



*Foundation 4*

**FORMATION**

## Introduction



Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you”.

1 Peter 3:15

In the Scriptures we see in the life of Jesus that the formation of His followers to grow in discipleship and enter into His mission is central.



Through His words and deeds Jesus teaches His disciples how to interpret Scripture (Luke 24:25-27), how to pray (Matthew 6:5-14) and to be attentive to the interior life (Mark 7:14-23).

He also teaches His Apostles vigilance in the spiritual life (Matthew 24:42-44; Mark 13:33; Luke 12:40), about the moral life (Matthew 5:21-29), the importance of forgiveness (Mark 11:25), and how to respond pastorally in mission (Mark 2:15-17; Matthew 9:10).

Our conscious decision to place the Great Commission of Jesus at the centre of our parishes' identity and action means discerning and enacting new ways to provide Christian formation that will enable our communities and parishioners to grow in Christ as missionary disciples. Formation of our hearts, minds and wills sustains the journey of faith by enabling us to know Christ better and live our discipleship more fully.

The process of evangelisation is rarely instantaneous or momentary but more often a gradual and lifelong process of conversion to Jesus Christ as a disciple on mission. To be a disciple is to be a learner who sits at the feet of Jesus, grows in faith and understanding over time, and is sent to witness and convey to others the truth of God's love in Christ: “[a]lways be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).





Joseph von Führich,  
Der Gang nach Emmaus  
c. 1837, The Yorck Project

Again, the *kerygma* or ‘Great Story of Jesus’ is at the heart of Christian formation. This is the proclamation of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection as the revelation of God’s saving love and mercy. Pope Francis notes, “[w]e must not think that in catechesis the *kerygma* gives way to a supposedly more ‘solid’ formation. Nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful, and wisdom-filled than that initial proclamation. All Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the *kerygma*”.<sup>1</sup>

This formation in the Gospel also takes place **in the context of Christian community**, as we are accompanied by others on the journey with Christ, formed by ongoing encounters with Christ in His Word and sacraments, shaped by the witness and testimony of others, enriched by a life of prayer and daily spiritual practices, and by living Jesus’ mission in service to the needy.

It is by a culture of ongoing formation in local parishes and communities that people grow in their faith in Christ and are equipped to share His person and message with others, becoming theologically literate and spiritually well-formed.

## Types of Formation

Jesus spent a great deal of time forming the people who followed Him: discussing moral and social issues; teaching them how to pray; explaining the disciples’ duties to God and ‘Caesar’; instructing them on how to be in community together, how to serve people on the margins and witness to the mercy of God, to challenge social structures and to relate to people outside their community; healing disciples of their own wounds; and offering His friendship.

There are four kinds of formation Christian disciples need: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral.

- **Human formation** is about helping the disciple grow into a mature adult who has the virtues necessary to live his or her life to the full. Human formation can involve engaging psychology, habits and the virtues. These are important for discipleship and evangelisation as virtuous lives lead to holiness which draws others to its source, Jesus Christ.
- **Spiritual formation** helps the disciple to enter into the apprenticeship of prayer in which he or she experiences

<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 156.

true personal conversation with God, and introduces the disciple to traditions that can deepen this encounter such as retreats and pilgrimages. The spiritual nourishment of the disciple is essential to the mission of evangelisation for, “[t]o proclaim fruitfully the Word of the Gospel one is first asked to have a profound experience of God”.<sup>2</sup>

- **Intellectual formation** develops the faculty of reason that complements the gift of faith: they are “like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth”.<sup>3</sup> Catechesis and intellectual formation are essential in the Christian life including the study of Scripture and Tradition, growing knowledge of Catholic theology, and drawing also on other disciplines including philosophy, literature and the arts. It can deepen and enhance the disciple’s encounter with Jesus in Word and sacrament, deepen his or her discipleship, and provide resources when discipleship becomes demanding. When evangelising, reasonable explanations can remove intellectual barriers to people encountering Christ, as well as dispelling fallacies about the Catholic faith.

*“...to know His ‘mystery’, the kingdom of God proclaimed by Him, the requirements and promises contained in His Gospel message, and the paths that He has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow Him”.*

As Pope John Paul II shared, “[w]ithin the whole process of evangelisation, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given Him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavours to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted Himself: to know His ‘mystery’, the kingdom of God proclaimed by Him, the requirements and promises contained in His Gospel message, and the paths that He has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow Him”.<sup>4</sup>

- **Pastoral formation** is about how the disciple carries out the particular evangelising mission to which he or she is called, building up the body of Christ. Pastoral formation helps the disciple become adept in engaging others and inviting them into an encounter with Jesus through persuasive communication, sensitivity to the other, and insights into the dynamics of conversion.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Ubicumque et Semper*, 21 September 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* 1.

<sup>4</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae* 20.





## Discipleship Pathway

If conversion is a process and not instantaneous, then communities seeking to ‘make disciples’ can benefit from putting clear steps in place for people to walk and follow, **a path of discipleship through which people can grow**. As shared in the chapter on evangelisation, a ‘discipleship pathway’ identifies how we are seeking to provide opportunities that can help people to move through a process of spiritual conversion and maturity in our community. Formation is an important part of this pathway.

This means clearly communicating what people can do to grow in relationship with Jesus and the pathway in the parish that will help them grow in this relationship. For example, a pathway for parish evangelisation might begin with building up a culture of invitation in the community, and for people to be drawn into an encounter with the Gospel via an initiative such as Alpha or ChristLife, which explores life and the Christian faith. Following this initial encounter, participants can then be encouraged to join the organising team for such a course, or otherwise join a small group in the parish to connect more deeply with others in community and enter into deeper formation. They might join a small group Bible study in order to deepen the faith they have discovered. As a next step, the parish might then encourage participants to commit to active mission in the form of service to others; for example, to become involved in a parish ministry or share their God-given talents in social outreach to the wider community.



## Taking Steps to Strengthen Formation in our Communities

In supporting the formation and apprenticeship of the entire Christian life, parishes and communities can strengthen the formal ways in which the faith of disciples is enhanced and continuing formation is made accessible.

Below is a four (4) step process which your community may choose to undertake to **reflect** upon the place of formation in your identity as a community of disciples, **review** how that identity is being expressed in the actions and priorities of your community, **discern and decide** how God might be calling your community to strengthen that foundation, and to take particular **actions** with the help of the support and resources outlined in this Mission Plan.

This process can be led by the parish priest with his parish leadership team. Alternatively, priests seeking to strengthen their parish's foundations for mission are also welcome to engage in this process by attending a *Parishes for Mission* day and bringing with them their parish leaders. These days, offered regionally and online, will provide leaders with formation in mission, strategies to assess and strengthen foundations for mission, and practical ways to create and implement a vision for the community. For more details, visit [www.gomakedisciples.org.au](http://www.gomakedisciples.org.au) or contact the Parish Renewal Team at [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org) or on (02) 9390 5330.

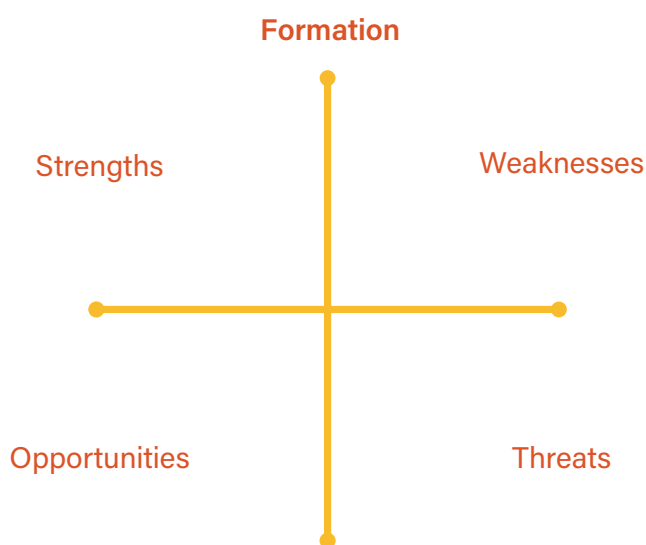
### *Step 1:* Reflect on Formation

- 1.1 We should begin with a reflection on the place of formation in the life and ministry of Jesus and the early Church. This reflection can include the following examples of Jesus' formation with His disciples:
  - Jesus provided intellectual formation to the disciples on the road to Emmaus by explaining to them how to read Scripture (Luke 24:13-35)
  - Jesus offered His disciples spiritual formation by teaching them how to pray (Luke 11:1-13)
  - Jesus provided human formation to His disciples by teaching them about the meaning of marriage (Mark 10:6-12)
  - Jesus provided pastoral formation, demonstrating service at the heart of leadership when He washed the feet of His disciples (John 13:1-17)

*Step 2:*

## Review Formation in your Parish

2.1 Again, a basic way of assessing the quality of formation in your community is to conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis of the formation currently undertaken in your parish, chaplaincy or movement. This exercise might be completed by your parish or leadership team, Parish Pastoral Council, RCIA, adult faith formation or other ministry groups as they seek to accompany people to maturity in Christ.



Once this brainstorming has taken place, and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to formation in the parish have been named, it is then possible to choose specific areas for response. No parish can be expected to address all of these concerns at once. The questions below will assist your parish to focus on areas where it can begin to practically strengthen and renew its dedication to formation of the Christian life.

1. What current strength in the area of formation can our parish most easily build upon?
2. What current weakness in formation would be the easiest one to fix?
3. What is the greatest opportunity in the formation of our people we could seize upon with the least amount of time and resources?
4. What is the most immediate or greatest threat we need to address in the formation of people as disciples on mission?

