

Partnering with Parents to Bring Home the Faith



Copyright Notice:

These materials are copyrighted by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Inc. © 2013 and may be adapted for use within the diocese at parishes, schools and institutions.


This program and related materials are not to be distributed or used outside the diocese without the express, written consent of NFCYM.



© 2013 by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Inc. All rights reserved


This PowerPoint is not to be copied or used by anyone except the contracted diocese and their appointed trainers.

Partnering with Parents to Bring Home the Faith




***Strong Catholic Families:
Strong Catholic Youth***


Parent Presentation




National
Conference for
Catechetical
Leadership



NFCYM
NATIONAL FEDERATION FOR
CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CATHOLIC FAMILY LIFE MINISTERS
Strengthening the Church's commitment to families



NCEA

© 2013 by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Inc. All rights reserved

1. Presenter should have this on in the background as people arrive.
2. Begin with a welcome and introduce self and your experience as a teen, as a parent and as a LEM in the church.
3. Introduce the title of the series and the image of the tree reflection – it is symbolic of the family - the deeper and stronger our faith and family roots are, the better and more clear the reflected image will be (our teens and children).

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NSRV)

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today.

Drill them into your children.

Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest.

Bind them at your wrist as a sign and let them be as a pendant on your forehead.

Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates."

10 Minute Opening Options: Local Presenter Chooses Best Option:

1. Use this reading and the simplified lectio divina process in small groups of 3-5 to begin session with prayer and to demonstrate an easy formula to follow for prayer and faith sharing at home:

- Read it the first time and have each person listen and share the one word that speaks to them (without explanation).
- Read it second time and have them listen and share the phrase that speaks to them most (without explanation)
- Read it a third time and have them listen to what God may be saying to them. This time spend a few minutes so each person can share this with others.

OR

2. Use the hidden "Reflections" slide (#51) to invite parents to do some small group sharing that helps them focus on their own faith formation, young people today and parents today.

OR

3. Invite in groups of 2-3 to ID a strength/gift they see a.) in their child/teen, b) with their family and c) within themselves as a parent.

After they have time to share in small groups, invite them to keep in mind these gifts and strengths and seek to build on them as we walk through the process of building strong Catholic families and youth.

OR

4. Your own idea or a combination of the above...

What is Your Wish?



1. Tell a story about a hope, wish or dream you have for a child/children in terms of faith (humorous or serious).

2. Ask parents to write down two wishes on the inside page of the Family Faith Resource Book:

1. What they wish they were doing if they were not here tonight.

2. What they wish for their child/ren in terms of the impact that faith will have in their lives 10-15 years from now (when they are an adult).

3. Give them 30 seconds of silence to do this. Then ask them to group up into 4's and introduce themselves to one another and share their two wishes and why. Only give them a couple of minutes to do this.

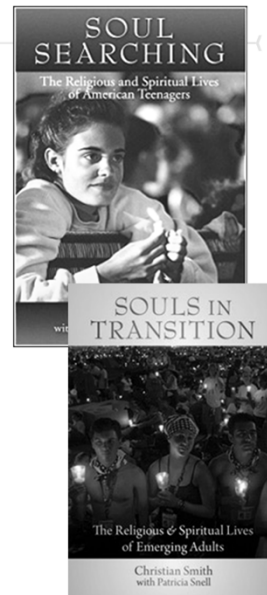
4. Ask for some answers to the first wish (where they would rather be). Be sure to add your own to this and after some responses have been shared, say that we all probably had some other place we'd rather be tonight but the fact that we are here speaks loud and clear about the importance of passing on our faith to our children. But what is it that we hope they "catch" from us?

5. Invite a few parents to share their second wish with the large group.

6. Then let them know that this session is designed to help us begin moving in that direction over the coming years, to help make this wish come true for you.

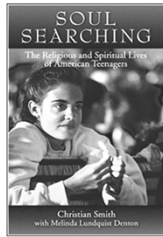
Objectives

- **Learn about what current research is telling us about young people and faith...**
- **Consider its implications for us as parents...**
- **...and how the Church can help you.**

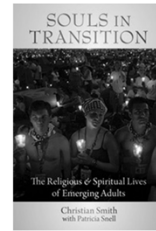


“The objectives of the presentation are...” At this point it would be good to emphasize that the material to be presented will be challenging, especially to parents, and to emphasize that the objective is not to make anyone feel bad, but to raise all of our awareness about where we and our children are, faith-wise, so we can be empowered to make good, informed, decisions.

