

“Reimagining Faith Formation” Assessment Tool

The “Reimagining Faith Formation” Assessment Tool provides a way for your congregation to examine how it is forming faith through congregational life, family faith formation, age-group faith formation, and leadership. Rate each item on a scale from poor practice (1) to excellent practice (4). Items that receive a rating of 4 (excellent) or 3 (good) indicate areas of strength. Items that receive a 2 (adequate) or 1 (poor) indicate areas for growth. After rating each of the items circle the items that are in need of attention and development (scores of 1 or 2) and items that your congregation wants to strengthen even if it received a score of 3 (good). Use the results of this assessment to apply the concept of a faith forming ecosystem (described in Chapter Two of *Reimagining Faith Formation* book) to your congregation and to develop growth areas for creating a curriculum plan for your congregation as described in Chapter Four of the book.

Part 1. The Congregation Creates a Faith Forming Culture

	Practice			
	1=poor	2	3	4=excellent
1. God’s Living Presence: People experience God’s living presence in community, at worship, through study, and in service.	1	2	3	4
2. Discipleship: People learn who God is and come to know Jesus Christ personally; learn how to be Christian; and how to discover the meaning of the Bible for their lives.	1	2	3	4
3. Community: People experience a life-giving spiritual community of faith, hope, and love; characterized by hospitality, welcoming, love, and support.	1	2	3	4
4. Worship: People experience spiritually uplifting worship experiences that are enlightening, fulfilling, inspiring, interesting, easy to understand, and relevant in daily life.	1	2	3	4
5. Liturgical Seasons: People experience the Story of Faith through the celebration of the feasts and seasons of the church year.	1	2	3	4
6. Rituals and Milestones: People experience God’s love through rituals, sacraments, and milestones that celebrate significant moments in one’s life and faith journey.	1	2	3	4
7. Prayer: People experience the presence of God as individuals and community through prayer and spiritual disciplines/practices.	1	2	3	4
8. Learning: People grow in faith understanding by learning the content of the Christian tradition, reflecting upon that content, integrating it their lives, and living its meaning in the world.	1	2	3	4
9. Moral Responsibility: People develop ethical/moral responsibility—learning about Christian perspectives on moral questions and how to apply their faith to decisions about what’s right and wrong.	1	2	3	4
10. Service & Justice: People are engaged, locally and globally, in serving those in need, working for justice, and caring for God’s creation.	1	2	3	4
11. Intergenerational Relationships: People develop intergenerational relationships and community where the Christian faith is shared, modeled, and lived.	1	2	3	4
12. Intergenerational Faith Experiences: People are engaged in intergenerational faith experiences and activities of worship, prayer, learning, and service as an integral aspect of congregational life.	1	2	3	4
13. Digital Ministry: People can grow in faith and discipleship through online faith forming content and social connections on the congregation’s website(s) which provides content and experiences to extend participation in congregational life and ministries into daily life.	1	2	3	4

Part 2. The Congregation Equips Parents and Families

	Practice 1=poor 4=excellent
14. Parental Faith: The congregation helps parents and grandparents grow in faith and discipleship, and practice a vital and informed Christian faith.	1 2 3 4
15. Parenting for Faith Growth: The congregation teaches parents and grandparents the knowledge and skills for forming faith at home: caring relationships, celebrating rituals and milestones, praying, serving, learning the Christian faith, and reading the Bible.	1 2 3 4
16. Parenting: The congregation equips parent and grandparents with the knowledge, skills, and confidence for parenting today, and how to develop a close, warm, and affirming parenting style that promotes religious transmission at home.	1 2 3 4
17. Family Faith Experiences: The congregation provides whole family experiences that promote growth in faith and discipleship, and teach parents how to share faith and live faith practices at home.	1 2 3 4
18. Family Faith Practices: The congregation provides families with resources to nurture growth in Christian faith and practice at home: caring relationships, celebrating rituals and milestones, praying, serving, learning the Christian faith, and reading the Bible	1 2 3 4
19. Family Assets: The congregation strengthens family life by developing the assets that build strong families: nurturing family relationships, establishing family shared activities and traditions, maintaining family expectations and rules, adapting to daily challenges, and connecting to the community.	1 2 3 4
20. Digital Ministry with Families: The congregation connects with families at home through an online ministry (family website, social media) that provides social interaction and a variety of content (print, audio, video, websites) for family faith practices, parent faith formation, parenting, and family asset development.	1 2 3 4