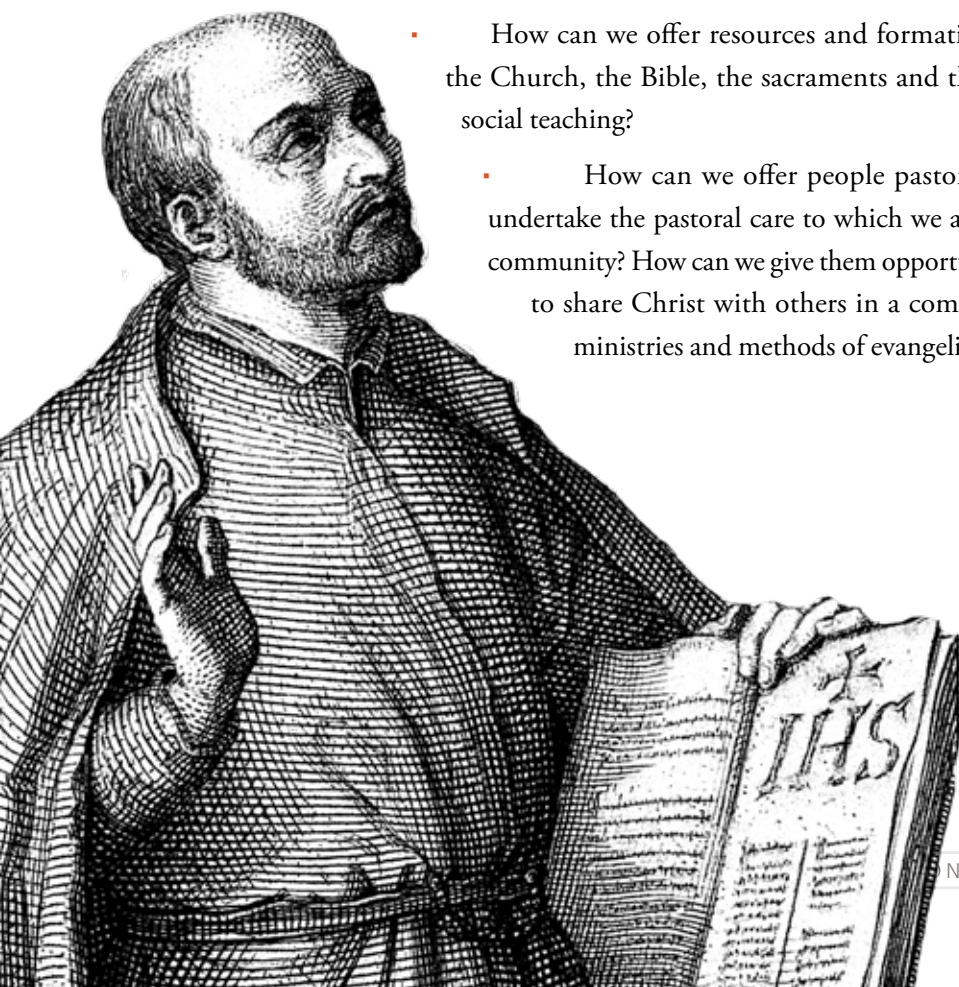


2.2 The questions below will also assist the conversation about formation within your parish, chaplaincy or community:

- Reflecting on the various opportunities for faith formation in your parish or community, which do you think warrants further attention so that the ‘Great Story of Jesus’ or *kerygma* is better or more deeply known?
- What are the small groups of formation that can be intentionally grown to promote and encourage a culture of learning in the wider parish community (e.g. Lenten, Advent, Scripture study groups)? How might these existing groups form part of a discipleship pathway in your community or be connected to other dimensions of parish life (e.g. as an opportunity for growth and community following RCIA)?

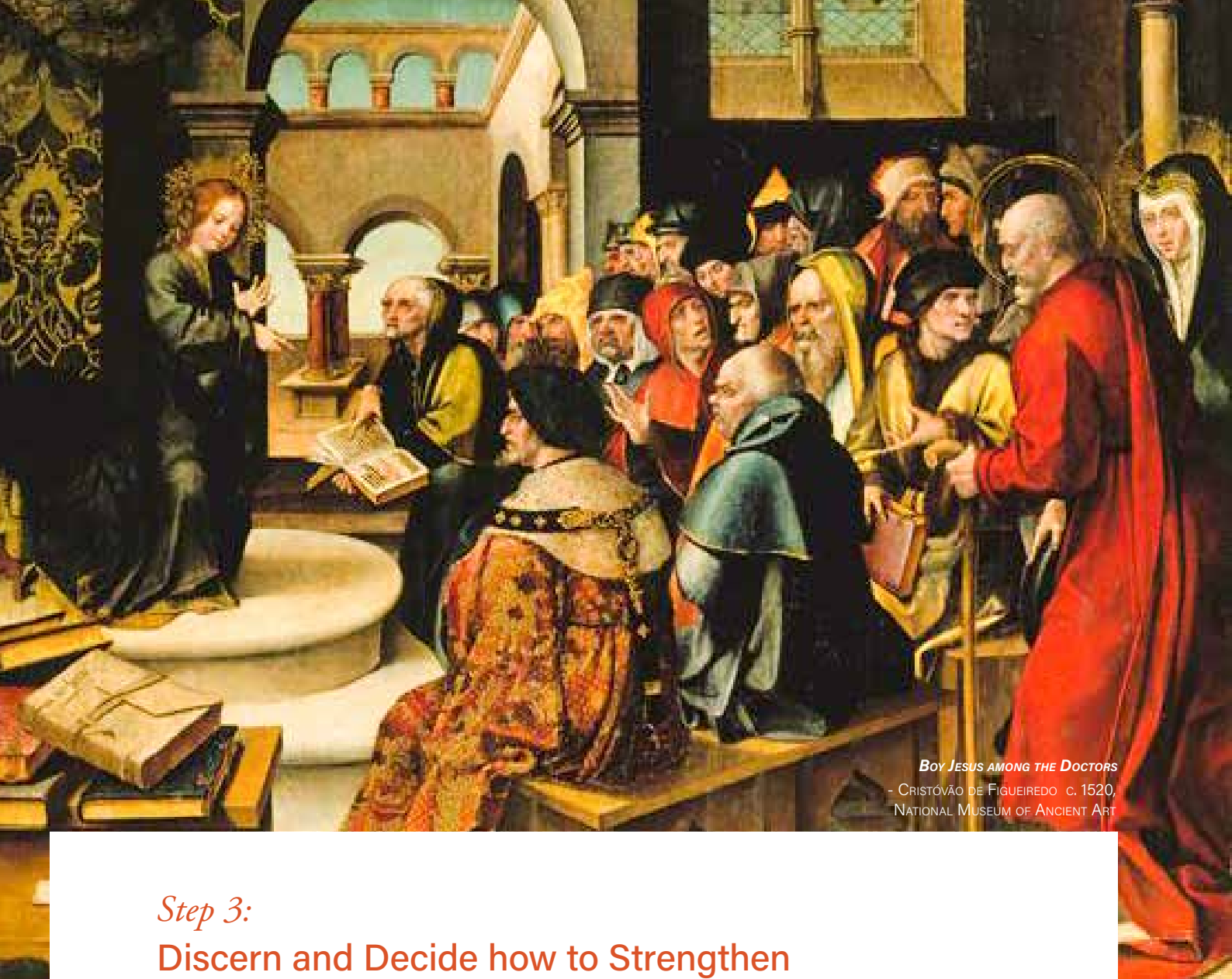
2.3 In keeping with the four kinds of formation Christian disciples need, consider whether your parish can offer any of the below to assist with such formation for the people in your community:

- How can we offer resources and formation on human sexuality, mental health, relationships, healthy psychology, and issues such as addiction? Can we ensure parishioners have access to counselling, formation programs, literature and services concerning these issues?
- How can we provide people with spiritual formation by offering experiences and opportunities by which they can learn to pray, deepen their prayer life, discover new ways to pray, and access the great schools of prayer and traditions such as *lectio divina*? How can we introduce parishioners to the great schools of spirituality that offer us centuries of wisdom on deepening our relationship with God, such as the Ignatian, Carmelite, Benedictine, and Marist traditions? Can we offer retreats and coordinate pilgrimages for the growth of our people?
  - How can we offer resources and formation on understanding the teachings of the Church, the Bible, the sacraments and the Mass, moral theology, and Catholic social teaching?
    - How can we offer people pastoral formation on how to discover and undertake the pastoral care to which we are called in our parish and in the wider community? How can we give them opportunities to develop skills and competencies to share Christ with others in a competent and attractive way through our ministries and methods of evangelisation?



Saint Ignatius of Loyola.  
Engraving by Friedrich Ludy after  
Eduard Jakob von Steinle.  
Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)





*BOY JESUS AMONG THE DOCTORS*  
- CRISTOVÃO DE FIGUEIREDO c. 1520,  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANCIENT ART

### *Step 3:*

## Discern and Decide how to Strengthen Formation in your Parish

- 3.1 By now, you should have a clearer sense of the place that formation has in your community and how this aspect of our identity as a Church is currently being expressed in the actions and priorities of your community. The next step is to discern and decide how God might be calling your particular community to strengthen its foundation of formation.
- 3.2 Discernment is not a process of simply choosing some good thing, but of trying to listen carefully to what God is asking us to do in our situation. Resources for a process of group discernment are available at [www.gomakedisciples.org.au](http://www.gomakedisciples.org.au). Alternatively, the Parish Renewal Team within the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation can facilitate this conversation and process of discernment for you at a *Parishes for Mission* day. For more details, contact the team at [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org) or on (02) 9390 5330.
- 3.3 Some things to consider in your conversation include:
  - a. What formation needs do we sense in our community?
  - b. Are there any particular areas of formation that need more attention than others?
  - c. Which of the strategies below is God calling us to implement to strengthen formation in our community?

