



WORD of LIFE™

Community Parent Formation Guide

A Proven Path for Religious Education

Parent Formation offerings are intentional gatherings that form, encourage, and equip parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in the faith (CCC 2223).

They help parents:

- Grow in personal faith
- Feel connected to the parish
- Gain practical tools for family faith life
- Build community with other Catholic families

If you are looking for individual parent formation, go to our Word of Life: Individual Parent Formation Guide.

Overview

Our Community Track for Parent Formation offers four foundational years of content highlighting the Golden Threads of Catechesis. Each track is seven sessions, with optional add-on sessions oriented toward the liturgical calendar.

It is important to carefully consider what's best for your parish. As a helpful guide, here is a recommended layout for the Community Track that you might find useful:

- At the beginning of the school year, hold an onboarding session for all new Word of Life parents (see appendix for recommended schedule)
- Each month, hold a parent formation session, either during the regular R.E. time or at a separate time convenient for families
- Within each session, have time for prayer, content viewing, discussion, and announcements (see appendix for recommended schedule)
- Routinely remind and update parents with bulletin inserts, emails, or your preferred communication method (see appendix for examples)

Step-by-Step Implementation

1 1-3 Months in Advance: Scheduling & Space

- a. Duration: Our schedule recommendations include a 60-minute and 90-minute option, each of which can be further adapted to fit your parish's needs.
- b. Scheduling & Frequency: Our parent formation tracks are designed for monthly meetings over the school year, totaling seven sessions with optional Lent and Advent add-ons. Before you begin, choose the dates for each of your sessions.
 - For first-time *Word of Life* parents, be sure to set up an onboarding meeting before your regular sessions begin.
- c. Location: Choose the ideal location for parent formation that allows access to stream content and host your parents.
- d. Timing: Determine whether this is best suited during regular R.E. sessions or a different time in the week. If you choose to host outside of R.E. times, consider offering childcare for parents to encourage attendance.

2 1 Month in Advance: Agenda & Communication

- a. Send an email to parents reminding them of the upcoming meeting (see appendix).
- b. Include a bulletin insert to encourage attendance (see appendix).
- c. Use and adapt our schedule template to fit the needs of your parish.

3 1 Week in Advance: Prepare Materials

- a. Make name tags or table signs
- b. Print out any handouts or discussion questions
- c. Determine whether you'd like to share any take-home resources from your parish (scripture cards, family prayer guides, upcoming events, book recommendations)
- d. Plan Hospitality: light snacks, meals, coffee, or dessert

4 1 Week After Parent Formation: Follow-Up

- a. Send a thank-you email or text (see appendix)
- b. Share a key takeaway, photo, or resource
- c. Remind parents of the next scheduled parent formation time.

Considerations

1 Preparation

- a. For further formation for active leaders and volunteers, take the Revive Parishes Course: *Small Groups with Lisa Brenninkmeyer*

2 Resources to Have on Hand

- a. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- b. Prayer Cards or additional parish information
- c. Parish event calendar or Religious Education information

3 Volunteer Opportunity

- a. If you have interested volunteers, consider inviting them to act as greeters, host tables (e.g., assist in guiding discussions), or offer hospitality support (e.g., bringing meals)

4 Prayer

- a. Pray for the parents before, during, and after every session!

Appendix

Discussion Questions Examples

For each session, choose from 3-5 of the following questions to invite discussion, or come up with questions of your own:

- What was your reaction to this video? Does it challenge you in any way?
- Did you learn anything new? What stood out to you most?
- Are there specific habits, practices, or prayers you feel called to begin (or restart) after watching?
- Do you feel that what you just watched will affect your approach to parenting, your relationship with others, or how you practice your faith moving forward? If so, how?
- How might you explain this concept to your child?
- Was there something in the session that felt especially relevant to your family's life right now?
- How do you think God is inviting you to grow through this particular theme or lesson?
- In what ways do you feel confident in passing on the faith? Where do you feel unsure or unprepared?

