Opportunities for Evangelization, Catechesis, Sacramental Preparation and Faith Formation

Updated by the Diocese of London August 2019
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- denotes Canadian material

- denotes new material and/or new section
Parish Evangelization:

**Alpha**

https://www.alphacanada.org/

The Alpha experience provides an intentional space for the kerygma to be proclaimed and where we can provide others an opportunity for encountering Jesus Christ. Alpha works at the pre-evangelization level and the evangelization level. It is a great starting point for people of all ages to build relationships and share in faith discussions. This is not a catechetical program. It is an entry point for those seeking faith.

**Parish Missions**

Please note: In the Diocese of London Parish Catechetical Resources Survey, many parishes reported hosting a Parish Mission. We are working on developing a list of potential speakers. Please let us know about your parish mission (theme and speaker) so that we can share your recommendations with others.

**Catholics Returning Home**

http://www.catholicsreturninghome.org/index.php

As the title suggests *Catholics Returning Home* is a parish-based program meant to invite non-practicing Catholics back to actively participate in the Church. The program is recognized by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
Parish Based Renewal

Amazing Parish
https://amazingparish.org/
The Amazing Parish movement seeks to equip pastors and pastoral teams with resources so that they can create vibrant and thriving parishes. They note that, while each parish is different, there are three common “building blocks” that form the foundation of an amazing parish.

Divine Renovation
https://www.divinerenovation.net/
Their goal is to inspire and equip parishes to become mission oriented so that each parish can bring people to Jesus.

Rebuilt Parish
http://rebuiltparish.com
Rebuilt: Awakening the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, and Making Church Matter invites pastoral teams and the faithful to examine the question “How can we make the Church matter to Catholics?” The answer lies at the heart of the Gospel! Rebuilt is not so much a program as it is mindset and approach to ministry.
Professional Development Reading

Suggested reading for parish teams:


Sherry Waddell. *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus*. Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 2012. (After reading this you may be interested in Sherry Waddell’s *Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples* (2015) and *Fruitful Discipleship: Living the Mission of Jesus*.)


‘Small church’ reflection and discussion –

Suggested CCCB Documents:

‘Small Church’ – a small group of adults who gather to reflect on their lives in the light of the Gospel and to share their Christian faith through prayer, friendship and service.

The Co-responsibility of the Lay Faithful in the Church and the World
This pastoral letter explores the great responsibility of the laity in God’s plan for the world, in which they are not simply collaborators of the clergy but are truly “co-responsible” for the Church’s being and acting.

The Essential Elements of Evangelization Today
Written from the current Canadian context, the text emphasizes that “spreading faith in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of humanity, is the Church’s fundamental and primary mission”. The reflection is primarily for pastors and those who serve in parishes, but also for all Catholics who wish to understand better the role of the parish in the Church’s mission.

The Missionary Dynamic of the Church Today
Written from the current Canadian context, the text emphasizes that “spreading faith in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of humanity, is the Church’s fundamental and primary mission”. The reflection is primarily for pastors and those who serve in parishes, but also for all Catholics who wish to understand better the role of the parish in the Church’s mission.

A Church Seeking Justice: The Challenge of Pope Francis to the Church in Canada
Dealing broadly with the themes of Human Dignity and Labour, War and Peace, and the Economics of Exclusion and Isolation, this document outlines the freshness and urgency with which Pope Francis is calling us to act for justice and offers reflection questions tailored to our Canadian context.

I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me: Pastoral Letter on Welcoming Refugees
This Pastoral Letter aims at making Canadian Catholics more aware of the current situation, while also challenging them to make a difference in the lives of refugees through prayer, support, and the sponsorship of families.

Our Evangelical Neighbours: A Catholic Reflection on Evangelical Christianity
The resource provides Catholics in Canada an introduction to Evangelical Christianity by exploring its origins, similarities and differences to Catholicism.
Small church’ reflection and discussion - Pope Francis Documents

Evangelii Gaudium - The Joy of the Gospel
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html


Other study guides:
- Pauline Press: Study and Reflection Guide
- Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay, NSW Australia: Seven Challenges from Pope Francis: A pastoral resource based on Evangelii Gaudium
- God’s Mission Joy of the Gospel – Resources (click here)

Laudato Si’: On Care For Our Common Home
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Pope Francis 2015 encyclical Laudato Si’ is a call to us to help humanity understand the destruction that we are rendering to the environment and to our neighbour. At the same time the encyclical examines the many philosophical, theological, and cultural causes that threaten the relationships of the person and communities to nature and between each person and others.