Your parish or community may already be doing many of the good things outlined. However, there will also be actions that your community can take up to strengthen formation for discipleship as a foundation of your identity as a parish. Many of these actions will also be applicable to migrant chaplaincies, shrines and ecclesial movements in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

## Strategy 1:

### Establish a Small Group Culture

Providing formation in a small group context can be particularly effective because it means that **formation can take place in a more personal environment** in which all participants have a chance to ask questions and share ideas.

Small groups are vital to our growth because discipleship is not only about how we learn and grow as individuals but how we learn and grow together.

Small groups can be initiated in a parish-wide approach or by one person deciding to intentionally begin formation with others in their life. These groups provide a more intimate experience of Christian community and enable a depth of relationship through a more intense sense of belonging.

#### Resources

- A good way to start a ‘small group culture’ in your parish, where people can experience formation, community, and receive comprehensive training on how to lead a small group, is through the Alpha series. For more information about Alpha, contact Tania Rimac in the Parish Renewal Team at [tania.rimac@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:tania.rimac@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9390 5338. If you would like to establish a small group without implementing Alpha, contact the Parish Renewal Team at [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9390 5330
- A helpful small group resource, including a leader’s guide, is ‘Faith Circles’, available from the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong at [www.dow.org.au/media-resources/faith-circles](http://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/faith-circles)
- Another Catholic approach to small groups is the ‘Discipleship Quad’ resource from the Franciscan University, Steubenville, involving groups of four people who journey together as disciples through weekly gatherings of fellowship, learning and ongoing conversion. A guidebook can be downloaded for free at [www.steubenvilleconferences.com/discipleship-quads](http://www.steubenvilleconferences.com/discipleship-quads) as well as tips for launching such groups, templates for invitations and follow up by email, and guidance for small group coordinators

## Strategy 2:

### Provide Intellectual Formation

Continuing the small group format from Alpha, **offer ongoing formation using quality Catholic programs.** These include the series listed below.

#### Resources

- Word on Fire has produced outstanding series about the Catholic faith that can be used by parishes as formation including *Catholicism*, *The Mass*, *The Sacraments*, *The Mystery of God: Who He is and Why He Matters*, *Untold Blessings: Three Paths to Holiness*, *Conversion: Following the Call of Christ*, and *The Saints*. For more information and online access, visit [www.wordonfire.org](http://www.wordonfire.org) or purchase DVDs at [www.mustardseed.org.au](http://www.mustardseed.org.au)
- The St Paul Centre for Biblical Theology and Dr Scott Hahn have produced a range of biblical studies which can be accessed via streaming or DVD and are accompanied by a leader's guide for small group discussion. For more information, visit [www.stpaulcenter.com](http://www.stpaulcenter.com)
- Jeff Cavins has produced an 8-week course as an introduction to Scripture called 'Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible: The Bible Timeline'. This resource is available from Parousia Media at <https://store.parousiamedia.com/> or (02) 9651 0375
- Dr Brant Pitre has produced some outstanding biblical talks that focus on outlining the continuity of God's salvific plan in the Old and New Testaments. He offers series such as *The Origins of the Bible*, *The Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* and *A Biblical Explanation of the Mass*. Talks can be purchased and streamed at [www.catholicproductions.com/collections/brant-pitre/digital-video?sort\\_by=created-descending](http://www.catholicproductions.com/collections/brant-pitre/digital-video?sort_by=created-descending)
- Sycamore offers a range of free evangelisation and formation courses about the Christian faith and its relevance for life today. Sycamore is a tool for primary evangelisation but can also form part of a wider program of faith formation, catechesis or sacramental preparation. These courses are designed to be used in small groups. Each session in the courses involves a short film and time for discussion. For more information, see [www.sycamore.fm](http://www.sycamore.fm)
- 'Formed' by the Augustine Institute is a website that provides access to thousands of movies, children's programs, e-books, audio and parish study programs. Subscriptions available for individuals or parishes. For more information, go to [www.parousiamedia.com/formed](http://www.parousiamedia.com/formed)



**Action 1**

- ‘Evangelium’ offers a series of PowerPoint presentations on the Catholic faith based on the structure of the Catechism. Leader and participant guides are included. These resources can be used for RCIA or in a range of adult faith formation contexts. Available at [www.mustardseed.org.au](http://www.mustardseed.org.au) or (02) 9307 8350
- For assistance in establishing small groups for a formation series in your parish, contact the Parish Renewal Team at [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9390 5330

Promote **Catholic podcasts**, which provide intellectual formation in the Catholic faith.

## Resources

- *Episcopal Podcast* with Most Reverend Richard Umbers, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney. In the context of a fortnightly informal discussion with co-hosts and guests, this podcast brings awareness to the riches that constitute the Christian intellectual tradition, including philosophy, theology, history, the sciences, languages and the arts. Listen at <https://the-episcopal-podcast.captivate.fm>
- *This Catholic Life* with Peter Holmes is a show about ordinary Catholics having a relaxed, informal, and genuinely searching conversation about current issues, the challenges and hardships of contemporary life. Listen at [www.thiscatholiclife.com.au](http://www.thiscatholiclife.com.au)
- *Pints with Aquinas* with Matt Fradd explores the teachings of St Thomas Aquinas and their relevance to life today in a conversational manner. Listen at [www.pintswithaquinas.com/episodes](http://www.pintswithaquinas.com/episodes)
- *The Word on Fire Show* with Bishop Robert Barron is a weekly podcast exploring faith and culture. Listen at [www.wordonfireshow.com/category/podcasts](http://www.wordonfireshow.com/category/podcasts)
- *Clerically Speaking* with Fr Harrison Ayer and Fr Anthony Sciarappa. Two Catholic priests discuss matters of faith in an informative and entertaining manner. Listen at [www.clericallyspeaking.com](http://www.clericallyspeaking.com)
- *The Fr Mike Schmitz Catholic Podcast* looks at faith, pop culture, and headline reflections. Fr Mike Schmitz is the director of youth and young adult ministry for the Diocese of Duluth. Listen at <https://thefrmikepodcast.fireside.fm>

**Action 2**

## Strategy 2 (continued):

### Provide Intellectual Formation

Promote subscriptions to written and audio **commentaries and reflections on Scripture**. Follow the links provided to sign up for these resources.

Resources

- *Daily Scripture Reflections* with Bishop Robert Barron  
[www.dailycatholicgospel.com/sign-up-daily-gospel](http://www.dailycatholicgospel.com/sign-up-daily-gospel)
- *Bishop Barron's Sermons* podcast reflecting on the Sunday Gospel [www.wordonfire.podbean.com](http://www.wordonfire.podbean.com)
- *Scripture Reflections and Commentaries* by Fr Brendan Byrne SJ available at <https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/edition/scripture-reflections-and-commentaries>
- *Sunday Bible Reflections* by Scott Hahn  
[www.stpaulcenter.com/studies-tools/sunday-bible-reflections](http://www.stpaulcenter.com/studies-tools/sunday-bible-reflections)

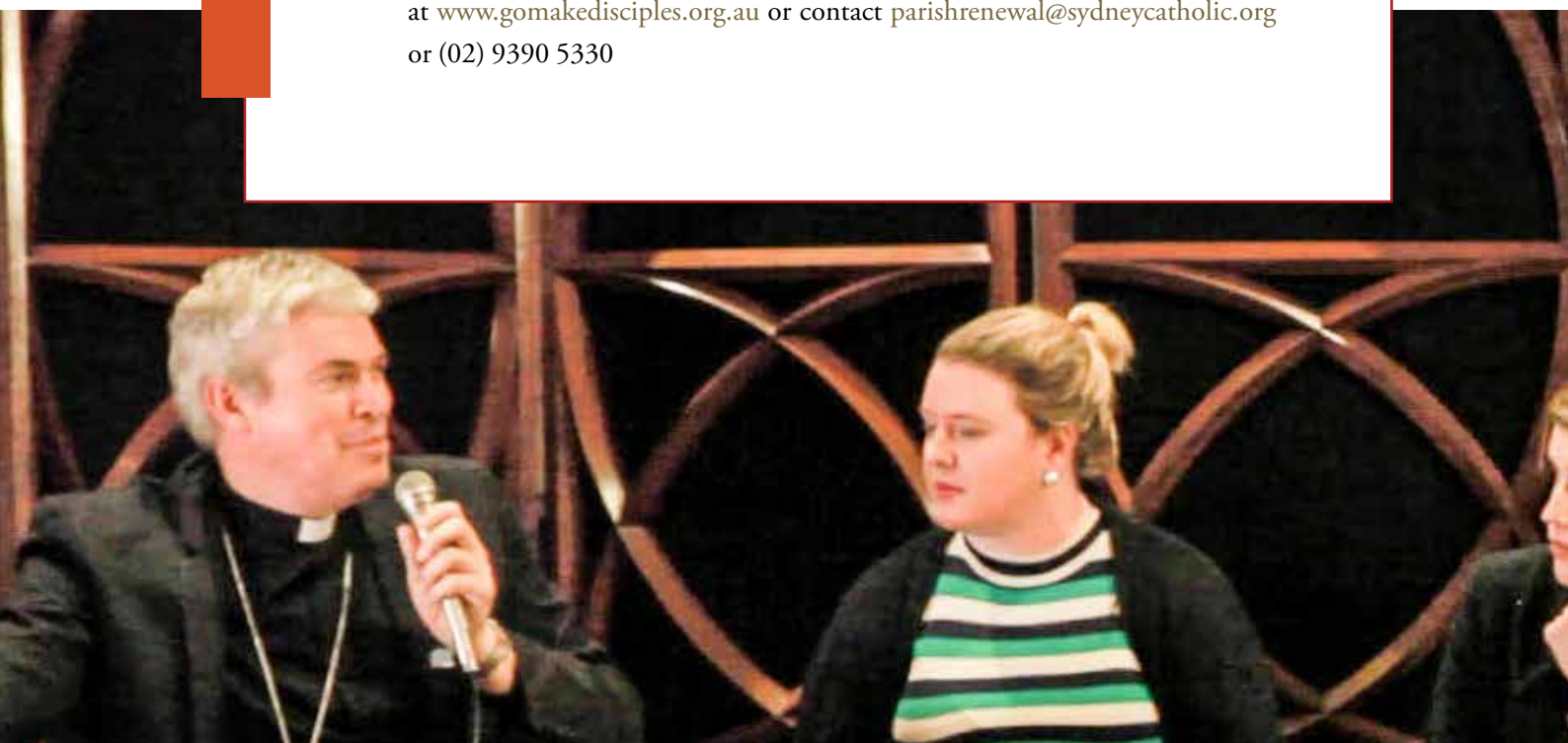
Attend **formation on a range of Scriptural, theological and pastoral topics** through the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation.