Part 3. The Congregation Embraces Lifelong Faith Growth

	Practice 1=poor 4=excellent
21. Lifelong: The congregation provides a continuity of ministry and faith formation across the whole lifecycle from children through older adults that promotes growth in Christian faith and discipleship in age-appropriate ways at each stage of life.	1 2 3 4
22. Programming: The congregation offers a variety of age-specific experiences, programs, activities, resources, and social connections for every stage of life that are available anytime and anywhere, in physical places and online spaces, and conducted in variety of settings—self-directed, mentored, at home, in small groups, in large groups, church-wide, in the community, and in the world.	1 2 3 4
23. Online: The congregation uses their own website(s), as an integral component of age-group ministry and faith formation, that extends gathered ministries/programs through online content (print, audio, video) and experiences, blends online and gathered activities in individual programs, and offers online-only programs, activities, and resources—all of which are available anytime, anywhere.	1 2 3 4
24. Children: The congregation addresses the unique life tasks, needs, interests, and religious/spiritual journeys of children through a variety of faith forming experiences and activities focused on developing caring relationships, celebrating	1 2 3 4

the liturgical seasons, celebrating rituals and milestones, learning the Christian tradition and apply it to life, praying, reading the Bible, serving /working for justice/caring for creation, and worshipping God with the faith community.	
25. Youth: The congregation addresses the unique life tasks, needs, interests, and religious/spiritual journeys of youth through a variety of faith forming experiences and activities focused on developing caring relationships, celebrating the liturgical seasons, celebrating rituals and milestones, learning the Christian tradition and apply it to life, praying, reading the Bible, serving /working for justice/caring for creation, and worshipping God with the faith community.	1 2 3 4
26. Young Adults: The congregation addresses the unique life tasks, needs, interests, and religious/spiritual journeys of young adults through a variety of faith forming experiences and activities focused on developing caring relationships, celebrating the liturgical seasons, celebrating rituals and milestones, learning the Christian tradition and apply it to life, praying, reading the Bible, serving /working for justice/caring for creation, and worshipping God with the faith community.	1 2 3 4
27. Adults: The congregation addresses the unique life tasks, needs, interests, and religious/spiritual journeys of adults through a variety of faith forming experiences and activities focused on developing caring relationships, celebrating the liturgical seasons, celebrating rituals and milestones, learning the Christian tradition and apply it to life, praying, reading the Bible, serving /working for justice/caring for creation, and worshipping God with the faith community.	1 2 3 4

Part 4. The Congregational Has Faithful, Competent Leadership

	Practice 1=poor 4=excellent
28. Spiritual Influence: The pastor and ministry leaders know and model the transforming presence of God in their lives and ministries.	1 2 3 4
29. Interpersonal Competence: The pastor and ministry leaders build relationships and community in the congregation, as well as in their ministries and programs.	1 2 3 4
30. Competent Leadership: The pastor and ministry leaders demonstrate effective leadership by modeling the way—aligning values and actions, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process—being innovative and experimenting, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart of others—affirming and celebrating contributions.	1 2 3 4
31. Competent Ministry: The pastor and ministry leaders reflect superior theological, theoretical, and practical knowledge and skill for leadership in the congregation and their ministries.	1 2 3 4
32. Volunteer Leadership: The pastor and ministry leaders nurture the faith and theological knowledge of volunteer leaders, equip them with knowledge and skills for their ministry, and provide continuing support and mentoring	1 2 3 4

Research References

Many of the items on the “Assessment Tool” are drawn from research studies. Here is a guide to the research foundations for individual items.

From *The Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry* (The Study of Exemplary Congregations in Youth Ministry). Roland Martinson, Wes Black, and John Roberto. St. Paul: EYM Publications, 2010.

Items #1-4, 7, 9, 10, 14, 18, 28-29, 31-32

From *Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down Across Generations*. Vern Bengtson with Norella M. Putney and Susan Harris. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Items #14, 15, 16, 17, 18

From *Generations Together: Caring, Praying, Learning, Celebrating, and Serving Faithfully*. Kathie Amidei, Jim Merhaut, and John Roberto. Naugatuck: LifelongFaith Associates, 2014

Items #1-12

From: *The American Family Assets Study*. Amy K. Syvertsen, Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, and Peter C. Scales. Minneapolis: Search Institute, 2012. (<http://www.search-institute.org/research/family-strengths>)

Item #19

From “Biblical and Theological Perspectives and Best Practices for Faith Formation.” Marcia Bunge. *Understanding Children’s Spirituality*. Edited by Kevin Lawson. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2012.

Items #3-10, #14-18

“How Highly Religious Families Strive to Fulfill Sacred Purposes.” David Dollahite and Loren Marks. *Sourcebook on Family Theories and Methods*. Edited by V. Bengtson, D. Klein, A. Acock, K. Allen, and P. Dilworth-Anderson. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005.

Items #14, 15, 16, 17, 18

“What Makes a Good Parent?: A Scientific Analysis Ranks the 10 Most Effective Child-Rearing Practices.” Robert Epstein. *Scientific American Mind*, November/December 2010.

Items #16 and 19

The Leadership Challenge. Fifth Edition. James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012.

Items #30