For Pope Francis, building on the Documents of Vatican II and manifested in his work and writings as Bishop and Cardinal, care for others, promoting human development and caring for the earth is an expression of faith and are important elements of evangelization.


Other study guides:
- Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice: On care for our common home: A dialogue guide for Laudato Si’
- United States Catholic Conference of Bishops Laudato Si’: On Care for our Common Home Discussion Guide
- Study Guide for Laudato Si’ created by The Interfranciscan Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation click here
- Laudato Si’ Resources can be found at the Global Catholic Climate Movement Website (or click here)
- Archdiocese of Washington (click here)
- Archdiocese of Atlanta (click here)
Amoris Laetitia – The Joy of Love

Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation Amoris Laetitia brings together the results of the two Synods on the family convoked by Pope Francis in 2014 and 2015. The exhortation cites their Final Reports; documents and teachings of his Predecessors; and his own numerous catecheses on the family.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Office for Evangelization and Catechesis and the Catholic Organization for Life and Family have created a video guide and reflection Guide. This can be found at:

English Webcast Series – Reflection Guide; or French Webcast Series – Guide de réflexion

Other study guides:
• For a study guide from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles: click here
• For a study guide from the Grey Sisters of Canada: click here

Other Resources:
• Catholic Organization for Life and Family (www.colf.ca): “The Joy of Love” At the heart of the Family

Gaudete et Exsultate - Rejoice and Be Glad

“Rejoice and be glad!” is what Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Mt 5:11-12). It is also the title of Pope Francis’ new apostolic exhortation on holiness in everyday life. Pope Francis reminds us: Jesus tells those persecuted or humiliated for his sake: ‘Rejoice and be glad’. Pope Francis goes on to say, “The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence.”

• Bayard Faith Resources (https://todaywithchrist.com/products/rejoice-and-be-glad) sells Bill Huebsch’s study guide booklet Rejoice and Be Glad: A Group Reading Guide to Pope Francis’ Gaudete et Exsultate. If the booklet is purchased in bulk, parishes can save money.
• Archdiocese of Washington. Rejoice Be Glad – Reflection Guide (click here)
• Diocese of London. Rejoice and Be Glad Notes (COMING JANUARY 2020)
Documents from the Holy See


Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church (Ad Gentes). “The pilgrim church is missionary by her very nature,” this decree states. Love and esteem for others should characterize this task. Missionaries must understand the culture where they will serve. They especially should be prepared for dialogue with non-Christian religions and cultures. It calls missionary activity the church’s “greatest and holiest task.”

Sacramental Preparation Resources

The following list represents some of the resources being used by our parishes for sacramental preparation. You may want to review these resources in light of the Evaluation Tool found below.
**Baptism**

**Diocesan Directives:**
*Criteria for Administration of the Sacraments of Initiation, First Penance and Marriage* (2016)

**Print Resources**
- Strong Catholic Families, Strong Catholic Youth (National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry [www.nfcym.org](http://www.nfcym.org))
- Baby’s Baptism: Sacrament of Welcome. St. Anthony’s Messenger Press. (Parent resource from Franciscan Media)
- Deborah McCann. *Celebrating Your Child’s Baptism*. Twenty-Third Publications. (available in Polish)

**DVD Series**
- Peg Bowman. *Celebrating Sacrament*. The Pastoral Center

**Good Practices**
- Pastoral visit with Family prior to and after Baptism
- Face-to-face small group sessions
- Baptism Anniversary Card Banner with pictures
- Newsletter sent each year on baptism anniversary
- Staying in contact and inviting participation by email
- Tots program on Sunday for new born to age two; Children’s Church for ages three and four
- Monthly Parents and Preschoolers programs – raising children in the Catholic Faith

**Other Resources**
- Why we Baptize ([www.bustedhalo.com](http://www.bustedhalo.com))
- Catholic Update
- Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth. Reborn Series ([www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org)) - need to register/login
First Eucharist

Diocesan Directives
- Criteria for Administration of the Sacraments of Initiation, First Penance and Marriage (2016)
- Pastoral Care of our Catholic Schools

