

Dreams & Visions

Pastoral Planning for Lifelong Catechesis



The Archdiocese of Houston

February, 2008



Faith Sharing

- **Step One: Listen to the Word**
 - As you heard the story of the Transfiguration proclaimed today, what particular words did you notice?
 - What line in this reading touched your heart?
- **Step Two: Look into Your Life**
- Perhaps this reading calls us, not to cling to the familiar, but to leave the comforts of the parish and reach out to the world around us.
In your neighborhood or community, who is waiting to hear the Good News?



A Conversation

What do you want folks to take away from all your efforts?



By the way...

- PastoralPlanning.com
 - This PowerPoint
 - Other materials – much of it free
 - Books, articles, resources galore!
 - Parish Vision 2009 – FREE tool!
- On the home page,
 - Click on **Houston Event**
 - It will be ready by this evening!



Your goals

- Sustain **energy** among staff or planners
- Shift to **shared ownership** by the larger parish community
 - Groom **new people** for leadership
- Move beyond the “**younger family**”
 - Into the wider, older parish
- Broaden **ministerial ownership**
 - youth ministers, liturgists, family life...



Your goals

- Use **electronic technology** to coach each other and share wisdom
 - And to reach the “**Millennials**”
- Better **publicity and marketing** of our various initiatives within the parish and within the Archdiocese
- **Multi-cultural realities** – how?



Your goals

- Help **liturgists** see their role
 - In making the liturgical year our calendar
- Provide ways for **catechumens**
 - To interact more with the rest of the parish
 - Wrestle with the “mystery of salvation”
 - Beyond dogma & precepts

Whew!



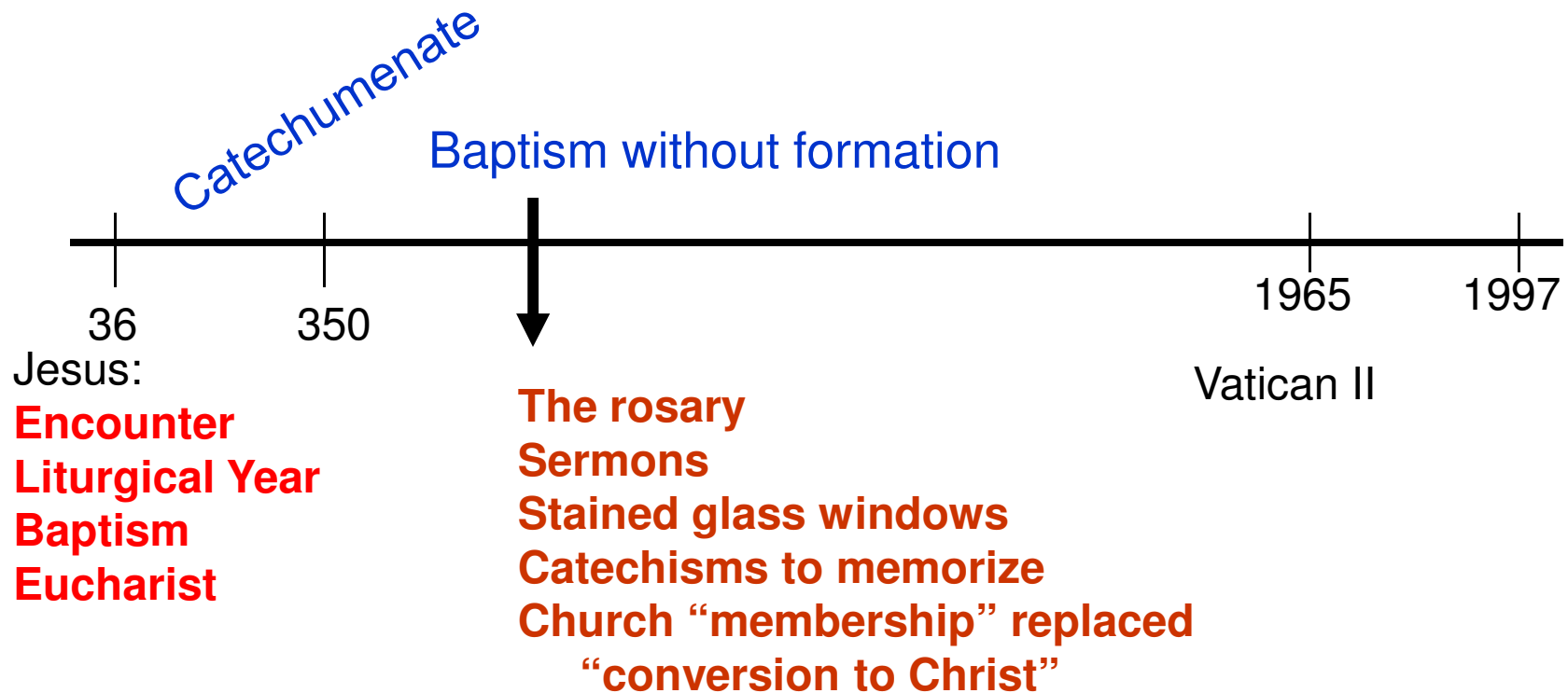
Today

- This morning:
 - A bit of background (very brief)
 - The steps of pastoral planning
 - With all your goals in mind...