IMPORTANT PRESENTER NOTE: At this point it’s very important for the presenter to acknowledge that there are many different kinds of families, including blended, single-parent, inter-religious, etc. In this presentation we wish to honor the rich variety of our families, and especially to be sensitive to the unique challenges and complexities that single-parent families and inter-religious marriages can bring. For instance, there are times when we’ll suggest talking with one’s spouse, and we know that for some of us that’s not an option. In all cases, we encourage parents to stick together, to work together, and to support one another, within and between families: as we’ll see, we’re up against long odds, and we really need one another!




National Study of Youth & Religion



- **The “gold standard” of research on youth & faith.**
- **One-hour teen interviews, 30-min. parent interviews, PLUS face-to-face follow-ups lasting as long as three hours**
- **Now with three waves of longitudinal data, from 2002 thru 2008**

Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers

1. Review the NSYR as the source of the most recent and reliable research on teens and religion, encouraging those who are interested in the details of the research methodology to get the books, *Soul Searching* (2005) and *Souls in Transition* (2009).
2. Three waves of longitudinal data are now available, tracking these young people into their early twenties...so now we have a much clearer sense of what really helps faith “stick” over the long haul. The findings from the first wave are in *Soul Searching*, and the findings from the second and third waves are in *Souls in Transition*.



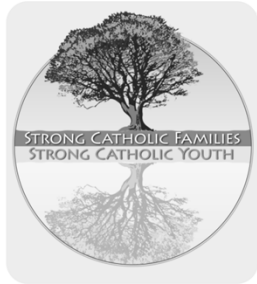
I. When it comes to faith, most young people:

- A. Are rebellious against the faith of their parents.***
- B. Consider their parents' religious practices to be old-fashioned and not for them.***
- C. Pretty much follow the faith of their parents.***

The presentation is anchored around three questions that will test our assumptions relative to the findings of the NSYR. Here's the first question. Each of the questions has three options, and I'll be asking you to raise your hand to show which of the options you feel is closest to the correct answer. I'll read the questions aloud and elaborate on them a bit, so you have a chance to think about how you want to "vote."

Possible remarks:

1. Have you ever heard it said that it's normal for teens to rebel against their parents, and leave religion only to return as young adults? That's been the conventional wisdom for years, and that's what this question is designed to test.
2. Not wanting to get up on Sunday morning for Mass does not necessarily point to rebellion. After all, do young people like getting up in the morning for virtually anything?



**I. When it comes to
faith, most young
people:**

***Pretty much follow the
faith of their parents.***

Presenter Note: After displaying this answer, move on to the next few slides which offer commentary and supporting evidence about why this answer is correct.

A different generation...




Teenage faith is very conventional.

“The vast majority of U.S. teens are not alienated or rebellious... Most are quite content to follow in their parents’ footsteps.”

Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers p. 260.

Refer to the parents when they were teens and how they may have been viewed as “rebellious boat rockers”. The NSYR found that teen rebellion is *no longer a significant issue*, in fact the opposite is true: they are remarkably conventional and looking mainly to their parents for wisdom, advice and guidance. In fact...



In fact...

“The single most important influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents.”


1. The NSYR is clearest on this: parents are the most important factor in the faith equation of their kids. Bar none, there's no other more important element – leading to faith, or no faith.
2. That doesn't mean that there are any guarantees. However, the best chance we have to ensure that young people have faith is if their parents have faith.
3. Recently Group Publishers asked 10,000 teenagers to name what was most important in developing their faith. Number one was parents.
4. Researchers found a very accurate “mirror” between what youth did and believed and what their parents did and believed, with the suggestion that young people today may in fact be the best barometer of the faith of their parents. This is verified in the hard numbers of the study (next slide)...

Mass / Religious Service Attendance

Frequency of Attendance	Catholic Youth	Catholic Parents	All Youth
<i>More than once a week</i>	6%	5%	16%
<i>Once a week</i>	33%	37%	24%
<i>2-3 times a month</i>	13%	15%	12%
<i>Once a month</i>	8%	8%	7%
<i>Many times a year</i>	8%	5%	8%
<i>Few times a year</i>	21%	18%	14%
<i>Never</i>	11%	12%	18%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: NSYR Resource CD © Ministry Training Source. Used with permission.

1. How did researchers find the “mirror”? This is one example...
2. Compare the “Catholic Youth” column with “All Youth” column and you can see significant variances. However, compare Catholic youth with Catholic parents, and you can readily see the mirror researchers found.
3. Note that this “mirror” is more clear for White families than Hispanic, however. Further research on Hispanic families suggests that, especially among the “committed parents” the mirror is not as reflective when compared to other ethnic groups. It is suggested that this may be due to an assimilation factor where second generation teens try harder to adapt to the predominant culture by distancing themselves from their culture of origin and their parents’ beliefs.