Recommended Schedules

Onboarding Schedule (60 minutes)

- **0:00 – 0:05** | Introductions, Welcome, & Opening Prayer
- **0:05 – 0:35** | Christ the Catechist
 - Introduce the video by encouraging the parents to be the primary catechists of their children
 - Watch *Christ the Catechist*
- **0:35 – 0:45** | R.E. Overview
 - At-Home and In-Classroom Expectations
 - Schedule of the Year
 - Sacramental Prep Details
 - Questions and Concerns
- **0:45 – 1:00** | Closing Prayer
 - Offer a brief introduction to Lectio Divina, sharing that this is something their students will also learn throughout the year
 - Following the Lectio Divina guide (see next section in the appendix), pray with 1 John 1:1-4

60-Minute Schedule

- **0:00 – 0:05** | Welcome & Opening Prayer
 - Quick greeting and overview
 - Opening prayer or Lectio Divina
- **0:05 – 0:35** | Teaching Segment (*time may vary based on video length*)
 - Show video
- **0:35 – 0:45** | Small Group Discussion
 - Discussion Questions
 - Optional: turn to a neighbor or form small groups
- **0:45 – 0:55** | Closing Prayer
Choose one of the following:
 - Guided reflection
 - Lectio Divina
 - Rosary decade or Litany
- **0:55 – 1:00** | Wrap-Up & Announcements
 - Share one key takeaway or challenge
 - Give any parish handouts/resources/announcements

90-Minute Schedule

- **0:00 – 0:10** | Arrival, Fellowship, and Opening Prayer
 - Light refreshments or food
 - Opening Scripture and prayer
- **0:10 – 0:40** | Teaching Segment
 - Clips/content and any accompanying talking points
- **0:40 – 0:55** | Small Group Discussion
 - Discussion Questions
 - Have each group share 1 insight aloud if time allows
- **0:55 - 1:15** | Guided Prayer or Workshop
 - Options:
 - Prayer journaling
 - Rosary decade + short reflection
 - Eucharistic Adoration (if possible)
 - Lectio Divina
 - Family faith habit-building workshop (e.g., how to teach the rosary to your kids)
- **1:15 - 1:25** | Takeaways, Next Steps, Q&A
 - Resource handouts (books, activities, prayer cards)
 - Optional Q&A time based on teaching session, discussion, prayer time, etc.
- **1:25 – 1:30** | Closing Prayer
 - Include intercessions for families and children

Lectio Divina Guide

Use the following as a script for leading Lectio Divina with your R.E. parents:

Today, we will pray with [name Scripture passage here].

We will read this verse a total of three times. After each reading, I will ask a question, and we will take time to respond silently in faith to God's Word.

[Begin with the Sign of the Cross and then read the passage aloud for the first time.]

What is the Lord saying to you today through these verses?

[Pause for a minute and then read the passage aloud a second time.]

What can you now say to the Lord in response to his Word?

[Pause for a minute and then read the passage aloud a third and final time.]

Let us spend a few moments in silence, resting in the Lord's presence.

[End with the Sign of the Cross.]

Bulletin Inserts

Sample 1

Parent Formation Session: [Insert Theme Name]

Date: [Insert Date]

Time: [Insert Time]

Location: [Parish Hall or Room Name]

Parenting is a big job—and you don't have to do it alone.

Join us for a time designed to support and encourage parents in their faith journey.

Questions? Contact: [Insert Email/Phone]

Sample 2

Parent Formation Session: [Insert Theme Name]

Date: [Insert Date]

Time: [Insert Time]

Location: [Parish Hall or Church Gathering Space]

All parents are invited to a formation session designed to nourish your faith and support your vocation as the primary educators of your children.

This event includes:

- Faith formation
- Time for small group discussion
- Prayer and reflection
- Practical resources to take home

Come connect with fellow parents, grow in your faith, and leave refreshed and inspired.

More info: [Insert Contact Info]

Find designed bulletin inserts by [clicking here](#).

Email Templates

Initial Email

Subject: You're Invited: Parent Formation Series at [Parish Name]!

Dear Parents,

As part of this year's Religious Education program, we're excited to offer a 7-session Parent Formation Series created specifically to support you in your role as parents. We believe that faith formation isn't just for children—parents need formation, encouragement, and community too. These sessions are designed to strengthen your own faith while giving you practical tools to bring into your family life.

Session Details:

Dates: [Insert Dates or "Begins [Start Date] and continues monthly"]

Time: [Insert Time]

Location: [Insert Location]

Each session includes:

- A short learning session
- Small group conversation with other parents
- Practical tools for living the faith at home
- A dedicated time of prayer

These sessions are meant to help you grow alongside your children during this R.E. year. We look forward to growing in faith with you!

In Christ,
[Your Name]

Reminder Email

Dear Parents,

A friendly reminder that our next Parent Formation Session is [insert date and time] at [insert location]. This session's focus will be on [insert theme].

We look forward to seeing you there!

In Christ,
[Your Name]

Thank you Email

Dear Parents,

Thank you for attending our last Parent Formation Session on [insert theme]. It was great to hear from everyone and discover how [insert key takeaway].

Our next Parent Formation Session is [insert date and time] at [insert location]. We look forward to having you there!

In Christ,
[Your Name]