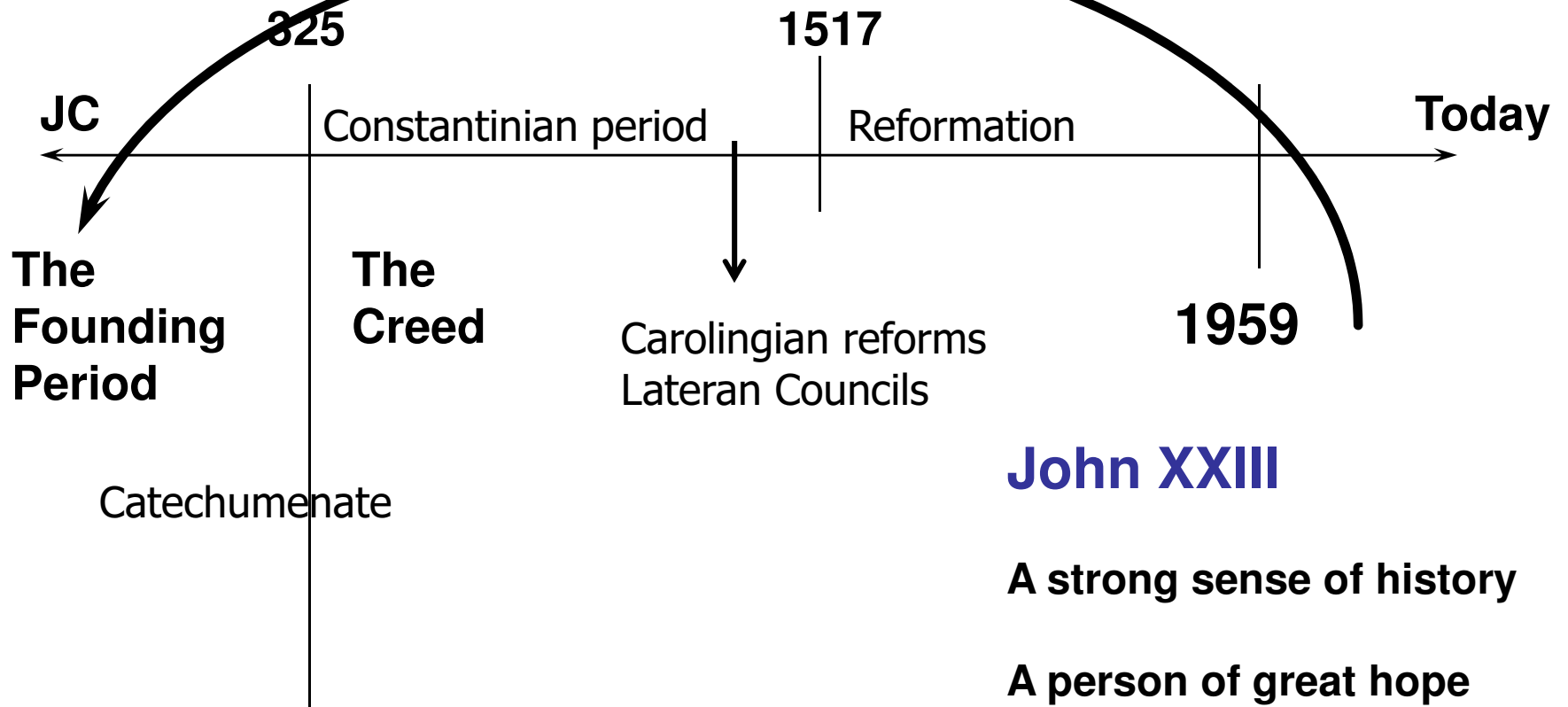
- This afternoon:
 - Local “Promising Practices”
 - How Do We Do This?



Our history...