Teens were asked:

“If you could change anything about your family situation, what would it be?”

Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers.

- What if we gave our teens a magic wand and a wish? What do you think they would want to change about their family situation?
- Ask parents to reflect or, if time allows, chat with another person about this question.
- Be sure to have some different answers called out to the large group before moving to the actual response in the next slide.

“To become closer to my parents.”



Teens were then asked:
“Why aren’t you close to them?”

“I don’t know how to do it.”

Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers.

1. Ask parents by a show of hands how many are surprised by these findings.
2. What might parents answer if asked the same questions? Probably the same response!
3. This is GOOD NEWS – both are wanting and needing the same thing – to grow closer, but both need help in doing so. In fact, other research (Pew Research Center) supports this finding and highlights the fact that we are in the midst of one of the most “family friendly” generations on record.
4. Important: Responses from teens like “I don’t know.” or “Nothing.” don’t necessarily mean they don’t want to or even need to talk. Note what the research found: “I don’t know how to do it.” Young people want (and need) significant relationships with their parents but parents should not wait until their teens comes running and jumping into their arms exclaiming this!. This evidence should spur parents forward with confidence that spending more time connecting and going deeper (i.e.: sharing faith and praying) with children/teens will go a long way toward feeding this wish and hope they have to grow closer.
5. Note that this “kinder, gentler generation gap” is likely a different one from the one the parents grew up in. We parents need to be careful we don’t assume teens want and need lots of space and distance (like perhaps we did in previous generations).



Two of three teens and three of four parents say they would be willing to give up a weeknight activity if it meant they could have dinner with their family. (CASA, 9/2009)

1. More supporting evidence from a 2009 study by the National Center for Addition and Substance Abuse (CASA) : the research shows that our kids are almost as hungry as we are for family time.
2. If you want more family time, and your kids want more family time, what's preventing you from getting what you want?
3. Is this part of your wish?

How do you feel about your family time at home?



- **Only 34 percent of North American families eat one meal together each day.**
- **The average father spends eight minutes per day with his children (includes meals and TV).**
- **Parents spend fewer than 3 minutes of non-directive communication with children per day.**

1. Use these points to invite parents to consider how they feel about the patterns in their own homes, and whether they're satisfied with those patterns or wish to change some of them.
2. If it's normal to be too busy to be a family, then maybe we need to change to a "new normal."
3. Perhaps ask: What's the definition of "insanity?" Someone will likely chime in "Doing the same thing but expecting a different outcome," or something like that. It's insane to think things will get better on their own.
4. In other words, change requires intention, decision and action. It's been said that it takes at least three weeks to develop a positive habit, but only three days to lose the habit. Change isn't easy, but it's worth it.

How do you feel about your family time at home?



- **Only 12 percent of families pray together.**
- **The average couple spends only four minutes of uninterrupted time together a day.**

Source: *"Raising the Bar: Ministry to Youth in the New Millennium,"* by Alvin Reid

1. If time allows, invite parents to chat with one another about the patterns in their own homes, and how they feel about those patterns.
2. How do you think your children would react to a change in family patterns that would lead to more quality family time?



2. In terms of positive life outcomes, highly religious young people appear to be doing:

- A. About the same as other teenagers.***
- B. Better than other teenagers.***
- C. Worse than other teenagers.***

Here's question #2. In this question we're exploring whether there's a connection between religious practice and well-being.

These next two slides define some of the measures they used to examine one's level of "religiosity" or religious practices and beliefs...

NSYR “Religiosity Variables”

- **Religious service attendance**
- **Importance of religious faith shaping daily life and decisions**
- **Made personal commitment to live life for God**
- **Involved in a youth group**
- **Frequency of teen praying alone**

Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers.

1. In order for you to respond to this question, you'll need to know what the researchers were looking for when they surveyed and interviewed young people and their parents, so here's a partial listing. This is what they mean by “religiosity”; notice that it's not just being knowing the right answers to questions about religion. The researchers were looking for evidence of real, lived faith as expressed in a particular religion. This is a sample of the areas (but not all the areas) the NSYR measured to determine one's religious depth. Perhaps think of it this way: if our young people were arrested and alleged to be Catholic Christians, would there be sufficient evidence to convict them? “Areas of Religiosity” = evidence.
2. Let parents know that the questions found in the family faith inventory are a way for parents to gauge their family's “level of religiosity”.
3. More of these on next slide.

NSYR “Religiosity Variables”

- **How close teen feels to God**
- **Number of mission trips and retreats**
- **Interest in learning more about your religion**
- **Frequency of reading from the bible alone**
- **Frequency of drug and alcohol use**

Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers.