Print Resources
- Francine O’Connor. First Communion. Liguori Publications (Spanish and English)
- Francoise Darcy-Berube & Jean-Paul Berube. We Share in the Eucharist. (child/family book and leader’s guide; also available in French). Novalis.
- Rosemarie Gortler and Donna Piscitelli. The Mass Book For Children. Our Sunday Visitor. (child’s resource)
- Jeanine Timko Leichner. Called to His Supper. Our Sunday Visitor (for family/home use)
- Doris Murphy. Learning Centers for First Eucharist and Reconciliation. Twenty-Third Publications (parish use)

DVD Series
- The Dynamic Catholic First Communion and First Reconciliation Experience. “Blessed”

Good Practices
- Orientation evening for families
- Knowing what the students are learning in school – Growing in Faith-Growing in Christ.
- Small groups of children led by catechist; parents with adult faith formation program in separate room
- Parent led small groups
- Classes following Sunday Mass
- Moving from First Reconciliation preparation classes to First Communion classes
- Remembering not all our participants are in Catholic Schools; program for students in public schools
- Having a retreat for students (and parents)
- After first communion with family; all invited to communal celebration of the Eucharist (Corpus Christi Sunday)
- Ongoing School Visits
- Emails with: invitations to parish events and to become involved; birthday wishes; summer camp

Other Resources
- Adaptive First Eucharist Preparation Kit: for individuals with Autism and other Special Needs. Loyola Press
- Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth. Reborn Series (www.formed.org) - need to register/login
First Reconciliation

Diocesan Directives

- Criteria for Administration of the Sacraments of Initiation, First Penance and Marriage (2016)
- Pastoral Care of our Catholic Schools

Print Resources

- Francoise Darcy-Berube & Jean-Paul Berube We Prepare for Reconciliation. Novalis child/family book and leader’s guide; also available in French). Novalis.
- Doris Murphy. Learning Centers for First Eucharist and Reconciliation. Twenty-Third Publications. (parish use).
- Francine O’Connor. First Penance. Liguori Publications (Spanish and English)
- Peg Bowman. At Home with the Sacraments: Reconciliation. Twenty-Third Publications. (parent resource)

DVD Series

- The Dynamic Catholic First Communion and First Reconciliation Experience. “Blessed”

Good Practices

- Orientation evening for families
- Knowing what the students are learning in school – Growing in Faith-Growing in Christ
- Small groups of children led by catechist; parents adult faith formation program in separate room
- Parent led small groups
- Classes following Sunday Mass
- Moving from First Reconciliation preparation classes to First Communion classes
- Remembering not all our participants are in Catholic Schools; program for students in public schools
- Having a retreat for students (and parents)
- After first communion with family; all invited to communal celebration of the Eucharist (Corpus Christi Sunday)
- Ongoing School Visits
- Emails with: invitations to parish events and to become involved; birthday wishes; summer camp

Other Resources

- Adaptive Reconciliation Kit: for individuals with Autism and other Special Needs. Loyola Press
- Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth. Reborn Series (www.formed.org) - need to register/login
- “Lump” www.nooma.com
- Brother Francis videos (available on YouTube
Confirmation

Diocesan Directives

- [Criteria for Administration of the Sacraments of Initiation, First Penance and Marriage](#) (2016)
- [Pastoral Care of our Catholic Schools](#)

Print Resources


DVD Series

- *Dynamic Catholic Decision Point*

Good Practices

- Orientation evening for families
- Knowing what the students are learning in school – *Religious Education*.
- Small groups of children led by catechist; parents with adult faith formation program in separate room
- Promoting community service projects
- Classes following Sunday Mass
- Remembering not all our participants are in Catholic Schools; program for students in public schools
- Having a retreat for students
- Ongoing School Visits
- Regular opportunities to celebrate the sacrament at the school
- Cards/Emails with: invitations to parish events/ministry/youth activities/Squires and Squirettes/ GR8 Fest/CCLC/ to help with future Confirmation preparation classes

Other Resources

- *Alpha Confirmation Program for Youth*
Marriage

Diocesan Directives

- **Criteria for Administration of the Sacraments of Initiation, First Penance and Marriage** (2016)