Church history

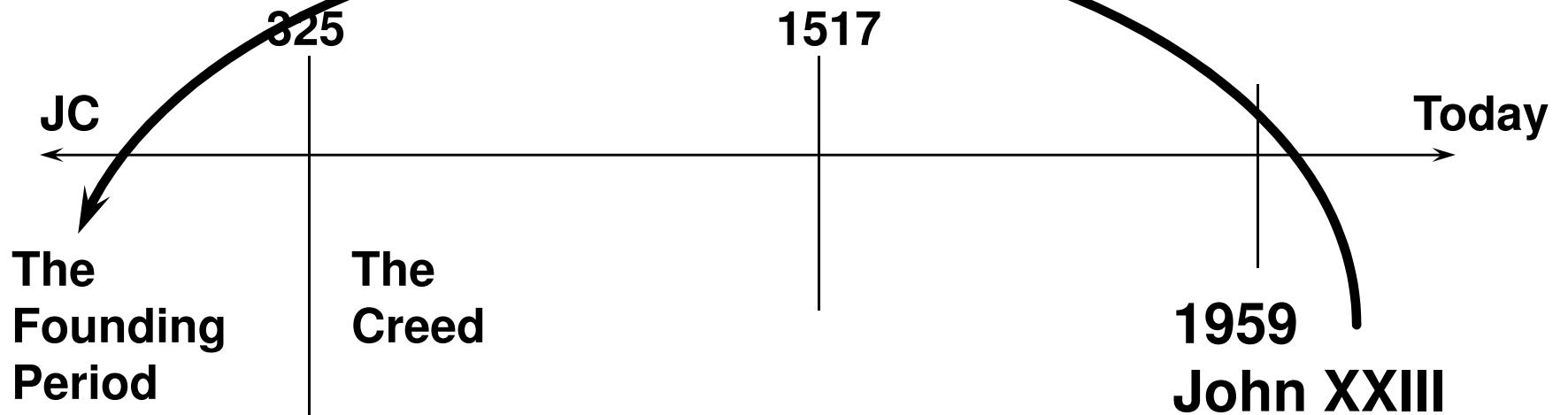


John XXIII

A strong sense of history

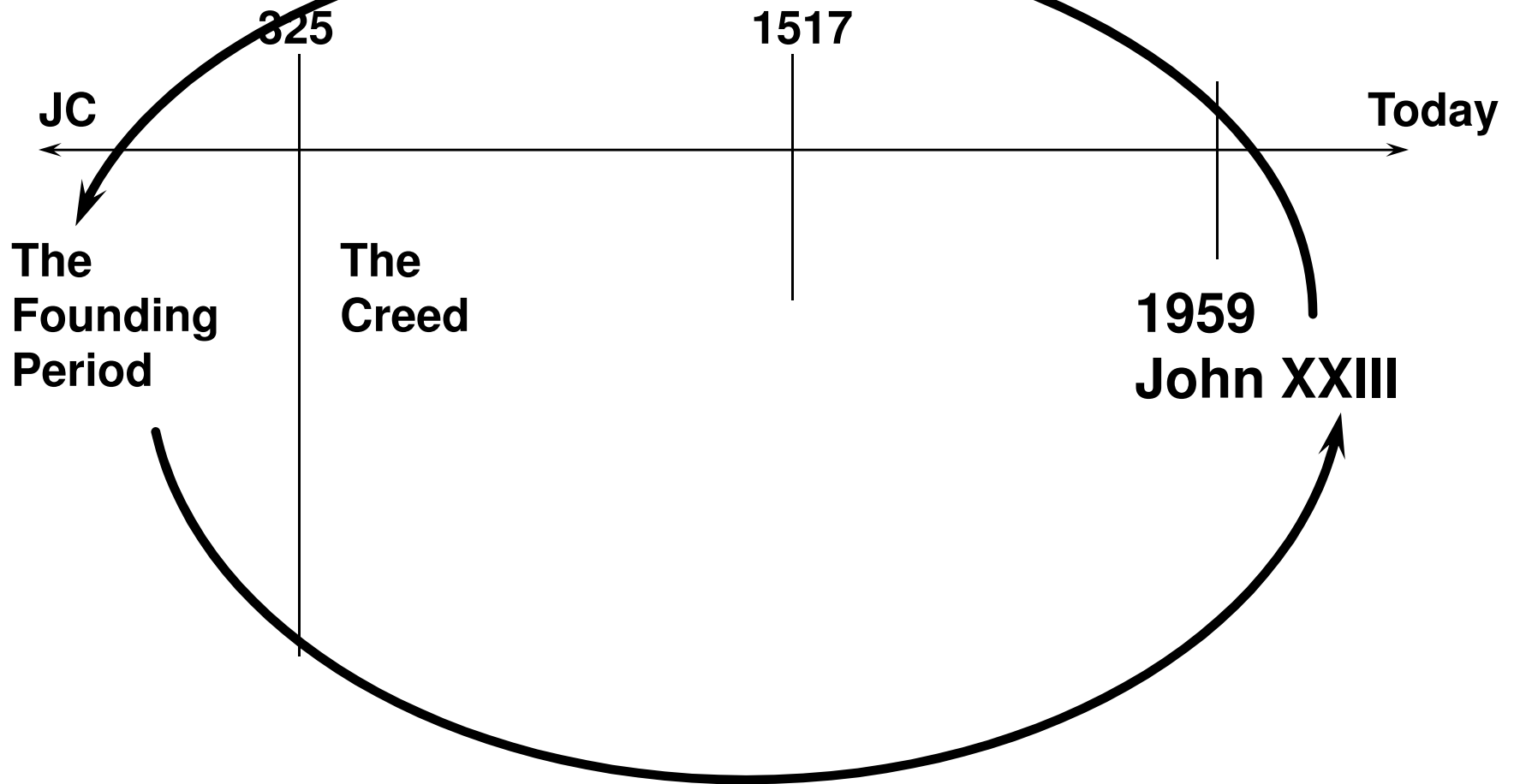
**A person of great hope
and passion!**

Church history

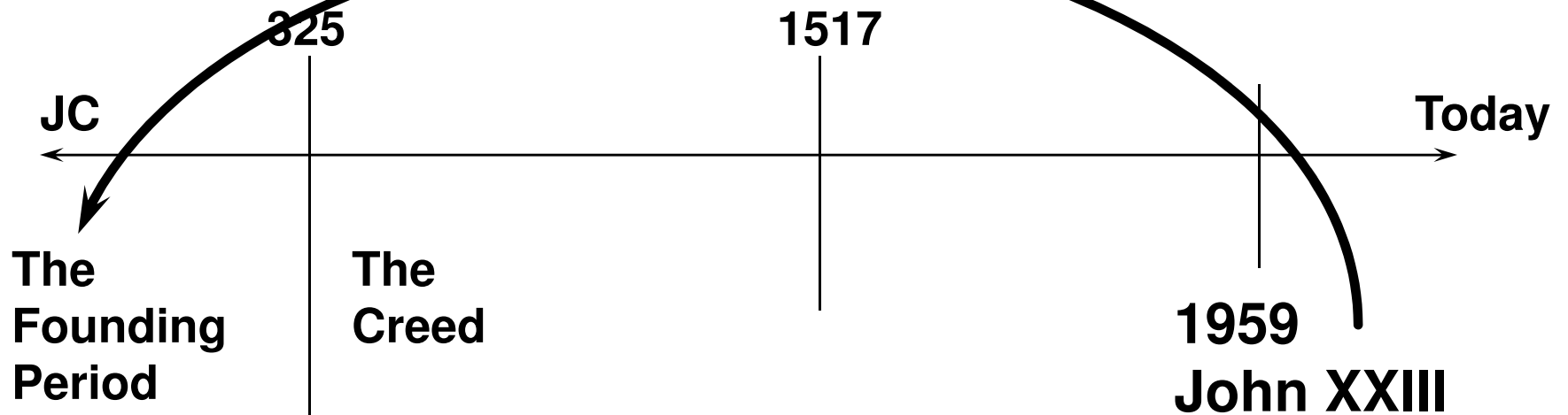


Ressourcement:
