



GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

#249 - November 2025

A Best Practice: Some Technology Ideas

During a recent course exploring technology in adult faith formation, the participants – at the closing – were invited to reflect on the reality of their parish and respond to the question:

What three things could your parish do technologically which would enhance people's faith growth, deepen people's quest for spirituality and community today, be available to people?

Listed here are some of their responses. As you read them, you will see the diversity of each parish ... which, of course, will be true for your parish. One size doesn't fit all! What works, what is needed will differ from parish to parish.

Hopefully, these thoughts and suggestions might spark ideas for you in your own parish and/or (arch)diocese.



Carol Werling from **Cincinnati, Ohio** responded:

- The first thing I think would be of great value is a Question-and-Answer blog. Some people are afraid to ask questions in person or in front of a group. If people could send a question about Catholicism to a designated parish email, then have the question posted anonymously under "Q&A of the Week" with an answer with suggested readings, bible verses, etc. to support the answer. This would be an opportunity for others to see the answers to a question they may also have or to learn about it in a way they never knew or thought of.

- It would be helpful to post the daily Scripture readings with a short reflection. There could be a Daily Mass Reflection area on the Parish website. It would be one approach to help people reflect on additional passages from Scripture as well as uniting people with the worldwide church who is hearing those same readings.
- What about the idea of an online Sacrament Preparation program conversation group. Staff and parish leaders would be able to suggest questions, resources and possible short videos for parishioners to watch. As the questions are discussed online, facilitated by a staff member or parish leadership person, people would deepen their understanding and share their faith with others. This would be providing faith growth opportunities without always making a trip to the parish for (another) meeting. It also meets people where they are: they enter the conversation boards on their time rather than on a set schedule which might be inconvenient for their family and work schedules.



Mike Raymer from **Louisville, KY** suggested:

- We are already doing this because of COVID-19, but we continue to provide live-streaming services. Live streaming for parishes that do not offer it currently can make worship accessible to those who cannot attend in person, such as the elderly, those with health issues, or people traveling. This ensures everyone can participate in the community's spiritual life.

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- We also have a mobile app that is not utilized as it could be. So, we could have another roll-out event for the parish app and go over its features and benefits for staying in touch. The app has many benefits, including
 - daily devotionals
 - prayer reminders
 - event notifications
 - a platform for parishioners to connect and share prayer requests
- We offer Bible studies and prayer groups, but we could also move some of them online (or begin new ones online). During COVID, another youth minister did weekly meditative prayer via Zoom and said people loved the prayer opportunity. So, we could offer virtual prayer groups using Zoom or Microsoft Teams because it would help maintain a sense of community and provide spiritual support, especially for those who may feel isolated.
- When I was working on our parish site I looked at the sites of successful Christian churches. They had:
 - videos
 - testimonials
 - many ways to connect
 - downloadable resources
 - small groups for cancer survivors
 - small groups for recovering alcoholic
 - small groups were single mothers or divorced parents

Their programming – and their website - showed that they were living their faith.



Andrew O'Flynn from **Brisbane, Australia** recommended:

- Our pastor (or other staff or parish leadership) could do a weekly Fireside Chat. It could be filmed by young people from the parish (even grade schoolers).
- Solicit prayer intentions through a FrontPage. Have, too, a FrontPage listing parish services, contact numbers. List the good things which are happening so that functions are less by Nods and Winks. The FrontPage could be a place of posting local personalities, contributions and giftedness.
- The Brisbane diocese conducts on-line adult faith formation. This has been advertised but it needs more attention. It needs a profile from persons who have participated. Even our Lenten study group could post the fruits of its reflections. Ballarat, the central city of the diocese, hosts websites for all the parishes.



Brendan Steven from **Toronto, Canada** mentioned:

- I think you could be clever in using technology as a way to bring people in. For instance, if you had a beautiful, old historical Church building, you could record a video giving a tour, and use that as an invitation to bring people to a workshop on sacred art, for instance. You just have to figure out what the connection is that makes the technological solution a true invitation into physical space and community.

Think about short video clips of certain parts of the mass, an explanation of the stained glass windows, statues in the church, etc.

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- I think my parish could begin recording faith formation sessions, and sharing those recordings with parishioners who are unable to attend. Though they miss out on the key community building and small group discussions aspects of those programs, it would be helpful for them to get a sense of the content.
- We could use technology to bring in speakers virtually who we otherwise could not afford. By having a well-known speaker join over Zoom and give a presentation, we could then have a facilitated session within the community, and get the full value of in-person conversation.
- We could launch a faith formation newsletter to support the ministry leaders of our parish. We could share reflections, videos, and other content to help them develop as leaders. We could also include faith reflection resources for them to use among their own ministry teams. For instance, questions for conversation, Scripture passages for opening prayer, etc.



A Few Other Ideas You might want to Implement

- [3 Modern Methods to Accept and Share Prayer Requests](#)
- [Pros and Cons of Live vs. Delayed Church Video Streaming](#)
- [Use Technology to Reach Out to Homebound People in Your Parish](#)
- [Using Digital Technologies for Faith Formation](#)
- [Practicing Ministry in Digital Spaces](#)



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Additional ideas for Adult Faith Formation Planning and Best Practices can be found in:

- *Deepening Faith: Adult Faith Formation in the Parish*
<https://www.litpress.org/Products/4652/Deepening-Faith>
- *Guided by the Directory for Catechesis: Transforming the Vision and Practice of Parish Catechesis*
<https://twentythirdpublications.com/products/guided-by-the-directory-for-catechesis>
- Lifelong Faith Training: <https://www.lifelongfaithtraining.com/>
- Lifelong Faith: <https://www.lifelongfaith.com/>
- Seasons of Adult Faith website: <http://adultfaith.weebly.com/>
- The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation:
https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/seasons_of_aff_-_journal_special_issue.pdf