

# Are You Ready to Build Strong Catholic Families and Strong Catholic Youth? ...Then Let's Get Started!

## Building Strong Families from the Ground Up

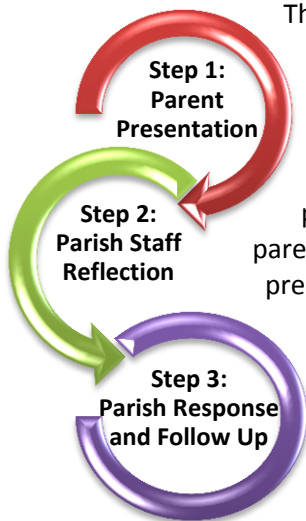
All across the United States, pastors and parish leaders are asking for effective ways to engage parents in the life and mission of the parish as well as seeking ways to help them take ownership as the primary leader of faith within their families. Instead of throwing our collective arms up in the air in despair, we invite you to consider a dynamic grassroots process designed to reach out to parents in a way that empowers and challenges them to form Strong Catholic Families.



## What is Strong Catholic Families About?

*Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* is a cyclic parish process that engages parents in reflecting, assessing and actively sharing with parish leaders the specific support and formation they need to form their families in the Catholic faith.

## How Does it Work?



The Strong Catholic Families process is made up of three distinct steps that are repeated annually in a parish...

**Step 1** begins with a two hour presentation and dialogue with parents by a diocesan-trained presenter, who uses contemporary research from the *National Study of Youth and Religion* combined with engaging visuals and pertinent stories to help parents understand the vital dynamic that faith plays in their children's lives and

the critical role that parents uniquely possess in how that faith is experience and lived out. During this session, there is time for parents to react to what they hear, discuss in small and large groups what they want to do about it, and express to parish leaders what support they need in order to take their next steps as a family. The session ends with parents completing a needs assessment that is given to parish leaders who follow-up with next steps.

**Step 2** involves the parish staff reading and reflecting on what the parents needs are and, using an outline provided along with follow-up resources, discern as a team how to best support the parents in achieving their goals of growing in faith as a family.

**Step 3** is comprised of the follow-up responses by the parish which may take one or several different forms depending upon the expressed needs of the parents. Printed and online resources, parent websites and suggested follow-up sessions are provided to the parish staff as they consider the most effective ways to continue their journey with parents in strengthening the faith within the home. Follow up sessions include extended and focused parent listening sessions, home-based scripture and faith sharing skills, and fun and engaging parent-teen programs.

## Who Should Be Invited?

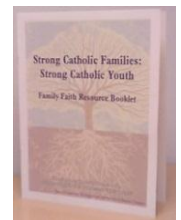
It is highly recommended that the Strong Catholic Families process become part of a parish's annual sacramental preparation process, collectively bringing together parents whose children are involved in Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation. This allows the parish to model for parents that these Sacraments indeed initiate an individual into a *life of faith*, not just a moment of faith. It also helps to create a supportive network of parents who quickly learn from one another that growth in faith is a lifelong journey and one that is nurtured most fully in the home.

## What Is the Cost?

Besides the presenters' initial stipend (if applicable), there is very minimal cost for this program because *the Diocese has already purchased the copyright permissions for you to use every year!*



A parish may choose to purchase professionally printed copies of the *Family Faith Resource Booklet* and table tent prayer cards which each family receives during the initial parent session, but permission is also granted for these resources to be copied locally as needed so the actual cost is really set by each parish depending upon the extent of follow-up options and resources you provide.



## How Was the Process Developed?

The *Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* initiative is a project of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry in **NFCYM** Washington, DC and has been provided to more than thirty dioceses around the country.

**Contact the Diocese to Get Started Building Strong Catholic Families Today!**