Note that the researchers were not only interested in the evidence or markers of faith, but were also looking for evidence of healthy decisions and negative, risk-taking behaviors, so as to explore the connection between religion and the well-being of young people.



2. In terms of positive life outcomes, highly religious young people appear to be doing:

- A. *About the same as other teenagers.***
- B. *Better than other teenagers.***
- C. *Worse than other teenagers.***

Once again here's question #2, exploring whether there's a connection between religious practice (measures of religiosity we just showed) and well-being. Show of hands for a?, b?, c?



2. In terms of positive life outcomes, highly religious young people appear to be doing:

Better than other teenagers.

The research found compelling evidence that there is in fact a direct connection between “being religious” and well-being. This is important information for all parents who of course want what’s best for their kids. It’s an important question to ask of ourselves: how am I as a parent “gatekeeping” the time and activities of our children to be sure that our kids are sufficiently involved in faith and religion so they’ll reap the positive benefits in their lives.

“...religious faith and practice themselves exert significant, positive, direct, and indirect influences on the lives of teenagers, helping to foster healthier, more engaged adolescents who live more constructive and promising lives.”



Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers, p 263

1. Emphasize that even if kids aren't especially religious, religion still has a measurably positive effect on their well-being.
2. So faith is really good for kids, helps them avoid getting in trouble, provides a solid moral compass for life decisions, even helps with getting good grades. As parents we want what's best for our kids, and the research says faith and religion are good for them.
3. *Ask parents if any of their "wish of faith" items are listed here?*
4. So if religion is good for kids, it follows that...

PRESENTER NOTE: Be careful here about "selling" faith as a kind of self-improvement product. Make the point that development of a strong faith makes a positive difference for kids, for families and for the world.

More = More

“The greater the availability of religiously based relationships, activities, programs, opportunities and challenges for teenagers...



...the more likely teenagers are to be religiously engaged and invested.”

Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers

1. Translated: that means that religion classes by themselves are not sufficient – they’re necessary, but not sufficient. Young people need the language of faith to live and share the faith, but a language without a place to use it regularly will likely be quickly lost (think of high school foreign language classes for instance).
2. In order for faith and religion to “stick”, they need lots of day to day reinforcement, especially at home (revisit the first question: parents have the greatest impact). This also translates into lots of different kinds of meaningful involvements, which might include retreats, mission trips, youth conferences, Sunday mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Eucharistic adoration, prayer services, youth group, Scouts, etc.
3. The Church calls this “comprehensive youth ministry”, with lots of activities and opportunities to pray, serve, learn and grow. That’s one of the big reasons full-time youth ministers are so important, because it’s their job to make sure there are lots of opportunities for young people in a parish faith community (which doesn’t mean that he/she has to do them all herself – in fact, it’s best to connect young people with the life of the church as it prays, serves, learns and grows.

Consider the possibilities...

Youth who have participated in at least one retreat, rally, conference or mission trip report:



✓ **being significantly closer to God**

✓ **that religion helps shape their daily lives**



✓ **reading the Bible more often.**

The research is clear that these events and programs really work in forming young people in faith, especially when they are grounded in a family life that is consistent with and supports those kinds of experiences – and especially when the principles and values that are taught in such programs are actively lived and modeled at home by parents.

Ask parents how many remember a retreat, rally or mission trip being a formative event in their faith life as a teen?

Ask parents if any of their “wish of faith” items are listed here?

**YET...
71% of junior
high youth, and
61% of high
school youth
have NEVER
attended a
religious retreat,
rally, conference
or mission trip.**



1. The sad news is that 3 out of 4 teens NEVER participate in them.
2. We are doing good stuff, that makes a difference in the faith life of teens and families, but the majority of them are missing out on it.

More = More



***“The more they attend
Mass and participate in
religious activities and
groups, the more they
make religious practices
their own,
but most do not
participate.”***

1. Presenter helps parents make connections:
 - if more = more, and faith is really good for kids, why isn't there more of it in their lives? (pause)
 - Who serves as the “gatekeepers” of their children’s schedules, through childhood and well into the teen years? (pause)
2. Of course: we do. The conclusion seems to be that faith and religion have been gradually pushed to the margins of our family’s lives, and our children’s lives, even though it’s really good for them.
3. Question: if it isn’t in faith and religion, where are they spending their time?
4. It seems that over time in the busyness of life we can lose track of what’s really important and will sustain our kids, our families and ourselves over the long run. Sometimes this is called “the tyranny of the urgent” in which things that seem so urgent at the time replace what’s really important, and we can find ourselves in a vicious cycle of unrelenting busyness. It’s worth considering: is that the kind of life that we want to model for our kids?