Return to the *sources*
and let them teach you.

Church history

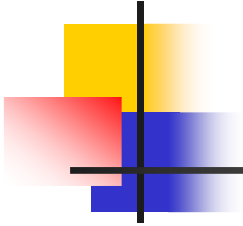


Church history



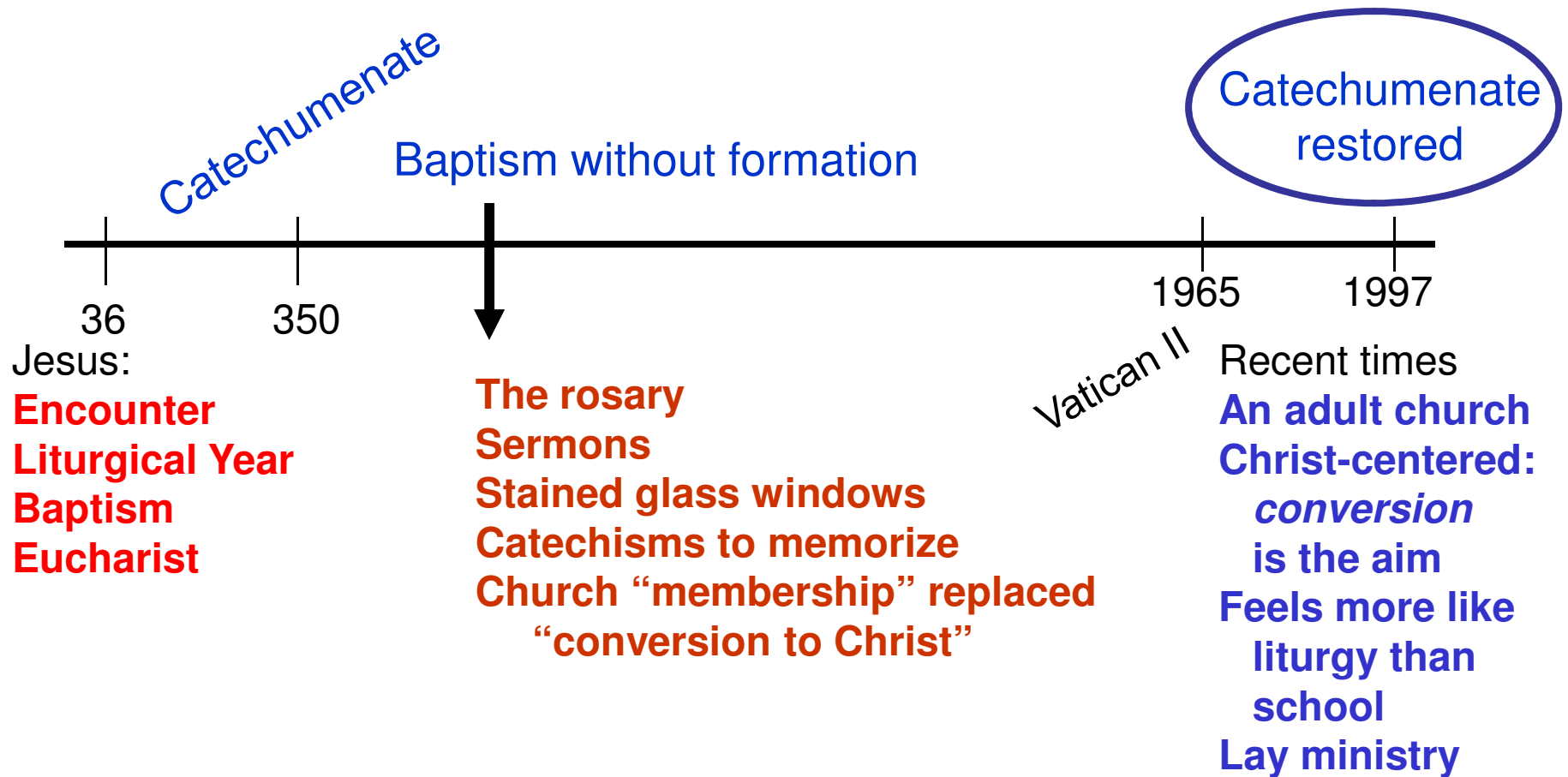
Aggiornamento:

Read the *signs of the times*
and bring yourself up to date!