Resources

- Throughout the year, the Parish Renewal Team within the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation will host short courses and stand-alone talks on a range of topics drawing on the best speakers and thinkers in the Archdiocese and beyond. Guest speakers will include Fr James Mallon, Sherry Weddell, Dr Mary Healy, George Weigel, Prof Hayden Ramsay, Peter Holmes, Fr Jacques Philippe and others to be announced. For more information, sign up to the *Go Make Disciples* newsletter at [www.gomakedisciples.org.au](http://www.gomakedisciples.org.au) or contact [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9390 5330

Action 3

Action 4



## Strategy 2 (continued):

### Provide Intellectual Formation

Promote attendance at **events focused on formation** around a range of topics offered by outstanding Catholic speakers and partner organisations in the Archdiocese.

#### Resources

- ‘The Bishop’s Blend Breakfast Series’ for young professionals, an initiative of Bishop Richard Umbers. Email [bishopsblend@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:bishopsblend@sydneycatholic.org)
- ‘Scholarship at the Cathedral’ is a series of public lectures at St Mary’s Cathedral bringing together intellectuals from different backgrounds and interests to share and seek truth together on matters of faith and reason. For more information, visit [www.satcathedral.org](http://www.satcathedral.org)
- The Archdiocese of Sydney’s Justice and Peace Office can provide parishes and communities with formation on Catholic Social Teaching. For more information, visit [www.justiceandpeace.org.au](http://www.justiceandpeace.org.au) or contact Fr Peter Smith at [peter.smith@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:peter.smith@sydneycatholic.org) or 0408 613 709
- The Notre Dame Institute for Ethics & Society runs ‘QndA’, which draws politicians, priests and professors of different faiths and traditions to Notre Dame to thrash out (what should be) the hot issues of the day. It is about faith and reason in action. For more information, visit [www.notredame.edu.au/research/institute-for-ethics-and-society/public-engagement/qnda](http://www.notredame.edu.au/research/institute-for-ethics-and-society/public-engagement/qnda) or email [qnda@nd.edu.au](mailto:qnda@nd.edu.au)
- ‘Theology on Tap’ is a monthly event held by the Chaplaincy of the University of Notre Dame. Currently in its 12th year, people from all walks of life get together for a bit of food for thought and theology on tap. For more information, contact the Chaplaincy at [sydney.chaplaincy@nd.edu.au](mailto:sydney.chaplaincy@nd.edu.au)
- ‘Apologetics Online’ is a series of talks run by the Chaplaincy at the University of Notre Dame, exploring and defending the Church’s views on a range of controversial topics. For information, contact Br Reginald Mary Chua OP at [reginald.mary.chua@nd.edu.au](mailto:reginald.mary.chua@nd.edu.au)





## Strategy 2 (continued):

### Provide Intellectual Formation

Start a **book club to encourage spiritual reading and formation** with the aid of classics and engaging texts in the Christian spiritual life. Popular authors include Dr Peter Kreeft, C.S. Lewis and Fr Jacques Philippe. Some other titles recommended as a starting point and available through [www.mustardseed.org.au](http://www.mustardseed.org.au) include:

#### Resources

- On human formation: *Virtuous Leadership* by Alexandre Havard; *The Virtue Driven Life* by Benedict J Groeschel; *Non-Violent Communication* by Marshall B. Rosenberg; *Father Elijah* by Michael O'Brien
- On pastoral formation: *The Wounded Healer* by Henri Nouwen, *Divine Renovation* by Fr James Mallon, *Forming Intentional Disciples* by Sherry Weddell
- On spiritual formation: *Searching for and Maintaining Peace, Thirsting For Prayer or Nine Days to Rediscover the Joy of Prayer* by Fr Jacques Philippe; *Saints A Closer Look* by Thomas Dubay SM; *Story of a Soul* by St Therese de Lisieux; *An Introduction to the Devout Life* by St Francis de Sales
- On intellectual formation: *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis; *The Twelve Apostles* by Pope Benedict XVI; *Because God is Real* by Peter Kreeft; *Walking with God* by Jeff Cavins and Tim Gray



## Strategy 3:

### Provide Spiritual Formation

Complementing the liturgy and the sacraments of the Church, parishes should consider **forms of prayer and spiritual growth** in the parish including the practice of *lectio divina*, the meditative reading of Scripture, alone or with others; Eucharistic adoration; the Divine Mercy devotion; novenas; rosary groups; intercessory prayer; spiritual reading; and days and times of recollection. For more on each of these forms of prayer, visit the websites below.

#### Resources

- *Lectio divina*, an ancient practice of prayer with Scripture is explained at [www.jamberoobbey.org.au/prayer/lectio-divina-praying-with-the-sacred-scriptures](http://www.jamberoobbey.org.au/prayer/lectio-divina-praying-with-the-sacred-scriptures)
- A Holy Hour can be made before the Blessed Sacrament, with resources on how to pray during this time of Eucharistic Adoration available at [www.gomakedisciples.org.au](http://www.gomakedisciples.org.au)
- The Liturgy of the Hours (sometimes known as the Prayer of the Church or the Divine Office) is a tradition of praying the psalms, other Scripture and writings of the Church Fathers at intervals throughout the day. Prayers for each day can be found at [www.universalis.com/Australia](http://www.universalis.com/Australia)
- Novenas can be prayed for various intentions seeking the intercession of saints; a number of novena prayers are available at [www.ewtn.com/catholicism/devotions/novenas-75](http://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/devotions/novenas-75)
- A guide to praying the Rosary is available at [www.mycatholic.life/catholic-prayers/the-most-holy-rosary](http://www.mycatholic.life/catholic-prayers/the-most-holy-rosary)

Integrate the forms of prayer mentioned above into **parish team meetings and meetings of groups** within the parish, encouraging a culture of prayer in all the pastoral life and works of the community.

#### Resources

- Contact the Parish Renewal Team for a copy of prayers and blessings that can be used for this purpose in your community at [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9390 5330

Action 1

Action 2

## Strategy 3 (continued):

### Provide Spiritual Formation

#### Action 3

**Organise parish retreat days** which can provide an opportunity for spiritual formation of leaders and other parishioners, and can be seasonal or thematic. These days can include a time of shared prayer, input and reflection time, group discussion and spiritual conversations that encourage leaders in their baptismal vocation and the mission of the community they serve.

#### Resources

- The Parish Renewal Team will offer regional retreat days for parishes of Sydney. For more information, contact [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9390 5330
- Retreat centres offer retreat programs, silent retreats and spiritual direction. Centres in and around Sydney include:
  - Benedict XVI Retreat Centre at Grose Vale [www.benedictxvicentre.org.au](http://www.benedictxvicentre.org.au)
  - Benedictine Abbey at Jamberoo [www.jamberooabbey.org.au/retreats](http://www.jamberooabbey.org.au/retreats)
  - St Mary's Towers Retreat Centre at Douglas Park [www.towersretreat.org.au](http://www.towersretreat.org.au)
  - St Joseph's Retreat Centre at Baulkham Hills [www.stjosephscentre.org.au](http://www.stjosephscentre.org.au)
  - Mt Carmel Retreat Centre at Varroville [www.mtcarmel.com.au](http://www.mtcarmel.com.au)
- *The Catholic Weekly Retreat Guide* is an annual guide to retreat venues and events. Visit [www.catholicweekly.com.au/retreats-magazine-2019](http://www.catholicweekly.com.au/retreats-magazine-2019)
- The Cursillo Movement offers retreat weekends. Visit [www.cursillo.asn.au](http://www.cursillo.asn.au) or contact Fr Graham McIntyre for more information regarding upcoming offerings on (02) 9602 1083

#### Action 4

**Organise a pilgrimage together.** This can be undertaken locally, to Mary MacKillop Place or Eileen O'Connor's tomb at Coogee, overseas to a significant Christian site such as the Holy Land or St Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, or an ancient Christian pilgrimage such as the Camino in Spain.

