- I am interested in helping our parish plan some follow-up steps to creating Strong Catholic Families and Youth.

- I am interested in receiving resources (print/electronic/e-mail) to help me parent my children in faith.

- I am interested in becoming more involved in a parish ministry:

- for myself
- with my family

Specific Ministry for Self: \_\_\_\_\_

Specific Ministry for Family: \_\_\_\_\_

- Please contact me to help my children/teens become more involved in faith and church.

- Additional comments or ideas you wish to communicate to the leadership of the parish:

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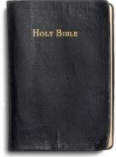
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*Thank You for Taking the Time to Complete This Response Form!*

## Ideas for Sharing Faith within the Family

Here are several easy methods for sharing faith at home together as family. The bottom line to sharing faith is to remember that your goal is to make the "God connection". Faith sharing always involves an answer to the questions: "Where is God in all of this?" and "What is God saying to me today?" It's important to not complicate this simple but profound process of stepping back, reflecting and sharing God's presence in our daily lives.

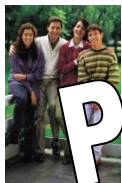
### Praying with Scripture



This simple three step adaptation of an ancient monastic prayer form called Lectio Divina (divine reading) involves reading a short scripture reading three times (preferably a section from one of the upcoming Sunday readings). Each time there is a different response that takes the person deeper into the reading. It is suggested that every person have a bible of the same Catholic translation such as the New American Bible (NAB) which is the translation used at Mass or the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

1. **Proclaim** the reading – **Pause** – Invite each person to share **one word** that speaks to them (no other sharing at this time).
2. **Proclaim** the reading – **Pause** – Invite each person to share **one phrase** that speaks to them (no other sharing at this time). The phrase does not need to include the word from the first step.
3. **Proclaim** the reading – **Pause** – Invite each person to share **what God is saying to them** through this reading.
  - You may choose to end with a spontaneous prayer, shared family prayer, individual prayer intentions or a Hail Mary, Glory Be or Our Father.

### Objects and Images



Using objects or images to help families share faith is much easier and potentially more profound than in other ways. Objects and images help us use the deep roots of our faith to describe life's struggles and movements and our developing relationships with God and one another. Here are just a few ideas for sharing faith using objects and images:

1. **Pocket Prayers** – Invite everyone to reach into their pocket or purse and place one object on the middle of the table. Then invite each person to think about their relationship with God right now and pick the one object that best describes it. Go around the room (youngest to oldest) and have each person share their reflection.
2. **Paper Prayers** – Distribute sections of the paper (or various papers) to each person in the family and give them time to find a headline or ad that best describes their life right now. After each person shares their reflection, conclude with shared prayer, asking God to be present with each of them in their journeys of life and faith.
3. **Nature Prayers** – Invite each person to bring in an object from outside that best describes their family at the moment. Invite each to share (youngest to oldest) and conclude by joining hands and saying the Our Father followed by a Gesture of Peace.
4. **Picture Prayers** – Use an old photo album or pictures hanging in the home, invite each person to think of the one image that best reflects their faith right now (or that defines Family or Home or Life right now). Invite each to share and conclude with each person offering a prayer intention.
5. **Cupboard Prayers** – Invite each person to select a food item that is in the home (cupboard or refrigerator) that best symbolizes the past week for them. Invite each to share (youngest to oldest) and conclude with spontaneous or traditional prayer.

### Cross Moments



Sharing "cross moments" is a simple and meaningful way to catch up with one another on significant moments in one's day or week. Ask each person to reflect quietly on a time in the past (day, week, month) that their lives intersected or crossed with God. In other words, where did they see evidence of the presence of God in their life or in the world recently?

# Developing Strong Catholic Families

## Samples from the New NFCYM Website for Parents:

<http://nfcym.org/family/index.htm>



### Parents Have a Strong Influence on Their Teen

It might not seem like they are spending a lot of time at home when they are headed off to school, a soccer game, band practice, play rehearsal, a part-time job, a friend's house, a youth ministry event, etc., but teens really do spend more time at home and with their families than anyplace else. When asked about the most important influences in their lives teens consistently list their parents as the people they first look to for guidance, advice and support. Parents play a major role in shaping values and attitudes about faith and life, parents, whether they realize it or not, have a greater impact on their teen than peer groups or the media.

#### A Prayer for Parents

God of All Creation,  
Your breath gave life to all humanity.  
Breathe into us your love and guidance,  
so that we may parent with wisdom and compassion.  
Gift us with your strength and courage  
so we may proclaim your presence  
through our words and actions.  
Enlighten us with words of truth and comfort  
as they are needed  
and bring us patience and humility  
as we lead our family along this journey.  
Help us pass onto our children a faith that matters,  
with You as the center and foundation for our family.  
We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

#### A Family Prayer

Lord of Life,  
Bless and sustain our family.  
Hold us close, keep us connected  
and protect us from all evil.  
Gift us with love and patience for one another  
Help us reconcile that which divides us  
and celebrate all that unites us as one family,  
where you live and reign now and forever.  
Amen.

### Parents Need Encouragement



Parents need encouragement and support to be that positive influence for their adolescent. The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry seeks to support and partner with parents in their important role. This website is one way we hope to help families share, celebrate and live their faith in the home and in the world. Below are five general areas of interest or concern for parents of teenagers:

- [Understanding Youth Culture](#)  
Current trends in teen culture, including "Hot Button" issues that impact teens today and links to movie and music reviews.
- [Our Catholic Faith](#)  
Information on the Catholic Faith, including everything from church teaching to spiritual resources.
- [Parenting and Family Life](#)  
Encouragement for parents on how to develop a Catholic culture in their family. Marriage resources and support for single parents and blended families.
- [Multicultural Reality and Gift](#)  
Information on different cultural perspectives and concerns.
- [Resources and Research](#)  
Research on attitudes, habits, and needs of adolescents.

*"What you do in your family to create a community of love, to help each other to grow, and to serve those in need is critical, not only for your own sanctification but for the strength of society and our church. It is a participation in the work of the Lord, a sharing in the mission of the church. It is holy."* U.S. Catholic Bishops.  
Follow the Way of Love.