3. In most variables measuring religiosity, the Catholic Church in comparison to other Christian churches was:

- A. Better than most.***
- B. About the same as most.***
- C. Worse than all others.***

1. Here's your third and final question: how did we measure up relative to other Christian churches? Refer to the previous slides which outlined these "variables measuring religiosity" (apologies for the sociological jargon). Show of hands: a?, b?, c?
2. Presenter may offer this hint: in Soul Searching, we Catholics were the only religious group to get our own chapter.



**3. In most variables
measuring religiosity,
the Catholic Church in
comparison to other
Christian churches was:**

***C. Worse than
all others.***

Reveal answer - Presenter calls special attention to the fact that option C is not just worse than some, but worse than all other Christian denominations.

Our NSYR Report Card

Mormon youth are faring best, followed by...



- 2. Conservative Protestant**
- 3. Black Protestant**
- 4. Mainline Protestant**
- 5. Catholic**
- 6. Jewish**
- 7. Non-religious**

Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers.

1. According to the NSYR, “Catholic teenagers stand out among the U.S. Christian teenagers as consistently scoring lower on most measures of religiosity... 5 to 25 points lower.”
2. Why do you think Catholics ended up where we did? Or another way to phrase the question is to ask: “What are Mormons and Evangelicals doing what seems to work in terms of owning and living their faith between the Sundays?”
3. This slide is not meant to focus on faith as a competition but it helps to learn from “best practices” regarding what is working and what’s not.

Why the difference?

Churches relying on parents and family to transmit faith and the church to “mission” it, appear to be doing better than the ones who delegate this responsibility to others...



1. For better or worse, history shapes us. Those churches that appear to be doing better have been shaped in a certain way that puts the responsibility for faith formation in the home, with the family and parents.
2. Note that this “delegation mentality” can and has created a sort of co-dependence over the years. Parents “expect” the church to take care of faith formation. The Church has programs that both feed and support that expectation. The result: our faith formation has become institutionalized and done “by the experts.”
3. Presenter reinforces “no blame, no shame”: our history as an immigrant church shaped us into a strong dependency on the church for education and support just to survive in this country. However, as Dr. Phil might say, “How is that working for us now?”
4. Invite parents to reflect: what’s it going to take to reverse this trend?

And something else is going around...



**NSYR researchers
uncovered a new and
virulent “strain of faith”
that is sweeping the
country...**



**Moralistic
Therapeutic
Deism
(MTD)**

NOTE: Presenters may choose to skip this and the next two slides on Moralistic Therapeutic Deism if too little time remains.

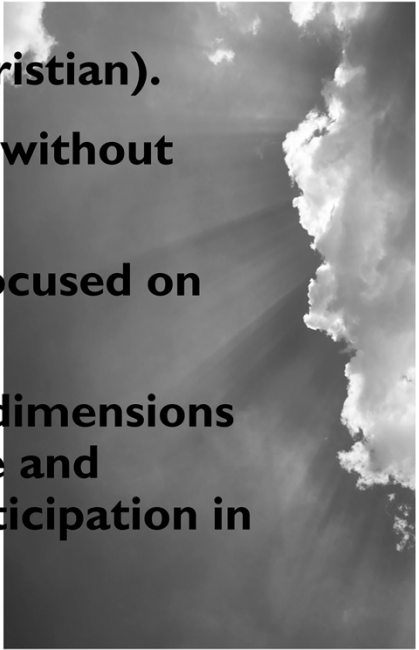
1. And to make things worse, not only are our Catholic young people particularly inarticulate about their faith, they also have symptoms of a “stealth” pseudo-faith called “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism” that is like a virus infecting and replacing the healthy “cells” of faith with something else that’s really pretty insidious because it’s so hard to notice, and identify.
2. Don’t be overly concerned about remembering the term; the shorthand we use is “MTD”. The next slide presents the MTD “creed.” Think about what might be wrong with this creed, even though it all sounds on the surface to be pretty good.

The “MTD” Creed

- 1. There is a God that watches over the world from a distance.**
- 2. God wants people to be “nice, good and fair”.**
- 3. The goal in life is to be happy and feel good about oneself.**
- 4. God only gets involved when needed to resolve a problem.**
- 5. Good people go to Heaven when they die.**

1. Review the 5 elements of the MTD creed, as follows:
2. Ask parents to name some things that are missing, things they think are important to our sense of Catholic faith and identity (e.g., Did you notice that a particular important person was missing from the creed? Hint: his mother’s name was Mary).
3. Ask parents how many times in the Gospels did Jesus say “Be nice”?
4. Perhaps mention that in the longitudinal research one of the keys to keeping faith into the twenties was a strong, internalized belief in a powerful God who’s intimately involved in our lives, a God of miracles. MTD presents a God who is a kind of “divine butler” or “cosmic therapist”.