**What was retrieved
from the early years
regarding faith formation
and updated for our times?**

The big view...

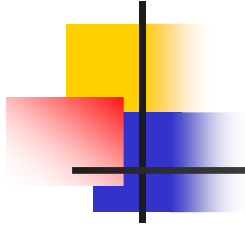


In a nutshell...



Whole Community Catechesis

- Take elements of the RCIA
- and implant them into the rest of the parish:
 - conversion
 - community gatherings
 - understanding the faith
 - being part of the liturgy
 - a 50-50 covenant with the parish



It's all about
the Catechumenate
(RCIA)



The past fifty years

- The Baltimore Catechism
- 1962: Vatican II
 - Called for a “Directory of Catechesis”
- Conferences and study weeks
- Synods of bishops
- The RCIA is restored in 1988
- 1997: The Directory is published



The popes and bishops

- '71: *Gen'l Catechetical Directory*
- '72: *To Teach as Jesus Did*
- '75: *Evangelization in our Time*
- '78: *Sharing the Light of Faith*
- '79: *Catechesis Today*
- '88: *Catechumenate: RCIA*
- '92: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- '97: *Gen'l Directory for Catechesis*
- '99: *Our Hearts Were Burning*
- '05: *National Directory for Catechesis*



So, all these years of work...

Where does this leave us?



So, where are we?

- We have an adult church
- Baptized but not **converted**
- Not **knowledgeable** in faith
- Most adults: **not engaged** with us

- But the Church wants a **pastoral plan**
 - to re-invite, welcome, form, and create a **"home"** for them all.



All pastoral planning leads to

- The **CORE work** of the Church
- If we stick to our **core work**...
- ...in everything we do,
- then **our mission** will be accomplished
- If not, we wander in **confusion**...



Our Core Work

- Help people **deepen their communion** with Christ...
- and help them **grow & sustain the excitement** of that within their parish!
- Leading to works of **justice & charity**
- And a life of **daily prayer**
- Then: **invite others** to deeper communion



We know the dream & vision

The Question is:

**How do we get there
from here?**



Pastoral Planning is needed!

- Without a plan: **haphazard!**
 - Hard for folks to “see”
 - Hard to market
 - Impossible to sustain
- With a plan: **well-ordered!**
 - Everyone is on board
 - Money, space, equipment is identified
 - The “people of the plan” are known
 - Marketing is easier



As we get started...

- We need a group of folks
 - people who care about the parish
 - and have an interest in formation
- Build a **foundation of understanding**
- Under the leadership of Pastor & Staff
- Becoming a CORE group
 - with a focus on our CORE work