Print Resources

- The Order of Celebrating Matrimony. (available from Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops).
- *Celebrating Our Love*. Novalis
- Susan and John Midgley, *A Decision to Love: A Marriage Preparation Program*. Twenty-Third Publications. (Different Resources. Please note: not sold outside of the United States)
- John Bosio, Teri Bosio, *Joined by Grace*. Ave Maria Press
- Joan Vienna and Virginia Metoyer, *Picture of Love*. Church Publishing Incorporated

DVD Series

- *Catholic Marriage Prep*. The Marriage Group

Premarital Inventories

- *Catholic Couple Checkup*. The Marriage Group
- *Foccus Pre-Marriage Inventory*. Archdiocese of Omaha
- *Fully Engaged*. Diocese of St. Cloud
- *Better Together*. Dynamic Catholic

Good Practices

- Face-to-face meetings with the couple
- Seek opportunities to build on their desire to be Married in the Catholic Church
- Engaged and Marriage Encounters offered by people they recognize
- Partner couples with a Mentor Couple to support them

Other Resources

- Engaged Encounter and/or Marriage Preparation courses
- *Alpha*
- [http://www.catholicmarriageprep.com/](http://www.catholicmarriageprep.com/)
- Family Ministries Archdiocese of Chicago
Adult Faith Formation

The following list represents some of the resources being used by our parishes to for adult faith formation. You may want to review these resources in light of the Evaluation Tool found below.

Faith Formation


These books are ideal for small group discussion. Each chapter comes with a series of questions that encourages reflection and discussion.

- Catholic Updates
- Check out the long list of books available from [Dynamic Catholic](https://www.dynamiccatholic.com). Many of their books are available for free with shipping & handling charge.

Social Justice


This book is ideal for small group discussion. Each chapter comes with a series of questions for reflection.

Bible Study

- The Word Among Us – Subscription and online (https://wau.org)
- *Little Rock Scripture Study* ([https://littlerockscripture.org/](https://littlerockscripture.org/))
- Jeff Cavins Bible Study – Ascension Press ([click here](https://www.ascensionpress.com/))
- *Walking with God: A Journey through the Bible*. Ascension Press ([click here](https://www.ascensionpress.com/))

Sacraments

- Lectio Eucharist. Lighthouse Catholic Media ([click here](https://www.lighthousecatholicmedia.org/))

General Evangelization and Catechesis

- *Symbolon: The Catholic Faith Explained*. Augustine Institute Lighthouse Media ([click here](https://www.augustineinstitute.org/))
- Cursillo
- Alpha
Pre-school Catechesis


- (Print resource) God Made Me and God Made Everything: print resources designed to nurture the faith lives of children ages 3-5. (Loyola Press - https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/early-learning/god-made-me-and-god-made-the-world)

- (Online Resource) Messy Family Project: https://www.messyfamilyproject.org/about/ (You may need a membership to search)

- The Strong Catholic Families Resource: Taking a Family Faith Inventory.

- (Online Resource) While this one is not Catholic, but has good resources... for building healthy families. https://keepconnected.searchinstitute.org/understanding-ages-and-stages/ages-3-5/ As you view this page, you will see links to the intellectual, emotional, physical, social and spiritual - these links offer practical suggestions to nurture growth. See below for the snapshot of the spiritual link.
Evaluation Tool for Sacramental Preparation and Catechetical Resources

Does the resource....

Engage:
• employ age-appropriate language and examples?
• employ developmental-appropriate language and examples?

Fulfill Key Tasks
• promote knowledge of the Faith (Holding on to the Faith)
• promote knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments
• direct us to live a moral life – moral formation in Jesus Christ
• teach us how to pray in Christ
• prepare us to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church
• lead us to take on a Missionary attitude – call us to be witnesses in word and in action

Lead to:
• A deeper, personal relationship with Jesus
• Living a sacramental life
• A desire to work for justice

Follow Norms and Criterion of Presentation:
• centred on the person of Jesus Christ, leading to the Trinity
• a proclamation of the Good News... centred on the gift of Salvation, promoting a message of liberation
• ecclesial in character reflecting its historic nature; is realized within “the time of the Church”
• expressed in a way that is understood in this time and place (enculturation) because the Good News is destined for all peoples
• offers a comprehensive message, with its own hierarchy of truth. It is this harmonious vision of the Gospel which converts it into a profoundly meaningful event for the human person