

# Households of Faith: Intergenerational Gathering

## Session Plan

2-Hour Model

**Note:** This plan describes a two-hour intergenerational gathering that could take place near the opening of the *Faith First* religion program year. It is an opportunity for parents or other caregivers to gather with the children and to reflect on the meaning of being a household of faith.

Refer to the guidelines for preparation and planning recommended for catechist workshops given on page 56. Remember to prepare facilitators in advance for the role they will play.

**Theme:** Becoming stronger households of faith

**Goal:** To reflect on the meaning and importance of sharing faith as families

### Workshop Materials

Provide the following materials for each table:

- Bible, candle, and crucifix
- Index cards
- Paper and pens or pencils
- Art materials for making crosses

## Part 1

45 minutes

### What Is Faith?

#### Introduction

- **Welcome.** Gather the participants in intergenerational groups at tables. Welcome the large group and thank them for attending. State the goal of the gathering.



- **Pray.** Invite everyone to stand. Invite the cantor to lead an opening hymn with the group. Project the lyrics for all to see or prepare a handout for the lyrics. Lead an opening prayer in your own words. Ask all to be seated for a proclamation of Scripture. Ask a reader to proclaim Hebrews 11:1, 8–16, which is about the faith of the ancients.
- **Break the Ice.** Invite the participants at the table groups to introduce themselves to one another by stating their name and one positive fact they would like others to know about their family.

#### Table Sharing

Ask table facilitators to lead the following process:

- **Proclaim.** Begin by reading again a key passage (Hebrews 11:8) from the reading just proclaimed.
- **Dialogue.** Lead a table dialogue, using such questions as the following:
  - What does it mean “to take something on faith” or “to have faith” in something or someone?
  - Why was Abraham willing to go to a strange place and leave behind all that he knew?
  - What difference does it make to walk by faith as a family?

- **Conclusion.** Conclude with a short doctrinal message such as this:

The ancient Hebrews gradually came to understand that God was in their midst guiding them to a land of promise. They came to understand that God had extended an invitation to a covenant relationship of love and fidelity and that Abraham accepted this offer. It is the same offer that God makes to each of us. When we accept God's offer of everlasting friendship at Baptism, we become members of God's family and heirs to all that he has promised—his free gift of salvation, merited for us through Jesus Christ. The faith-filled lives we live, as individuals and as families, are expressions of our gratefulness for the gift we have been given.

## **BREAK** · 15 minutes

## **Part 2**

1 Hour

## **Households of Faith**

### *Family Activity: Making Crosses*

- **Introduction.** Remind the families that the cross is the sign of our salvation and of our Christianity. Every Christian home should have a cross hanging in a place where it can be seen by all. Tell individual families to work together on this activity.
- **Art Media.** Place a variety of art media on a long table at one side of the room. Use two tables if you have a large number present. Invite the family member(s) to choose art media to create a cross that will remind them to put faith first throughout the year.
- **Process.** Give the participants at least 20 minutes to complete their crosses. Invite participants to share their crosses with their table groups and then place them in the middle of the tables where they are sitting.



## *Faith Choice*

Ask table facilitators to lead this process:

- **Strengthening families.** Ask each member of the group to reflect silently on how their family can improve the ways they show that they are a true household of faith. Then invite family groups to tell one another about their reflections.
- **Faith Choice.** Remind the whole table group of the importance of answering the call of the Gospel by making a faith choice. Ask each participant to reflect on and write (or, for younger participants, draw) what they are going to do on an index card. Invite all who are willing to share their faith choice with the group to do so. Ask all the participants to take their faith choice home and to follow through on it during the next week.

## *Closing*

- **Final Reminders.** Remind the group of the title of the children’s curriculum being used in the parish—*Faith First*. Tell them that this title reminds all of us of the importance of keeping our Christian faith at the forefront of our lives at home, in our workplace,

and when we are at play. Our faith affects everything we do.

- **Faith Choices.** Remind all participants to follow through on their faith choice during the week. Encourage families to discuss the progress of their faith choices at the end of the week.
- **“With My Family” pages.** Remind parents that children also make a faith choice each week as part of the *Faith First* curriculum. Tell them to ask their children about these choices as well, and to use the “With My Family” pages that they will receive each week. These pages are a way of extending today’s reflection into the weeks to come.
- **Announcements.** If another large assembly session is already planned, mention the date.
- **Pray.** Invite all to stand for a closing prayer. Use the words of Hebrews 13:20–21. Lead the group in a sign of peace and invite the cantor to lead the closing hymn.

Invite everyone to remain for refreshments and conversation. Remind them to take their crosses home and to hang them where their children will see them.



# *Introduction to* Faith First *Unit Themes*

Four ninety-minute sessions are provided on the following pages to help you introduce the four unit themes of *Faith First Legacy Edition* to adults. Ideally, you would offer these sessions just before the children begin their study of each unit. While junior high students will be exploring a single theme more intensely each semester, their parents certainly could benefit from these workshops and should be encouraged to attend.

The four sessions, which correspond to the unit themes, are:

Session 1: We Believe

Session 2: We Worship

Session 3: We Live

Session 4: We Pray

Each session has two goals:

- To offer parents and other caregivers an adult reflection on the themes the children will be studying
- To preview for them the particular aspects of these themes that the children will be studying at each grade level

The following general background information provides suggestions for setting up each of the four sessions.

## *Preparation Checklist*

- Follow the same preparation guidelines given on page 56 for catechist workshops.
- Encourage parents to bring their children's books to the session. Have some extra copies available of each grade level for parents who may forget them.

## *Workshop Environment*

- Follow the same guidelines for environment given on page 56 for catechist workshops. The emphasis on welcome and hospitality is especially important when families are present.
- Make sure that your team has the room arranged and refreshments prepared ahead of time. Have nametags and a materials packet available for each family. Be sure to include a copy of the calendar for the upcoming year. Seat parents at tables of six or eight and begin on time.

## *The Importance of Welcome*

- Make sure that you are available before each session to greet parents and caregivers yourself as they arrive.
- Always begin on time. Begin by extending some words of welcome and explaining the purpose of the workshop session.