So what's the problem with MTD?

- It's not **Catholic (or Christian)**.
 - It's “**feel good religion**” without demands or challenge.
 - It's individualistic and focused on me.
 - It lacks the communal dimensions of faith: **worship, justice and service, sacrament, participation in a faith community.**
- 

1. Summarize MTD by saying it's a “feel good, self-centered, it's-about-me-and-my-needs-type-of-faith”. MTD is an easy faith to pass on to the next generation because it does not require much.
2. Were any of your faith wish list items listed on the MTD creed? Probably not, which means if we want there to be something else, it is up to (the collective) “US” to change it.
3. Note that MTD is a **default position** meaning that if we DON'T CHANGE IT (just like with a computer's default position), this is what our culture will automatically serve up to our teens.
4. It can be changed, but we must take action to do it!

We're in this together...

“...No previous generation of American Catholics inherited so little of the content and sensibility of the faith from their parents, as have today's Catholic youth.”



Church historian R. Scott Appleby, Notre Dame University

1. This slide is not used to shame or blame parents but to stress that there have now been several generations of adults who did not receive or embrace a sense of Catholicism as a comprehensive way of life, and therefore have been less able or inclined to pass on a sense of Catholicism as a comprehensive way of life to their children.
2. Scott Appleby is a noted Notre Dame church historian who said this back in 2003, when the researchers were out in the field gathering the first wave of research. As such it stands as a kind of independent corroboration from a completely different but trustworthy source.
3. The good news is parents are not alone. The better news is... we can do better (we MUST do better) for the next generation.

...facing two big challenges...

“The challenge of Catholic education and formation in our media-driven, cyberspace age is no less than this: older Catholics must be restored to, and younger Catholics introduced to, a sense of Catholicism as a comprehensive way of life.”

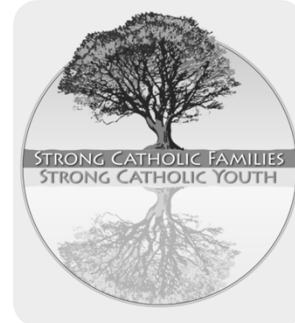


Church historian R. Scott Appleby, Notre Dame University

1. The competition out there for teen and parents' attention, time and beliefs are fierce and we must be **STRONG** in our own beliefs, faith and convictions to navigate our desired path, our journey of faith.
2. Notice that Appleby names two vital projects: 1. Restoring older Catholics, and 2. introducing younger Catholics to Catholicism as a **COMPREHENSIVE WAY OF LIFE (MORE = MORE)**. This is a two-pronged strategy to get us back on track. Note that it's a both-and, and both need to happen if we're going to turn this situation around.
3. Obviously a comprehensive way of life means a lot more than going to Mass on Sunday and getting to some religion classes. It means just what it means: living faith as a way of life. That's why the Family Faith Inventory has the categories and the number of items it does. The Inventory is designed to help you take stock, asking yourself how comprehensive is your faith and that of your family.
4. Learning to live our faith as a comprehensive way of life (if it's not what we're currently doing), will require some serious soul-searching, probably some hard decisions, and some serious courage and commitment. The culture will undoubtedly push back.
5. In other words, it won't be easy...which is why it will be so satisfyingly **GOOD!**

After hearing all this...

1. **What are you thinking?**
2. **Your comments or questions?**
3. **Comments or questions for other parents or leaders?**



This is the **ACTIVE LISTENING** portion of the presentation, a VERY IMPORTANT time when parents have a chance to voice their needs, hopes and concerns a bit (and for parish leaders in attendance to hear them). Be sure to save time for this to occur. ***Do not cut it out of the presentation.***

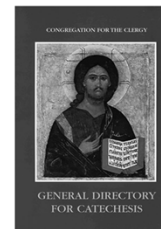
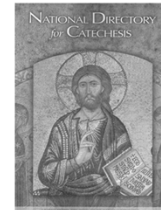
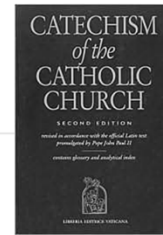
1. Divide into groups of 4-6 and give them at least 20 minutes (30 is preferred) of small group dialogue followed by 10 minutes of some large group comments, concerns, questions and answers.

2. If a BRIEF break is needed, do that after 5 minutes of small group so groups that wish to continue can and those who need to break can. When they return, do thoughts and comments in large group but keep it to 10 or fewer minutes.