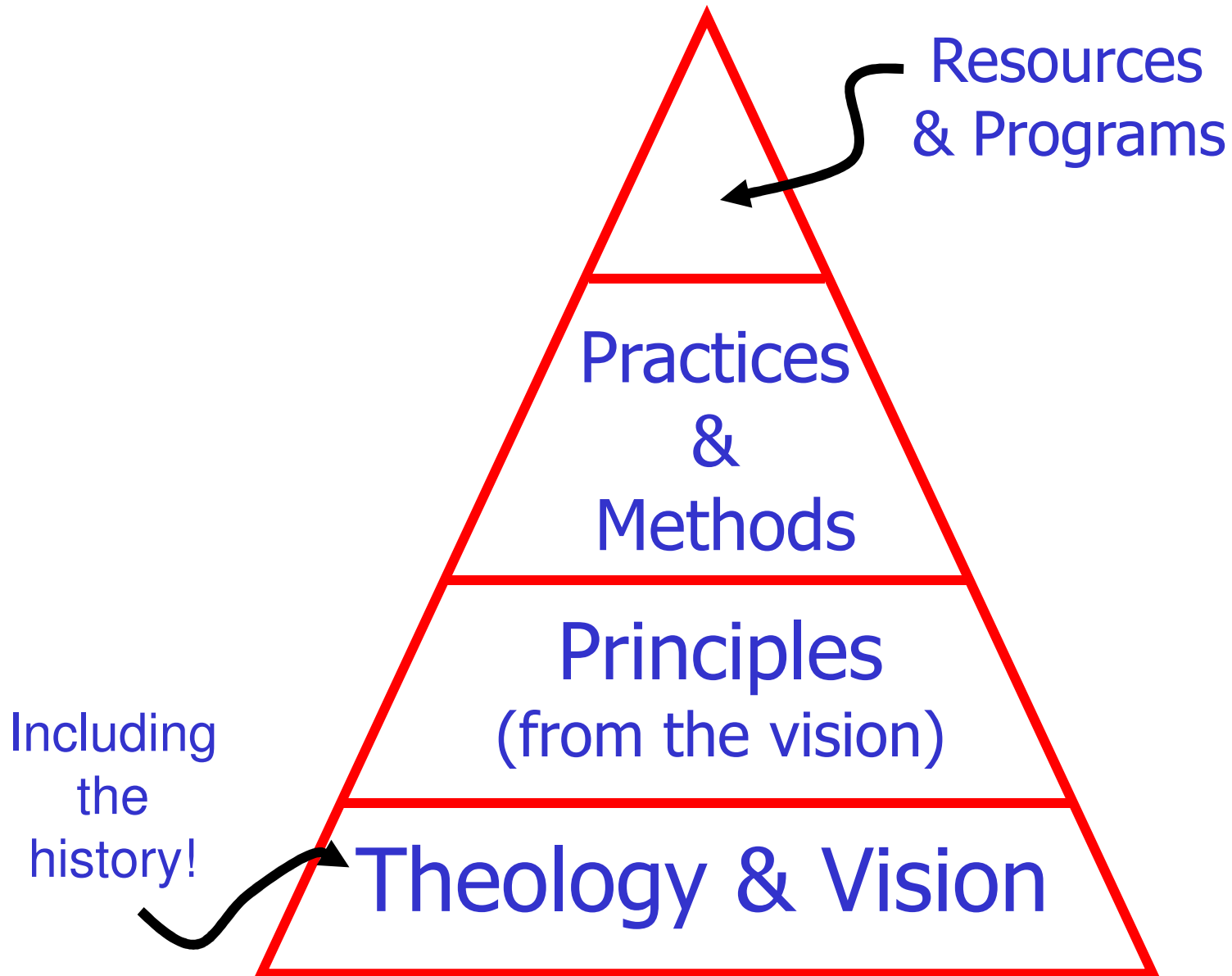
Planning steps & Resources

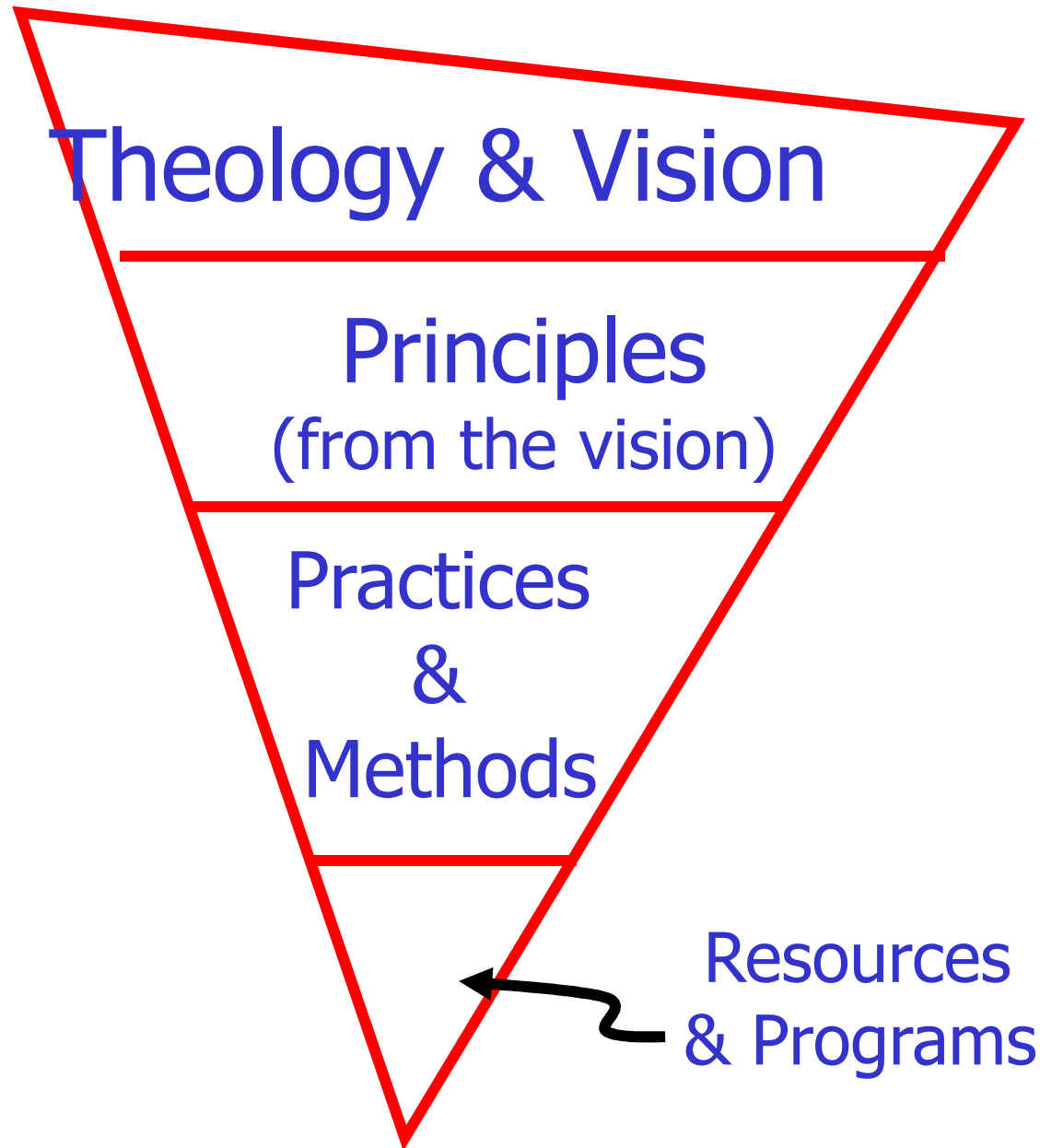
Planning steps

- **Core group work:**
- Understand the theology and what the church wants
- Make sure you can speak of it clearly and with conviction

