

An Overview of Various Adult Faith Formation Formats

There are various forms of adult faith formation which currently take place around the Diocese. While not meant to be an exhaustive list (or to limit your imagination) here is a brief overview of some popular forms of faith formation.

- **Bible Study:** Bible studies can take many forms. Some Bible studies focus on an in-depth examination of a particular book of the Bible (e.g. Gospel of St. Matthew). Some provide an overview of the entire Bible (e.g. *The Great Adventure Bible Timeline*). Some look at a particular section of the Bible (e.g. The Passion accounts) or theme of the Bible (e.g. Justice). Others reflect on the content, themes, and application of the Sunday Mass readings. Whatever form it takes, Bible studies typically meet on a weekly basis—sometimes for a set amount of time (e.g. 8 weeks, Lent, etc.) or indefinitely (especially when the Sunday Mass readings are the source material).
- **Apologetics:** “Apologetics” refers to the ability to explain and defend the Faith. Adult faith formation sessions that take an apologetics approach seek to explain the Scriptural, theological, and historical basis for what we believe. Typically a specific topic is chosen as the focus of a particular presentation (e.g. “Why do we believe in the Real Presence in the Eucharist?,” “Why do we confess our sins to a priest?,” “Why do we believe that God is a Trinity?,” etc.). The format is flexible. Presentations may be weekly, monthly, or occur during specific liturgical seasons (e.g. Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc.).
- **Day of Reflection/Retreat:** This is an “event” approach to adult faith formation. A Day of Reflection typically occurs on a Saturday or Sunday and revolves around a particular theme (e.g. The miracles of Jesus, the lives of the saints, etc.). A meal is usually provided and Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Eucharistic adoration/benediction are often included as well. A parish retreat (or mission) typically occurs over the course of 2 days. In some cases it is a full 2 days, while in others it is at a set time over the course of 2 days (e.g. 7:00-8:30pm). Just like a Day of Reflection, a parish retreat/mission usually focuses on a particular theme and incorporates the sacraments.
- **Pastoral Formation Institute:** Many parishes/deaneries take advantage of the Diocese’s Pastoral Formation Institute (PFI) to provide high quality courses for their parishioners. The PFI offers courses on Scripture, Fundamental Teachings of the Catholic Church (Creed), The Sacraments, The Spiritual/Moral Life, Church History, and Catechetical Methodology. The courses can be taken for certification by catechists, or audited by everyone else. The PFI also offers ministry training (e.g. Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, Lectors, etc.) and Days of Reflection.
- **Faith and Film:** This approach revolves around screening a movie in the parish and using the film as a springboard for discussion. The film can be explicitly religious in nature (e.g. *A Man for All Seasons*, *The Passion of the Christ*, the great saint films put out by Ignatius Press, etc.) or secular, though possessing great Catholic Christian themes (e.g. *The Counterfeiters*, *Rear Window*, etc.). It is also possible to have a film for children playing simultaneously, with age appropriate discussion afterwards, to make it a family event (e.g. Veggie Tales, etc.). This is typically a monthly event or a weekly event during a specific liturgical season.
- **Catholic Book Club:** Similar to any other book club, a Catholic book club focuses on the reading and discussion of a specific text. Some focus on the great spiritual classics (e.g. *Introduction to the Devout Life*, *The Imitation of Christ*, etc.). Some focus on novels with Catholic themes (e.g. *Kristin Lavransdatter*, the short stories of Flannery O’Connor, etc.). Others focus on books that explain aspects of the Catholic Faith or moral life (e.g. *Theology of the Body for Beginner*, *The Lamb’s Supper*, *Catholicism for Dummies*, etc.).