NOTE: Before sharing in large group, introduce the Parent to Parish Response Form so they can begin filling it out since their needs may be on their minds right now.

The Church speaks...

- **“The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute.”** (CCC 2221).
- **“Parents are the most influential agents of catechesis for their children.”** (NDC 234)
- **“...the Christian Community must help [parents] assume their responsibility of educating their children in faith.”** (GDC 227).



1. Let parents know that this is what the Church has taught and believed since the beginning: that they are in charge of the faith of their kids. But to pull this off, a partnership between the Church and the Home (domestic Church) is required).
2. So the Church in its youth ministry and religious education and religion classes, etc. is there to support YOU, but not replace you.

Good News

The Church wants to be our partner and is working towards providing “more = more”.

Bad News

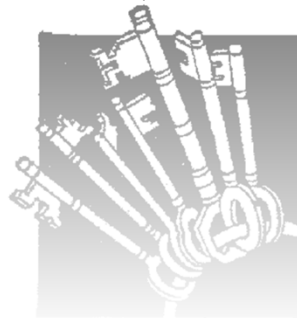
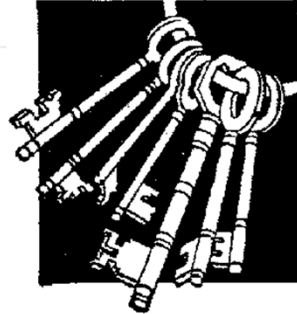
The activities of “Living Faith” have been “demoted” in our busy lives and in the larger culture.



1. The fact that we're here today is evidence that the Church wants to support us. A number of our churches have full-time, trained ministry leaders to provide MORE = MORE for our kids. There are many adult education and formation opportunities in many of our parishes.
2. But here's the bad news: for most Catholics, the activities of living faith between the Sundays and attending church are low priorities, and have been squeezed to the margins or completely off the page by our busy lives, multiple commitments, athletics, etc.
3. There is hope: if our churches and parents can get on the same page and work together, we can and will make progress.
4. The Parent-to-Parish Response Form is a way for you to tell the leaders what you need from them to help your family grow deeper in faith and how you'd like to be involved. This is why it's so crucial for you to take your time in filling it out and turning it in before you leave.

What are the Five Keys to Building Strong Catholic Families & Strong Catholic Youth?

KEYS

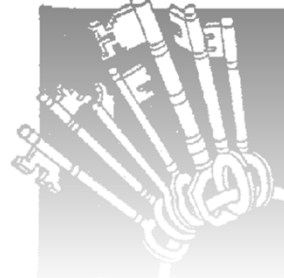
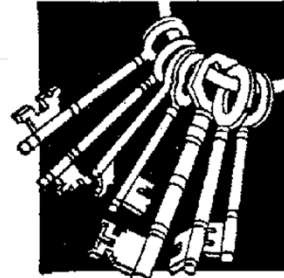


We think there are at least five keys to the kind of strong Catholic family that leads to strong Catholic children and youth. Here they are:

The Five Keys

- 1. Live the faith you want to pass on.**
- 2. Make faith a top family priority (see “Family Faith Inventory”).**
- 3. “Gatekeep” your kids’ activities & time. Remember “More = More”.**

KEYS



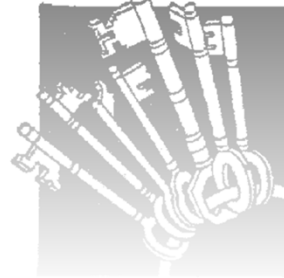
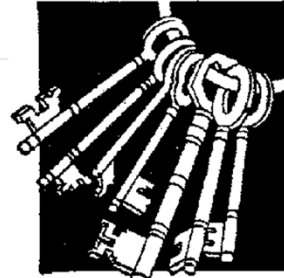
1. First point: Like Scott Appleby said, we adults need to be restored to living Catholicism as a comprehensive way of life. Maybe you are right now, but for many of us we’re not there. We know that whatever we insist on for our kids we have to live authentically, otherwise they’ll write it off. So the first thing is to seriously ask ourselves is whether faith is at the center of our personal lives, and if not, do something about it. The church is ready, willing and able to help in this, with opportunities for prayer, faith formation, service and community. The goal is to be sure that on a daily basis we’re praying, reading scripture, doing Christian service, and being an active part of our churches.
2. Second point: As Catholic parents our role is to be leaders of “the domestic churches” of our families – so our families become places of regular prayer, spiritual reading, faith formation, conversations about faith, morals, life issues, etc., and so our families are engaged in the Church (remember that more = more).
 - Refer to the “Family Faith Inventory (pgs 8-11) in the Family Faith Resource Booklet and let parents know that this is a great assessment to help them to start reflecting on what level of importance is given to faith growth within their home.
3. Third point: As parents one of our most important jobs is gate-keeping the time and priorities of our families, especially our children. Jesus said our hearts will be where our treasure is. Maybe today he would say our hearts are where our calendars are, and that our schedules tell us what our true priorities are. So are there less important elements in our family life that are squeezing out other more important things (like family dinner, family time together, sharing faith, Sunday Mass, church faith formation, etc.?)