Available resources

- WCC in Plain English
- Toward an Adult Church
- Pastor's Guide to WCC
- Here Comes E'body!
- The Doc's themselves
- Ctr for Min Developm't
- Dreams & Visions
 - Chapters 1-3







Finding your core people

- A “public meeting”
 - after which you invite anyone to come forward
- Key volunteers whom you invite
- Parish leaders

- The Pastoral Council
- **Critical, sustained conversation**



The Commitment

- **Reading** together a significant book or church document
- **Unpacking** it together
 - Meeting periodically – whatever works but at least once a month
- Drawing some conclusions through interaction with **the Pastoral Council** on **a shared retreat day**



And maybe...

- Becoming part of the Lifelong Formation Team
 - which helps stage events*
 - planning
 - marketing
 - setting up and taking down
 - evaluating
 - setting the next event



Hint:

You can't do this alone – surrender some of the controls and trust others...



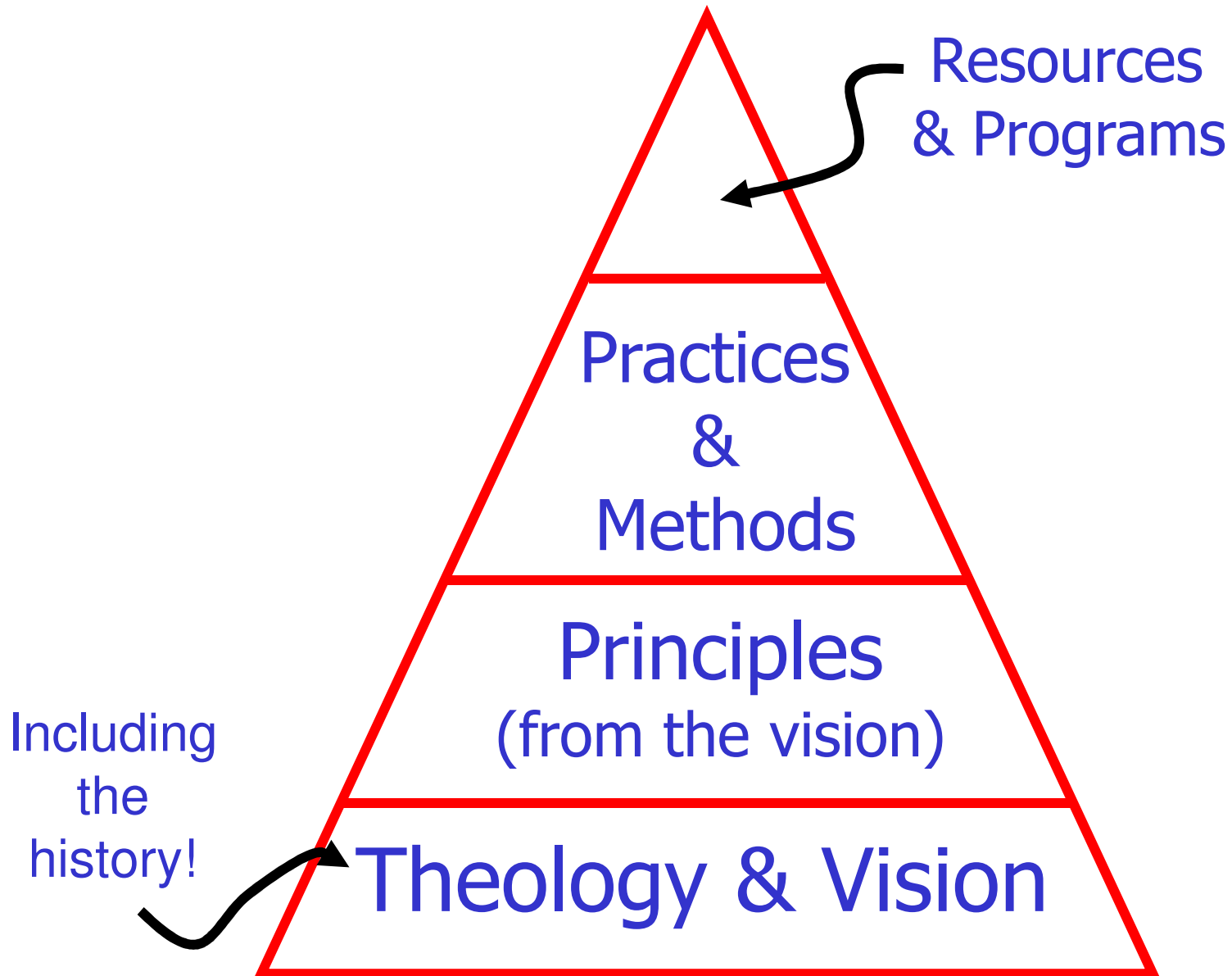
Re-think

- Old model
 - Parish staff knows everything
 - Can do everything
 - Is smarter than the people
 - Because we have Master's degrees!
- New Model
 - Parish staff orchestrates
 - Uses "smarts" to *pastor* instead of take over



*Events

- parish based retreats
- faith gatherings or assemblies
- reflection nights
- faith sharing – Q of the Week
- internet connections
- sites in local malls or shopping areas
- outreach





The first step

- Make a decision.
- The pastor must be part of this
- Make this decision “outloud”
- Don’t just assume that everyone’s on board
- Examples:
 - The Cross Lake meeting



What are you deciding?