#### Resources

- Join the Archdiocese of Sydney's annual 'Walk with Christ' pilgrimage on the Feast of Corpus Christi. For information, sign up to the *Go Make Disciples* newsletter at [www.gomakedisciples.org.au](http://www.gomakedisciples.org.au)



- Make a pilgrimage to a local shrine. “Going on pilgrimage to the shrines is one of the People of God’s most eloquent expressions of faith ... In the shrines, indeed, our people live out their deep spirituality, that piety which has for centuries shaped the faith with simple but very meaningful devotions”.<sup>5</sup> The Shrine is the “house of forgiveness, where each person meets the tenderness of the Father who has mercy on all, excluding none”. There are a number of shrines in our Archdiocese, such as:
  - Shrine to Our Lady of Mt Carmel, Waterloo. The church was established by Archbishop Polding in 1859. Interestingly, Archbishop Polding’s ship had been caught in a storm off Fremantle and he had promised to build a church on the highest hill he could find and dedicate it to Our Lady of Mt Carmel in exchange for their safety
  - The Church of St Peter Julian in Haymarket is a Shrine of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The Blessed Sacrament Fathers sought permission to provide Exposition and the Sacrament of Penance at this shrine [www.stpeterjuliansydney.com/about-us](http://www.stpeterjuliansydney.com/about-us)
- Other important places of pilgrimage within the Archdiocese include:
  - The tomb of Australia’s first saint, Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop who tirelessly served the poor and marginalised in Australia. For more information, go to [www.marymackillopplace.org.au](http://www.marymackillopplace.org.au). To organise a visit to MacKillop Place, contact Deborah Cho, Central Events Coordinator, at [event.bookings@mmp.org.au](mailto:event.bookings@mmp.org.au) or (02) 8912 4814
  - The tomb and museum of Servant of God Eileen O’Connor at Coogee. Eileen O’Connor suffered from chronic spinal tuberculosis and was unable to stand or walk for most of her life. She co-founded Our Lady’s Nurses for the Poor which performs a unique ministry of care for the sick, poor and disadvantaged. Eileen died at 28 years of age. The cause for her canonisation has been opened by the Vatican’s Congregation for the Causes of Saints. For more information about visiting Our Lady’s Home at Coogee, the Feast Day Mass and prayers held annually on 10 January, or to book an appointment to visit, contact Monica O’Connell on (02) 9665 6331
  - The Cathedral Church and Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Mother of God, Help of Christians (known locally as St Mary’s Cathedral) is the Cathedral church of the Archdiocese of Sydney [www.stmaryscathedral.org.au/about-us](http://www.stmaryscathedral.org.au/about-us)

<sup>5</sup>Pope Francis, General Audience, 21 January 2016.



Paul Newton,  
St Mary of the Cross MacKillop

Action 4

- St Patrick's Catholic Church at Church Hill is an important parish in the history of Sydney. According to tradition, St Patrick's is the site at which Catholics prayed before the Blessed Sacrament during a period in which the Catholics of Sydney had no priests. Today, the Marist Fathers continue their ministry of mercy by offering Mass and the Sacrament of Penance frequently for the many people who visit the parish [www.stpatschurchhill.org](http://www.stpatschurchhill.org)
- Parishes may like to consider participating in the Parish Support Pilgrimage Scheme, offered by Rome Pilgrimages in the Archdiocese of Sydney. Embarking together on a pilgrimage to Rome, and staying at Domus Australia, is a great way for individuals within parishes to strengthen relationships, deepen their interior life, and journey with other parishioners as they learn more about our Catholic faith, history and tradition. This program also raises funds to assist with parish programs and development. For more information regarding the Parish Support Pilgrimage Scheme, visit [www.romepilgrimages.com](http://www.romepilgrimages.com) or contact [pilgrimage@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:pilgrimage@sydneycatholic.org) or 1800 753 959
- Pilgrimages to places such as the Holy Land and the Camino Santiago de Compostella can be arranged through Harvest Journeys. For more information, send an email via the website [www.harvestjourneys.com](http://www.harvestjourneys.com) or call 1800 819 156



**Strategy 4:****Provide Human Formation**

Action 1

**Counselling** can help people with the many issues they face in relationships, parenting, ageing, disabilities, addictions, domestic violence and mental health. Parishes can help their parishioners grow by promoting **access to these services**.

Resources

- CatholicCare have professional and compassionate teams for counselling, education, emotional support and practical strategies. They help individuals, couples and families through life's testing times. Consider referring your parishioners to them when needed. For more information, visit [www.catholiccare.org](http://www.catholiccare.org)
- CCareline is a free and confidential helpline for counselling, relationships, parenting, ageing, disabilities, addictions, domestic violence and mental health. CatholicCare's CCareline team is the first point of contact for people to access help. The caring team of professional advisors assist people over the phone with a wide variety of needs, and direct them to the services they require. CCareline is open 8am-6pm Monday-Friday. For more information or to access these services, visit [www.ccareline.org](http://www.ccareline.org) or call 13 18 19

Action 2

Provide various forms of human formation on **parenting and family life**.

- CatholicCare may be able to provide a Family Support worker in the parish to work with vulnerable families referred by the parish priest and others. Vulnerabilities within families can emerge for a variety of reasons and from a range of sources, including developmental challenges with children, addictions, domestic and family violence, mental health issues and marriage difficulties. Parishes can discuss the extension of a service such as this to their community by contacting Cathy Hammond at [cathy.hammond@catholiccare.org](mailto:cathy.hammond@catholiccare.org) or 0427 960 918
- CatholicCare offers fertility and pregnancy help for couples, families and young mothers who need practical support and drug-free fertility options. CatholicCare also offers free and confidential support to pregnant women, their partners and families, and accompanies younger mothers in locations around Sydney in their HOPE Program. For information about the HOPE program, visit [www.catholiccare.org/family-and-Individual-services/fertility-and-pregnancy/hope-bondi](http://www.catholiccare.org/family-and-Individual-services/fertility-and-pregnancy/hope-bondi). For information on fertility and pregnancy support, visit [www.catholiccare.org/family-and-Individual-services/fertility-and-pregnancy](http://www.catholiccare.org/family-and-Individual-services/fertility-and-pregnancy)





## Strategy 4 (continued):

### Provide Human Formation

Action 3

Provide formation and support concerning **the meaning of human sexuality**.

Resources

- The Life, Marriage and Family team, of the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation offers formation in Theology of the Body. For information about courses and resources, contact Steven Buhagiar at [steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org) or 0415 600 290
- 'Strive 21' is a free online 21-day porn detox program created by Matt Fradd and Covenant Eyes. This course requires 'accountability partners' and can be run in a small group context. For more information, contact Steven Buhagiar in the Life Marriage and Family team at [steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org) or 0415 600 290

## Strategy 5:

### Provide Pastoral Formation

Action 1

Equip leaders and parishioners to **integrate Christ-centred witness testimony** into the works and outreach of the parish. Hearing stories often about how people have encountered Christ, how this encounter has changed their lives, and how the Lord answers prayers and intervenes in circumstances is formative for those who hear this witness, encouraging growth and expectation of God's movement in one's own life.

The preparation of such testimonies can include a broad background on the personal journey to discipleship, the catalysts for change in this spiritual development, a focus on what made this conversion of life possible, inclusion of Scripture or stories that had particular meaning during this process, a description of the change experienced following a commitment to Christ and the influence of the Church community in this itinerary. Once a complete testimony is composed, this can be edited to a shorter version fit for use in suitable forums (e.g. during sacramental preparation, in small groups, RCIA, youth groups, or other key parish touchpoints).

Resources

- Refer to the chapter on Evangelisation on page 69 within this Mission Plan for a list of resources for developing and sharing personal witness

## Strategy 5 (continued):

### Provide Pastoral Formation

Sending your community members **to workshops and retreats on evangelisation** can help them to grow their understanding and practical skills to carry out the mission to which they have been called with sensitivity, insight and impact. The Parish Renewal Team will offer reflection days and workshops on the theology and practice of evangelisation that will assist with pastoral formation.

#### Resources

- ‘Ananias Training’ is a training course to equip Catholics to accompany others on their faith journey to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus. For information, visit [www.siena.org/ananias](http://www.siena.org/ananias). For orientation and associated resources, contact the Parish Renewal team on (02) 9390 5330 or [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org), who can coordinate these opportunities in collaboration with the St Catherine of Siena Institute. A modest fee to the Institute applies
- ‘Called and Gifted Training’ offers a process of formation to assist lay, religious and ordained apostles to discern their own charisms for the building up of the parish community and the Church. For orientation and associated resources, contact the Parish Renewal Team who can coordinate these opportunities in collaboration with the St Catherine of Siena Institute at [parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:parishrenewal@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9390 5330. A modest fee to the Institute applies

Action 2

Offer pastoral formation to parishioners to be **volunteer chaplain assistants** to assist those in hospital, prisoners and those reintegrating into society, the homeless, the aged, the sick and the dying.

