

Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth Sample Packet

This packet contains an overview of the Strong Catholic Families process as well as sample pages from various resources, handouts and website support used during the program. You will be given full access to the full content of all these resources after registering for the program.



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 or 202-674-4209

The following pages (2-5) are excerpts from the 16 page Family Faith Resource Booklet given to each family who attends the program. The pages in the sampler are not complete texts, but only serve to offer a glimpse of the content contained in this resource.

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 note if you are satisfied with the rating or if you or your family would like to begin work on developing a family faith plan in the coming year.



Family and Community

How well does our family recognize the sacredness of a family meal and discover God in the ordinary moments of family and parish life?

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

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

Okay Change

2. **Being Catholic is a significant part of our family identity.**

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

Okay Change

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

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

Okay Change

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

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

Okay Change

Prayer and Worship

Does our family recognize and embody the centrality of prayer in Catholic life, both individually and collectively?

1. **We attend Mass together on a regular basis.**

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

Okay Change

2. **I pray on my own (outside of Mass).**

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

Okay Change

3. **We pray together as a family (outside of Mass).**

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

Okay Change

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

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

Okay Change

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Developing a Family Faith Plan

After each adult has completed their Family Faith Inventory, use this worksheet to indicate what next steps you wish to take in the coming year both as an individual and as a family. To assist with this process, review the many suggestions found in the article, "Suggestions for Living Faith as a Family" which follows this worksheet. Be sure the entire family is present and able to talk through sections C and D before signing the Covenant at the bottom.

A. Using the four inventory faith themes and your ratings for the statements under each, indicate the general level of satisfaction for each in terms of its faith life.

	Not at all		Somewhat		Very
Family and Community	1	2	3	4	5
Prayer and Worship	1	2	3	4	5
Formation	1	2	3	4	5
Justice and Service	1	2	3	4	5

B. Individually reflect on each of your own inventory ratings and decide on two things you will do on your own to grow in faith in the coming year.

1. Start Date:

2. Start Date:

C. Share your inventory ratings with other family members and decide together on two things you will do as a family to further grow in faith in the coming year.

1. Start Date:

2. Start Date:

D. Consider your responses to the above questions and list any support, resources, or help you will need from your parish community to achieve your goals to grow in faith either individually or as a family.

1.

2.

Family Covenant

The _____ family commits to taking the steps outlined above in order to grow in our Catholic faith in the coming year. Signed by all family members:

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Suggestions for Living Faith as a Family

Includes contributions by Greg “Dobie” and Lisa Moser, Cleveland, and Michael Theisen, Rochester, New York

Learning how to love and rear children and teens as people of faith and followers of Jesus is a challenging and lifelong task. Recognizing that another’s life is always a gift and never a possession, we are challenged to raise our children in God’s image, not our own. As you reflect on how your family may grow stronger in the specific areas highlighted in the Family Faith Inventory, consider some of the following suggestions. Remember too, that you are not alone. Your parish pastor, director of religious education, and youth ministry leader are able supports and have many resources available for your family’s continued journey in faith.

Family and Community

Recognize the sacredness of a family meal and learn to discover God in the ordinary events of car pools, purchasing groceries, and helping with homework, how God is present and operative. We are swimming in a sea of God’s grace, so seek ways to celebrate and embrace the gifts of life and the grace found in the present moment of family and parish life as well as the life of the larger community.

- **Make Meal Time Sacred**—Establish days of the week that are set aside as “family meal nights” and ask everyone commit to working their schedules around these sacred times. Use these meals to pray together and share joys, hopes, disappointments, and sorrows. Help bring to life the connection between your home table with the Lord’s Table by celebrating the Eucharist together weekly.
- **Share Your Cross Moments**—“Cross moments” are a simple and meaningful way to focus on significant experiences during family meal nights or other family gatherings. Invite each person to share a time in the recent 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?
- **Choose Wisely**—The top two memories of your children and teens will include how much love was in your home and how much time you spent together as a family. When contemplating schedule or activity additions or changes, ask yourself, “Will doing this activity or turning on this screen strengthen or weaken our family life?”
- **Fill Your Home with Faith Images**—Go shopping at a religious store and invite each person to select an item of faith they would like to see displayed at home. Also, be sure you have family youth-friendly Bibles at home and

in each person’s bedroom (for a list of recommended Bibles, visit the Strong Catholic Family website referenced in this booklet).