The Five Keys

4. Support one another & build inter-family networks of faith and life support.

5. Live as the “domestic church” you already are!

KEYS



4. Fourth point: This is going to be difficult and we parents need to stick together and support one another, make pacts with one another so we have each others' backs, especially in the face of a powerful media-driven culture that can and does powerfully compete with what we're trying to do in our families. The Parent to Parish Response Form you will be completing next gives you a chance to let the parish know what type of support systems you need and the follow-up parent session we have scheduled will give you a concrete next step in this direction.
5. Fifth point: If our kids are going to “catch” faith from us, we need to live our faith “out loud”, especially in the home, which means modeling it, living it and especially talking about it, and engaging them in conversation about it. This is why John Paul II reminded us that every family is a “domestic church” (point out page 7 in the Family Faith Resource Book for more info on this). That means we need to take action to build up this church by sharing faith together regularly, seeing family life as sacred and holy, attending formation classes, joining bible studies, prayer groups, doing scripture reading – whatever it takes. Note that the Family Faith Resource booklet outlines on pages 12-14 many different ideas and directions that parents and families can take to grow in faith both individually and together at home.

Next Steps...

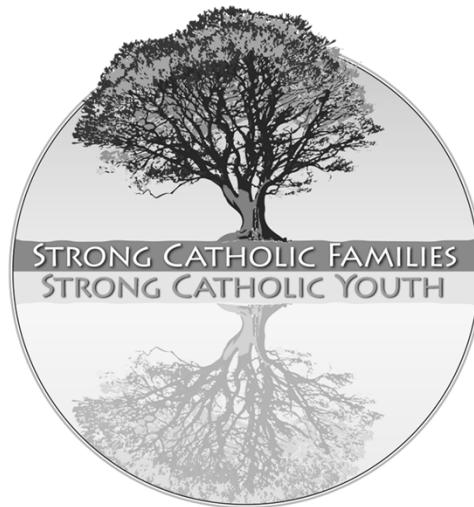
- 1. Complete & submit your Parent-to-Parish Response Form.**
- 2. At home, fill out and discuss your Family Faith Inventory with your spouse and family.**
- 3. Attend the follow-up parent session to share more thoughts and help plan parish responses.**



NOTE: Introduce the local SCF Team and explain that it will be their job to work together with parents to help you walk together this path toward growing deeper in faith as a family. It is advised that a member of the SCF team present this part of the slide, focusing especially on inviting parents to attend the follow-up parent session highlighted in #3.

1. If not done so already, ask parents to complete the Parent-to-Parish Response Form now. Tell parents that this is their opportunity to let the leadership and the SCF Team how it can best help them in their next steps toward becoming a stronger Catholic family. Leaders will be reviewing these and using them to develop next steps.
2. Walk the parents through the Family Faith Resource Booklet, especially focusing on the Family Faith Inventory (pages 8-11). Suggest that this is best done individually and then reviewed at a family meeting with spouse and children. Show them that the “Living Faith as a Family” section has some helpful steps they can take at home to begin growing deeper in faith based on what their inventory results revealed. Remind them to start with some small steps that will take them in the right direction, not to try and do a complete makeover right away.
3. Invite them to the follow-up parent session (outlined in Appendix D2-6 of the Parish/School Host Manual). Encourage them to work with the SCF Team and leadership parish to make good things happen for families, parents and kids.


A Faith That Matters



© 2009 by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Inc. All rights reserved




1. Share a closing story that illustrates the powerful hopes and dreams every parent has for their children.
2. Conclude with the blessing prayer for parents found on the back cover of the Family Faith Resource Booklet (pg 15)

Partnering with Parents to Bring Home the Faith




***Strong Catholic Families:
Strong Catholic Youth***

Parent Presentation



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CATHOLIC FAMILY LIFE MINISTERS
Strengthening the Church's commitment to families



© 2013 by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, Inc. All rights reserved

1. Presenter should have this on in the background as people arrive.
2. Begin with a welcome and introduce self and your experience as a teen, as a parent and as a LEM in the church.
3. Introduce the title of the series and the image of the tree reflection – it is symbolic of the family - the deeper and stronger our faith and family roots are, the better and more clear the reflected image will be (our teens and children).