#### Resources

- CatholicCare can assist parishes in the training of volunteer chaplains. To find out more, visit [www.catholiccare.org/community-services/chaplaincy-services](http://www.catholiccare.org/community-services/chaplaincy-services) or contact Fr Peter Carroll MSC at [peter.carroll@catholiccare.org](mailto:peter.carroll@catholiccare.org) or 13 18 19

Action 3

Consider sponsoring some of your ministry leaders to attend the **Areté Centre for Missionary Leadership** course, ‘Foundations of Missionary Leadership’ which provides formation in the theology and practice of mission. For information, visit [www.aretecentre.org](http://www.aretecentre.org)

#### Resources

- For further details, refer to the chapter on Leadership within this Mission Plan on page 103

Action 4

Guerrino, c. 1641 - 1641  
Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the Well

## Strategy 5 (continued):

### Provide Pastoral Formation

Provide **formation to all serving in liturgical ministries**, including lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

#### Resources

- The Archdiocese of Sydney's Liturgy Office can help parishes establish liturgy teams and assist with other liturgical needs. For more information, visit [www.liturgy.sydneycatholic.org](http://www.liturgy.sydneycatholic.org) or contact the team at [liturgyassistant@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:liturgyassistant@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9307 8360

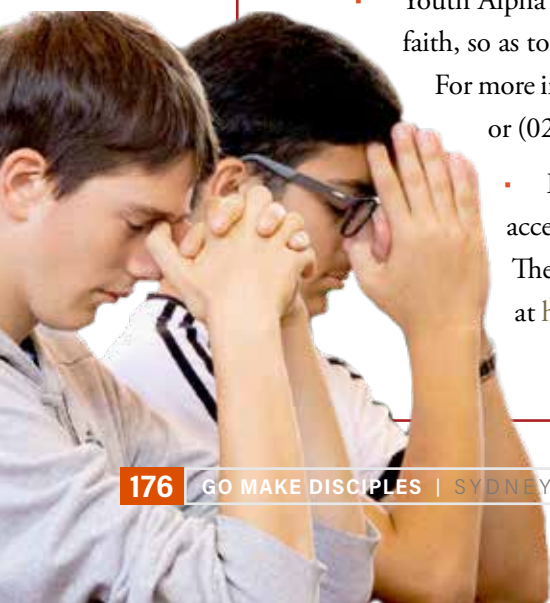
## Strategy 6:

### Provide Formation for Youth

The Sydney Catholic Youth (SCY) team is available to support your parish in building up young people, in faith and understanding by providing **resources, tools, programs and processes to mature young people in discipleship** and knowledge of our Catholic faith. Consider encouraging the youth of your parish to participate in the opportunities for formation below.

#### Resources

- Sydney Catholic Youth's annual 'Evangelisation School' brings together young people from parishes around the Archdiocese of Sydney for formation in the areas of evangelisation, leadership, community, faith and worship. For more information, contact Sydney Catholic Youth at [info@sydneycatholicyouth.org](mailto:info@sydneycatholicyouth.org) or (02) 9307 8152
- Youth Alpha is designed especially for young people, in the basics of Christian faith, so as to develop and nurture a relationship with Jesus and with each other. For more information, contact Tania Rimac at [tania.rimac@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:tania.rimac@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9390 5338
- Establish evenings of intellectual formation with material that is accessible to young people, such as 'Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible: The Bible Timeline' series. The resource is available from Parousia Media at <https://store.parousiamedia.com> or (02) 9651 0375

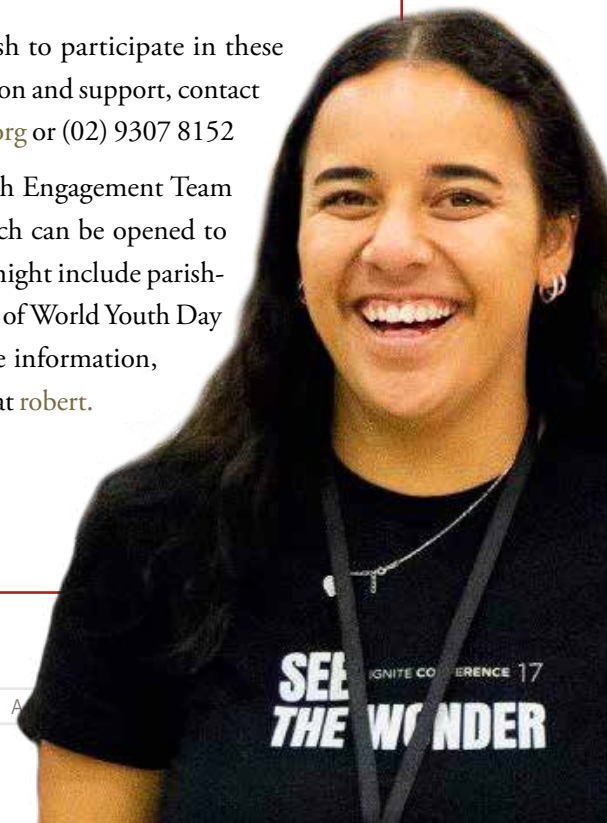




## Strategy 6 (continued):

### Provide Formation for Youth

- LifeChoice, together with the Life, Marriage and Family team and Sydney Catholic Youth, provides training for young adults in the areas of human life and sexuality, and the political realities in which the Church engages. For more information, visit [www.lifechoice.org.au](http://www.lifechoice.org.au) or contact the team via the online form at [www.lifechoice.org.au/contact](http://www.lifechoice.org.au/contact)
- Provide workshops for young people on how to discuss matters of faith, and how to prepare and deliver a personal testimony. As a follow-up, young people can be mentored by the Sydney Catholic Youth team to provide formation for their peers in formation initiatives in the parish
- Sumner House offers a year of live-in formation for young Catholic men of the Archdiocese of Sydney to discern their vocation to marriage, priestly or religious life. The program of formation is based on the four pillars of spiritual, intellectual, human and pastoral formation as articulated within *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and this Archdiocesan Mission Plan. For more information, visit [www.sydneycatholic.org/directory/listing/sumner-house](http://www.sydneycatholic.org/directory/listing/sumner-house) or contact Sydney Catholic Youth at [info@sydneycatholicyouth.org](mailto:info@sydneycatholicyouth.org) or (02) 9307 8152
- The Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) takes place every second or third year, and brings together youth from across the country for a shared and joyful experience of Christian discipleship. The Festival provides formation in various areas of the Catholic faith, given by bishops, priests, religious and lay leaders. For more information, contact Sydney Catholic Youth at [info@sydneycatholicyouth.org](mailto:info@sydneycatholicyouth.org) or (02) 9307 8152
- Consider sponsoring young people from your parish to participate in these Archdiocesan and national events. For more information and support, contact Sydney Catholic Youth at [info@sydneycatholicyouth.org](mailto:info@sydneycatholicyouth.org) or (02) 9307 8152
- Sydney Catholic Schools' Mission & Identity Church Engagement Team offers youth ministry nights for school students which can be opened to the youth of parishes or deaneries. For example, this might include parish-based formation and follow up sessions for participants of World Youth Day and the Australian Catholic Youth Festival. For more information, contact Dr Robert Haddad, Sydney Catholic Schools, at [robert.haddad@syd.catholic.edu.au](mailto:robert.haddad@syd.catholic.edu.au) or on (02) 9568 8116



## Strategy 7:

### Provide Formation for Children

Parishes can ensure that they provide **opportunities for children to grow spiritually** by teaching them to spend time in conversation with God.

#### Resources

- Some parishes may seek to engage with **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd**, a religious formation program for children aged 3 to 12 years that focuses on the child’s relationship with God and assists the child as he or she learns to follow Christ, the Good Shepherd. A typical session includes prayer, a presentation on Scripture or the liturgy, and time for children to work with materials from the presentation and ponder the mysteries presented. For more information, visit [www.cgsaust.org.au](http://www.cgsaust.org.au)
- ‘Beating Around the Burning Bush’ is a Facebook page created by the Communications team in the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation, dedicated to posts designed to teach children about the saints. For details, visit [www.facebook.com/BeatingAroundTheBurningBush](http://www.facebook.com/BeatingAroundTheBurningBush)
- Establish a Children’s Holy Hour. For further information, visit [www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/pea/children.htm](http://www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/pea/children.htm)
- Participate in the ‘One Million Children Praying the Rosary’ initiative. For further details, visit [www.aidtochurch.org/one-million-children](http://www.aidtochurch.org/one-million-children)

The **catechesis of children in state schools** can be encouraged through recruitment efforts throughout the year. This includes promotion of the ministry and leading catechists in Special Religious Education (SRE) through bulletins and parish communications, with university students and retirees, appealing also for catechist assistants who can accompany and transition into catechist teachers over time, and personal invitation to engage parishioners in the formation of Catholic children and families in state schools. Other initiatives to support such formation could include parish prayer cards for student recipients of SRE, collaboration with local youth ministries for the purpose of recruitment of student or young adult catechists, and conversation around volunteer retention.

Action 1

Action 2



**Action 2**

## Resources

- The Archdiocese of Sydney's Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) provides training and support for those taking up this ministry. For more information, resources and support visit <https://ccd.sydneycatholic.org> or contact your Parish SRE Catechist Coordinator who is supported by a Deanery CCD Faith Education Officer, or contact the CCD Parish Catechist Support office at [office@ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au](mailto:office@ccdsydney.catholic.edu.au) or (02) 9307 8330
- The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) Sydney offers further formation for catechists with an online series of videos on matters of Catholic faith. For access to these videos, visit the CCD Sydney YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/channel/UCpE0VVfzuzE9F12ngh-9KXA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpE0VVfzuzE9F12ngh-9KXA)

**Action 3**

Promote and create access to **print and digital faith formation resources** for children on prayer, the Bible, the saints, Mass, and virtues among other themes.

## Resources

- Access a range of children's books, parenting resources, and DVDs at [www.mustardseed.org.au](http://www.mustardseed.org.au)
- View the CCD Curriculum Support resource list online at <https://ccd.sydneycatholic.org/curriculum-resources-tweeting-with-god>
- 'Catholic Central' has created a collection of short videos for young people on topics of Catholic faith and spirituality. The videos are informative and entertaining. Visit [www.catholiccentral.com](http://www.catholiccentral.com) or view videos on their YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/channel/UC2kkKDrNirE5VR9JoWbDyiA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2kkKDrNirE5VR9JoWbDyiA)

**Action 4**

Parishes can review and strengthen the way that they provide **formation for parents and children** to prepare them well for reception of the sacraments.