- **Model God’s Love and Forgiveness**—Marital love is reciprocal, parental love is intergenerational: love is passed on and modeled for successive generations. In our homes, our love for one another should mirror God’s love for all people and all ages, races, and cultures. Be sure that moments of family forgiveness and reconciliation are made visible to the family. Do not “hide” apologies, let the family members who witness family conflict, know that the conflict has been worked out. Commit to participating in the sacrament of reconciliation as a family; especially during Lent.
- **Connect with Other Parents**—Seek out other adults and parents who share your commitment to Catholic parenting. Learn from their stories, strategies, and life lessons. Ask your parish to begin convening a Strong Catholic Family group (live or online) where parents can come together on a regular basis to share, pray, and support one another along this shared journey.



Prayer and Worship

Family prayer and worship are central to building a strong Catholic family. Keep in mind that the goal of individual, family, or communal prayer and faith sharing is to make the “God connection.” When we share faith with others, we are trying to answer the questions: “Where is God in all of this?” and “What is God saying to me today?”

- **Pray on Your Own**—It is very difficult to pray out loud, even with family members, if you do not take time to develop your own prayer life. Take a few minutes during the day or evening to turn off all outside “voices” and to turn on your connection with God. Find a quiet, uninterrupted space and read Scripture, and share with God your concerns, hopes, and fears. Allow yourself to be silent and open to God’s reply. If it is helpful, use a journal to write out your reflection during your prayer time.
- **Pray Together**—Look for the sacred family moments that can be integrated: birthdays, crises, trips, church events, car wrecks, achievements, funerals, Confirmation, and so on, large and small. Use traditional prayers such as the rosary or Our Father and other prayers and other ideas found in this

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Online Resources

Developing Strong Catholic Families

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

NFCYM's website for Catholic parents has resources and suggestions covering the following areas:

- *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.

Additionally NFCYM's Family and Parent Web Resource Area provides numerous links to other family and marriage websites, parent blogs, Catholic and Christian music sites, and other resources.

Print and Media Resources

52 Simple Ways to Talk with Your Kids about Faith by Jim Campbell; Loyola Press, 2007

Bringing Home the Gospel: A Weekly Journal for Catholic Parents (Year of Matthew and Year of Luke) by Judith Dunlap; St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2006

Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, Revised Edition; USCCB, 2007

Catholic Faith and Family Bible, Harper Catholic Bibles, 2010

Catholic Traditions in the Home and Classroom by Ann Ball; Our Sunday Visitor, 2005

Celebrating Faith: Year-Round Activities for Catholic Families by Mary Cronk Farrell; St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2005

Christian Parenting Survival Guide from A to Z by David M. Thomas; Twenty-Third Publications, 2007

Just Family Nights: Sixty Activities to Keep Your Family Together in a World Falling Apart, Susan Vogt, editor; Brethren Press, 1994

Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of Today's Adolescent in Your Home, School, and Parish by Michael Carotta; Harcourt Religion Publishers, 2007

A Parent's Guide to Prayer by Kathy Hendricks; Twenty-Third Publications, 2004

Pathways of Hope and Faith Among Hispanic Teens: Pastoral Reflections and Strategies Inspired by the National Study of Youth and Religion, Ken Johnson-Mondragón, editor; Saint Mary's Press, 2008

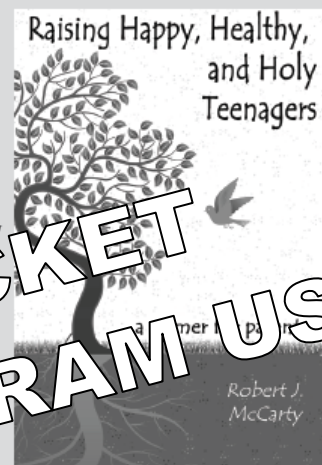
Praying with Your Children by Pat Fosarelli; Resource Publications, 2003

Raising Happy, Healthy, and Holy Teenagers: A Primer for Parents by Dr. Robert McCarty; NFCYM, 2009

Raising Faith-Filled Kids: Ordinary Opportunities to Nurture Spirituality at Home by Tom McGrath; Loyola Press, 2000

Soul Searching: A Movie about Teenagers and God, Revelation Studios (DVD, 79 minutes)

Your Catholic Family: Simple Ways to Share Faith in a Home by Jim Merhaut; St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2006



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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
 - Bi-Monthly
- Time Preference (check all that apply)
 - Morning
 - Afternoon
 - Evening
- Day Preference (check all that apply)
 - Sun.
 - Mon.
 - 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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Take a few minutes to help us to better support and partner with you...