## Resources

- For support and resources including the Archdiocesan Sacramental Program, contact the Sacramental Life and RCIA Coordinator within the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation at [becomingcatholic@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:becomingcatholic@sydneycatholic.org) or on (02) 9307 8477

**Strategy 8:****Provide Formation on Marriage, Parenting and Family Life**

Parishes can support the **formation of couples for and in marriage** through marriage preparation courses, and ensure awareness of marriage counselling services that are available.

## Resources

- The Archdiocesan Marriage Preparation Course, 'Of Life and Love', is conducted twice a year in March and October by the Life, Marriage and Family team within the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation. For more information, contact Steven Buhagiar at [steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org) or 0415 600 290
- The Messy Family Project is a ministry dedicated to Catholic parents and families, offering advice for Catholic families in their marriages and raising children of various ages. For more information, visit [www.messyfamilyproject.org](http://www.messyfamilyproject.org)
- Marriage preparation is offered by the Marriage Resource Centre and associated SmartLoving courses. For more information, visit [www.smartloving.org/engaged](http://www.smartloving.org/engaged) or email [info@marriagerc.org](mailto:info@marriagerc.org)
- CatholicCare also offers marriage preparation, marriage enrichment and counselling services. For more information, visit [www.catholiccare.org/family-and-Individual-services/counselling-and-relationships/marriage-and-relationship-education](http://www.catholiccare.org/family-and-Individual-services/counselling-and-relationships/marriage-and-relationship-education) or phone 13 18 19
- Conferences such as the 'Renaissance of Marriage' conference can also be engaged as an opportunity for local communities, to support and sponsor married couples for attendance and enrichment. For more information, visit [www.marriageresourcecentre.org](http://www.marriageresourcecentre.org)
- Fire Up Ministries provides speakers and courses focused on restoring marriages and family life, through teachings centred on Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body. For more information on their offerings in parishes, visit [www.fireupministries.com](http://www.fireupministries.com)
- CatholicCare is leading a project to establish a 'marriage catechumenate' for the support and enrichment of married life. This ministry will look to engage multiple programs and organisations and is to include Sydney Catholic Schools, university chaplaincies, marriage preparation providers and the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation. For further information, and updates, contact Meredith Lemos at [meredith.lemos@catholiccare.org](mailto:meredith.lemos@catholiccare.org) or 13 18 19
- The Culture Project offers formation for young adults and presentations to schools concerning life, marriage and family issues and can also provide this formation to young people in our parishes. For more information, visit [www.thecultureproject.com.au](http://www.thecultureproject.com.au)



## Strategy 8 (continued):

### Provide Formation on Marriage, Parenting and Family Life

Parish and school leadership can discuss **opportunities for parent formation** in Parish Pastoral Council meetings or other planning forums. This can include common formation on themes such as motherhood and fatherhood, Christian parenting, marriage enrichment, faith formation, prayer and healing, work and family life, mental health, pornography and other social concerns relevant to family life and young people.

#### Resources

- Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) Adult Faith Formation team provides Scripture study and other formation events such as tours of St Mary's Cathedral for parent-parishioners with students in SCS schools. Contact Dr Robert Haddad, Sydney Catholic Schools, at [robert.haddad@syd.catholic.edu.au](mailto:robert.haddad@syd.catholic.edu.au) or (02) 9568 8116
- Parishioners are invited to attend the myriad of opportunities Sydney Catholic Schools Family Educators offer parents, carers and families, to encounter their faith and strengthen their relationship with Jesus. These events, forums, activities and initiatives are often advertised in parish bulletins. Such opportunities include but are not limited to:
  - Parent retreat days that are open to parents and parishioners
  - Guest speakers regarding parenting and family well-being
  - 'Sacramental Craft' which are faith-based craft activities for all parents to celebrate feast days and sacraments
  - Parent pilgrimages and excursions to places such as Mary MacKillop Place, The Abbey at Jamberoo, and Rookwood and Woronora Cemeteries for the Stations of the Cross devotion
  - Collaborative outreach with St Vincent de Paul Society conferences to assist with different appeals, prepare food for Vinnies Night Patrol, Gift of Bread Program, visit nursing homes, and offer other opportunities for community service
  - SPaR (Stop, Pray and Reflect) are 10-15 minute gatherings offered to parents following the morning school drop off that provide an opportunity for prayer, community, and spiritual support
  - Playgroup/toddler activities give grandparents and carers an opportunity to connect with other members of the school and/or parish community, with the support and resources of the Family Educators

Action 2

For more information on the above, contact Dr Robert Haddad, Sydney Catholic Schools, at [robert.haddad@syd.catholic.edu.au](mailto:robert.haddad@syd.catholic.edu.au) or (02) 9568 8116. Alternatively, call one of Sydney Catholic School’s Church Engagement Education Officers on (02) 9568 8419 or email Elsa Manu ([elsa.manu@syd.catholic.edu.au](mailto:elsa.manu@syd.catholic.edu.au)), Mouna Roche ([mouna.roche@syd.catholic.edu.au](mailto:mouna.roche@syd.catholic.edu.au)) or Bernadette Bridle ([bernadette.bridle@syd.catholic.edu.au](mailto:bernadette.bridle@syd.catholic.edu.au))

Action 3

Families can also nurture a culture of faith formation in the home through **family prayers and traditions** (e.g. grace at meals, bedtime prayers), spiritual reading and conversation, through the presence of Christian music in the home and car, the stories of the saints, and by creating dedicated prayer spaces in the home, replete with crucifix, baptismal or other candles, rosary beads, holy cards, children’s prayer drawings or other items that create a sacred space and focal point for family prayer.

Resources

- CathFamily is an Australian website that provides resources, activities and support for Catholic families. For information and family activities, visit [www.cathfamily.org/about](http://www.cathfamily.org/about)

Action 4

The **Family Educator program** also supports the evangelisation, formation and wellbeing of parents and families, building relationships with school and parish families and engaging them in the life of faith. Initiatives, events and activities offered by Family Educators and communities include parent gatherings for prayer, opportunities for outreach, parent art sessions and prayer boxes in preparation for the sacraments, reflection mornings, and playgroups among others.

Resources

- For numerous ideas and strategies for family formation in faith, visit <https://reonline.sydcatholic.schools.nsw.edu.au>

## Strategy 9:

### Provide Formation for Men

Take steps to support the **spiritual growth and formation of men**. This can be supported by the groups and organisations below which can assist your parish in this vital outreach within our Church.

#### Resources

- The Archdiocese of Sydney's Maximus Men's Group gathers online to share faith and conversation at [www.facebook.com/maximusmensydney](http://www.facebook.com/maximusmensydney). For more information, contact Steven Buhagiar, Life Marriage and Family team, at [steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org) or 0415 600 290
- MenALIVE is a leading national Catholic ministry to men that offers resources, retreats, conferences and events such as the 'Father Factor series' that can be promoted and run for men in both parishes and schools. For more information, visit [www.menalive.org.au](http://www.menalive.org.au) or contact the team at [mail@menalive.org.au](mailto:mail@menalive.org.au) or (07) 3367 1402
- Australian Catholic Men's Fellowship. For more information, contact Steven Buhagiar, Life Marriage and Family team, at [steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org) or 0415 600 290
- Schoenstatt Men's League is an independent diocesan association of married and unmarried men within the Schoenstatt movement. For information, contact Jim Jankiewicz on 0432 487 927
- Alpha for Men. For more information or support on this program and application to men's ministry, contact Tania Rimac at [tania.rimac@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:tania.rimac@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9390 5338
- The 'Fathers of St Joseph's' men's group works toward the restoration, revitalisation and redemption of fatherhood in order that it may become what it has been created to be: an efficacious icon that directs the human family to God the Father. For more information, visit [www.fathersofstjoseph.org](http://www.fathersofstjoseph.org) or contact Steven Buhagiar at [steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org) or 0415 600 290
- 'Strive 21' is a free online porn detox program. For more information on this program, contact Steven Buhagiar, Life Marriage and Family team, at [steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org) or 0415 600 290
- 'Exodus 90' is an online ministry centred on prayer, asceticism, and fraternity that men can begin at any time of the year. For more information, visit [www.exodus90.com](http://www.exodus90.com) or contact Steven Buhagiar, Life Marriage and Family team, at [steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org) or 0415 600 290

## Strategy 10:

### Provide Formation for Women

A number of groups and movements offer **opportunities for Catholic women** to come together for friendship, support and formation in the Catholic faith. Encourage participation in some of the events and programs below for women within your parish and those looking for community and formation.