The following pages (7-8) are excerpts from the resources provided for Diocesan Hosts and local presenters. All information and resources are kept on a discreet website that contracted Dioceses are given access to. The website and resources are updated regularly and new resources added. Quarterly e-mail updates are sent to all SCF presenters and hosts.



Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth Diocesan Host Coordinator Responsibilities



Thank you for your commitment to developing Strong Catholic Families and youth. It is important to keep in mind that this in-service is basically a “training of the presenters” process where we train a local group of presenters (that you recruit) who will replicate the parent sessions at parishes and schools throughout your diocese. We strongly recommend that this be a collaborative effort at the diocesan level (i.e.: between youth ministry, religious education and family life offices).

Overview of the Schedule:

The recommended schedule for hosting the *Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* in-service is as follows:

1. **Evening of Day 1:** a two-hour *Parent Session* from 6:30-8:30 or 7:00-9:00 pm for any and all interested parents and grandparents at a “pilot parish” (a parish that is interested in leading the way in this process). This session is directed toward parents with the diocesan recruited presenters and other interested parish leadership also in attendance to observe the process.
2. **Morning of Day 2:** a three-hour *Parish Leadership Session* from 9-noon (with lunch following if desired). The actual program needs three hours (in addition to prayer and announcements) so adjust the start/end times appropriately. This session is directed towards parish and diocesan leaders *including pastors*. Those attending are expected to attend the parent session the night before. All local presenters are required to attend.
3. **Afternoon of Day 2:** a three-hour *Training of the Presenters Session* from approximately 1pm - 4 pm (after lunch). This session is directed towards local presenters and the diocesan leader(s) who will oversee the program. Trainers should have laptops with them.

Additional Tasks:

- ✓ Contact your assigned trainer prior to publicizing the program so he/she can talk/walk you through this entire process, which is unique and unlike other NFCYM training in-services.
- ✓ Secure site(s) and promote the in-service program through appropriate venues using the templates and bulletin announcements that are attached. We strongly recommend that all parish leadership, pastors especially, attend both the parent session and the morning session for parish leadership.
- ✓ Recruit your team of local presenters who will be charged with presenting the parent session in parishes, schools and other organizations within the diocese. See pages 7-8 on page 3 regarding recruitment of trainers.
- ✓ Provide lodging, meals, and ground transportation for the presenter.
- ✓ Reimburse trainer for airfare prior to or the day of training.
- ✓ Provide a data projector, a screen, a white wall area, and flipcharts for the PowerPoint presentation. A podium and microphone are also necessary. Screen should be large (7' minimum) and placed high enough so that all presenters have good sight lines without obstructions to the screen.

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Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth Host Site



This discreet website contains all of the documents you will need to prepare for this program. Please begin by reading through the **Diocese and Parish Recommendations document** which outlines the steps you need to take prior to hosting this process. Your assigned trainer will assist you with the details of these steps. The Host Resources section contains sample promo flyers, forms and other resources developed by host sites is available for your use. If you would like to add your promo flyers or resources to this folder to be used by others, please send them to miket@nfcym.org.

Preparation of Resources

Prepare the resources required for each of the sessions.

1. Parent Session

- Parent to Parish Response Forms (2 sided) – one per person
- *Family Faith Resource Booklet - one per family/parish leader/trainer
- *Table Tent Prayer and Blessing Cards – one per family/ parish leader/trainer
- *Note: Fifty copies of these two resources plus ten Spanish prayer cards will be provided to the host as part of the program fee. Additional ones can be ordered at a discounted price from the NFCYM Store (<https://store.nfcymoffice.net/shop/pc/home.asp>). Please be sure orders are made at least three weeks in advance so they arrive in time for the session. Permission to reproduce these documents in black and white locally is granted to participating dioceses and their institutions that use this program.*

2. Parish Leader Session

- E-mail in advance to all attending the Parish Leader session the pdf of the article “*Forming Young Disciples: Are We Asking the Right Questions*” along with any other necessary logistical information.
- Copy of each of the resources from the Parent Session if they do not yet have one.
- Copy of the Parish Leader PowerPoint slide handout pdf
- Session Evaluation form
- Pilot Parish Response Form (optional) - located in the Diocese and Parish Recommendations document.

3. Training of the Presenters Session

NOTE: those marked with an * should be copied double sided and placed in a three-ring binder in the order in which they are listed.

- Parent Session PowerPoint
- *Presenter’s Manual
- *Parent Session Handout
- *Trainer Note Pages for Parent Session
- Local Presenters Contact Information Sheet

4. Host Resources

- Program Flyers
- Program Resources

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