#### Resources

- The Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia offer retreats for women. For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/dominicansistersaustralia](http://www.facebook.com/dominicansistersaustralia) or contact Sr Cecilia Joseph OP at [sydney@op-tn.org](mailto:sydney@op-tn.org)
- Catholic Women's Mentoring offers a program by which women share resources, knowledge, and networks as companions and mentors, encouraging each other in their faith journey. For more information, visit [www.catholicwomensmentoring.org.au](http://www.catholicwomensmentoring.org.au) or contact [info@catholicwomensmentoring.org.au](mailto:info@catholicwomensmentoring.org.au)
- 'Leadership for Mission' program is a joint initiative of Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, Catholic Mission and the Australian Catholic University. Open to Catholic women aged between 25-35, this two-year, part-time program invites participants to grow in leadership in their chosen field. For more information, visit [www.nce.catholic.org.au/events/leadership-for-mission](http://www.nce.catholic.org.au/events/leadership-for-mission) or contact Sharon Brewer at [mission@nce.catholic.org.au](mailto:mission@nce.catholic.org.au) or 0466 013 534
- 'Sisterhood' is an initiative that seeks to provide a place of formation and support for women of all ages through regional small groups, retreats and events, national conferences, and resources. For more information, visit [www.sisterhood.org.au](http://www.sisterhood.org.au) or contact Karen Doyle at [kd@choicez.com.au](mailto:kd@choicez.com.au) or 0499 877 833
- 'The Genius Project' is a community and resource platform for Catholic women of all ages and stages of life who want to discover their unique gifts and mission and live the fullness of who God created them to be. It offers online courses, live virtual events, a membership site and a weekly podcast especially for Catholic women called 'The Genius Project', which can be found on all major podcast platforms. For more information, visit [www.geniusproject.co](http://www.geniusproject.co) or contact Karen Doyle at [karen@geniusproject.co](mailto:karen@geniusproject.co) or 0499 877 833
- The 'Women's Advent Retreat' day is offered every year by the Chaplaincy at University of Notre Dame Australia. The day sees many women gather at the Broadway campus for Mass, a time for reflection and Reconciliation, lunch, morning and afternoon tea, and inspiring talks. For more information, visit [www.notredame.edu.au/community/Ministry-Chaplaincy/sydney-ministry](http://www.notredame.edu.au/community/Ministry-Chaplaincy/sydney-ministry) or contact the Chaplaincy at [sydney.chaplaincy@nd.edu.au](mailto:sydney.chaplaincy@nd.edu.au)



## Strategy 10 (continued):

### Provide Formation for Women

- The Anima Women's Network aims, with an Antipodean voice, to educate and connect Catholic women, ministries, organisations and businesses who are bound together with promoting love, dignity, a culture of life and the feminine genius. For information, visit [www.animanetwork.org](http://www.animanetwork.org)
- The Catholic Women's League (CWL) is a charitable member organisation that aims to unite Sydney's Catholic women and coordinate with each other ways to support different groups and charities. Each year, CWL fundraises for a project and coordinates their own community and parish-based initiatives. For more information, visit [www.cwlsydney.org.au](http://www.cwlsydney.org.au) or contact the team at [cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org)
- The 'Good Samaritan Study and Mentoring (SAM) Leadership Program' provides an opportunity for Catholic women aged 30 years and over to receive mentoring and financial support while pursuing theological studies. For more information, visit [www.goodsams.org.au/2020/10/20/study-and-mentoring-leadership-program-focuses-on-womens-gifts](http://www.goodsams.org.au/2020/10/20/study-and-mentoring-leadership-program-focuses-on-womens-gifts) or email [samleadership@goodsams.org.au](mailto:samleadership@goodsams.org.au)

## Strategy 11:

### Provide Formation in Catholic Social Teaching

An encounter with the poor and marginalised is always an encounter with Christ. To grow in this area of our discipleship is to give witness to the mercy of Jesus Christ and continue His mission today to the poor, the marginalised and the vulnerable. Parishes can **engage formation in the area of justice, peace, ecology and development** as guided by Scripture through Catholic Social Teaching.

#### Resources

- The Justice and Peace Office can assist parishes and communities in formation and training, providing information and resources on a range of social issues, support to and networking of social justice groups and projects, offering workshops and speakers while working in collaboration with other agencies, dioceses and commissions. For more information, visit [www.justiceandpeace.org.au](http://www.justiceandpeace.org.au) or contact Fr Peter Smith at [peter.smith@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:peter.smith@sydneycatholic.org) or 0408 613 709



## Strategy 12:

### Engage with Communities of Formation

Promote the various **communities, movements and prelatures** in the Archdiocese of Sydney, that provide a place of formation and community for their members, each according to their own charism. Some of these groups provide formation outside their group as a means of outreach.

#### Resources

- The Neocatechumenal Way is a community which was formed in Madrid in 1964 and is dedicated to providing a path for those seeking initiation into the Catholic faith, as well as ongoing formation to the already baptised, to discover or more deeply appreciate the meaning of their Baptism and grow in maturity in the faith. For more information, visit [www.neocatechumenaleiter.org/en](http://www.neocatechumenaleiter.org/en) or contact [information@neocatechumenaleiter.org](mailto:information@neocatechumenaleiter.org)
- Disciples of Jesus Covenant Community is a charismatic community of disciples with a mission of evangelisation who live a common life of prayer, sharing and service. For more information, visit [www.dojcommunity.com](http://www.dojcommunity.com) or contact [dojsscommunity@gmail.com](mailto:dojsscommunity@gmail.com)
- The Emmanuel Community originates from France and its mission is to offer a path to all, to answer the call to holiness and proclaim Jesus in the world today. For more information, visit [www.emmanuelaustralia.com.au](http://www.emmanuelaustralia.com.au) or contact [emmanuelcommunitysydney@gmail.com](mailto:emmanuelcommunitysydney@gmail.com)
- Opus Dei is focused on living everyday tasks of work, family life, social relationships in a manner which serves God and others, while sharing the message that all are called to holiness. For more information, visit [www.opusdei.org/en-au](http://www.opusdei.org/en-au) or contact [info.au@opusdei.org](mailto:info.au@opusdei.org)
- Dominican Tertiaries are a community of lay men and women who seek to deepen their relationship with Jesus, by living their daily life in accordance to the Dominican way supported by the four pillars of continual prayer, study, common life and preaching the Good News to all those they meet. For more information, visit [www.op.org.au/about-the-dominicans/the-dominican-family/the-lay-fraternities-of-st-dominic](http://www.op.org.au/about-the-dominicans/the-dominican-family/the-lay-fraternities-of-st-dominic)
- Verbum Dei Missionary Fraternity is a community of men and women who seek to build the Kingdom of God through prayer, witness and the Ministry of the Word. For more information, visit [www.verbumdeiaustralia.com](http://www.verbumdeiaustralia.com) or contact [verbumdeisydney@gmail.com](mailto:verbumdeisydney@gmail.com)

## Strategy 12 (continued):

### Engage with Communities of Formation

- The Legion of Mary seeks to increase the personal holiness of its members, foster a deeper devotion to Mary and undertake apostolic works such as visitation of families and of the sick. For more information, visit [www.legionofmary.org.au](http://www.legionofmary.org.au) or contact [info@legionofmary.org.au](mailto:info@legionofmary.org.au) or (02) 9660 6131

The above are but a handful of the many communities, movements and prelatures in the Archdiocese of Sydney that enrich and provide formation for the faithful.

## Strategy 13:

### Provide Formation for Catechumens

Parishes should ensure a **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)** process is in place, at least in adjoining parishes, to accompany enquirers, those beginning the journey of Christian initiation as well as candidates.

#### Resources

- Contact the Archdiocese of Sydney's Sacramental Life and RCIA Coordinator within the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation for support and resources at [becomingcatholic@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:becomingcatholic@sydneycatholic.org) or (02) 9307 8477
- The National Centre for Evangelisation, which recommends resources including *Call and Response: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* and *At Home with God's People*. For more information, visit [www.nce.catholic.org.au/the-resource-centre/the-resource-centre-index/becoming-a-catholic-rcia](http://www.nce.catholic.org.au/the-resource-centre/the-resource-centre-index/becoming-a-catholic-rcia)
- The Christian Initiation Australia Network shares the vision and promotes the practice of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) through sharing ideas and challenges. For more information, visit [www.cianetwork.net](http://www.cianetwork.net)
- 'Evangelium' covers the basics of the Catholic faith over 24 sessions or topics. A participant's book, leader's guide and CD-ROM are also available which can assist RCIA teams, especially in the period of the catechumenate. For more information, visit [www.evangelium.co.uk](http://www.evangelium.co.uk) or order this resource at [www.mustardseed.org.au](http://www.mustardseed.org.au) or call (02) 9307 8350

## Strategy 13 (continued):

### Provide Formation for Catechumens

#### Action 2

Each parish should review and plan for opportunities for newly baptised adults or those recently confirmed to undertake **mystagogia** (post-baptismal formation) in the parish, including opportunities for ongoing catechesis and spiritual formation, community in small groups, experiences of group and personal prayer, and active participation in parish ministries, outreach and service.

#### Resources

- For more information about small group formation, refer to the discussion on page 163
- For support, resources and ideas regarding mystagogia, contact the Archdiocese of Sydney's Sacramental Life and RCIA Coordinator within the Sydney Centre for Evangelisation at [becomingcatholic@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:becomingcatholic@sydneycatholic.org) or on (02) 9307 8477

## Strategy 14:

### Provide Formation in Mission

A number of formation programs are also available from Catholic Mission for those working in parishes, providing theological **formation for mission**, mission formation workshops and learning experiences open to parishes and Parish Pastoral Councils, pastoral associates, family educators, clergy and religious.

#### Resources

- For resources and programs available, visit [www.catholicmission.org.au/for-parishes](http://www.catholicmission.org.au/for-parishes)





## *Step 4:* **Act**

In building up formation in the parish, the parish priest can work together with the Parish Pastoral Council, action groups, sub-committees or a team for formation, established for a definite duration. These groups should ideally include at least one member of the Parish Pastoral Council to ensure alignment with the wider vision and planning of the parish as a whole, and can lead and invite others into these efforts toward renewal.

As discussed above, you could also consider forming a senior leadership team that can focus on assisting in the ongoing practical strategies and decisions needed to implement the plan, which allows the Parish Pastoral Council to focus on the longer-term pastoral plan of the parish.