- To gradually become an “adult parish”
- To keep your children’s program intact
 - But use it as a springboard
 - To widen the circles of formation
 - little by little – not all at once!
 - to include the whole parish eventually
- With both **conversion** and **learning**



A key to this: **Faith**

- You actually don't know exactly what you're deciding
- No one can see the future
- **Trust the Spirit** to be with you

- All we do is set up the opportunities
- To allow the Spirit to work



Step 1½

- Get the right people on the bus.
- Make sure your leaders are prepared and willing to do this
- They must be “in Christ” themselves
- Some may leave the staff
 - voluntarily or involuntarily
 - this includes key volunteers



The second step

- Name someone to coordinate this.
 - Even in small or rural, & parish clusters
- This person can make or break the planning process
- This person may not be the DRE
- But must be loyal to everyone
- This is an “entrepreneurial” role



Entrepreneurial

- **Inventive**, but not a lone ranger
- Able to push against status quo
 - but not make people angry or hurt
- Can see the **opportunities** as they arise
- Doesn't have to control each aspect
- But **possesses the vision!**
- And can work with a team



The third step

- Form a
Lifelong Formation Planning Team.
- Who is this?
 - Sift through those who come forward
 - Use Listening Prayer to discern who
 - If possible, your **Pastoral Council**
- The key: forward thinkers who can envision a **GREAT** parish!



The fourth step

- Undertake a “**parish inventory**”
 - List each group
 - Use Parish Vision 2009 worksheets
 - Assign the groups among your leaders to evaluate and report
 - Listen
 - Consider using the **2 X 2 process**
- *Spend the time* needed for this step

Step 4½: Look at current plans

Planning steps

- What are you offering now?
- How's it being *received*?
- What's working and what's not?
- How can you do your **Core Work** in each group?

Available resources

- Dreams & Visions
 - Chapter 4
- **Parish Vision 2009**
 - PastoralPlanning.com
 - All are free
- Helps you consider current offerings **group-by-group**

Step 4^{3/4}:

Study available resources

- Planning is **resource-specific**
- If you plan for **“any resource will do”**
 - You may be unrealistic
 - Or disappointed when you come to implement the plan
 - Because your plans don't match what's possible
 - Or without sufficient budget
 - And very hard to “market”



Resources

- **Threshold Bible Study** by Steve Binz
- **Embracing the Vision** by Sr. Linda Gaupin
- **People of Faith** by the Ctr for Min Dev & Harcourt
- **The Adult Catechism**
- **Into the Fields** by D Schutte, Sr. Edith, and others
- **Growing Faith**
 - The entire Catechism in Plain English



Resources

- Catholic Update
- RENEW
- Little Rock Scripture Study
- Univ of Dayton
- Local resources from your diocese
- Tom Zanzig's – Faith Formation Strategies
- Others...



Step five

- Actually begin to:
 - add
 - strengthen
 - or affirm
- faith formation for catechists
 - working in any catechetical ministry
 - you'll need these folks **early** in your pastoral plan
 - Using your diocesan program in coordination with **Into the Fields & Echoes of Faith**

**youth ministry volunteers
baptism prep folks
training for liturgical roles
marriage prep
children's formation
confirmation & RCIA
school teachers
pastoral care workers
interested parishioners**



Background

- In 1960 there were **185,000** sisters –
 - most teaching in our schools or parishes
 - or nursing in our hospitals!
 - We paid them little or nothing
 - and expected them to work hard
- In 1960 there were **45,000** men studying for the priesthood in the US.



Today, by the way...

Students in grad theology programs in the US

35,400 lay or religious

26,600 women!

3,400 seminarians
2,480 diocesan
920 religious

(all in round numbers)



Our identity as Catholics

- Father was the **center** of the parish
 - whatever he said was the law
- The Sisters helped create a parish and school **spirituality**
- The parish was the center of life
- And we lived our faith at home:
 - statues on our dashboards
 - rosaries in our pockets



The Sisters & Father

- Lived a “spiritual life”
- Went home to the convent: prayer, discernment, “living church”
- They brought this back to the school or parish the next day
- **Their spiritual journeys became our own**



How can we form the staff?

- We asked:

**How could we replicate
religious life?**

What would work?



Answer: Create community

- It must be **parish or school based**
 - We can't send people across the diocese for formation!
- The resource:
 - must be **affordable**
 - **easy to use**
 - speak to **today's** people
- Users have to earn "portable" **CEUs**



The answer

- It must *really deliver formation* on the three dimensions called for by the bishops:
 - The **spiritual life** of the catechist or teacher
 - The **content** of the faith
 - The **skills and strategies** with which to pass on this faith effectively *today*
- NO fluff allowed!



The answer

- It must be BOTH:
 - Excellent for **group use**
 - Perfect for **personal use**
- It must have an Imprimatur
- It has to leave the users
“wantin’ more!”
- **In other words: it must be fun!**



The answer

- Regular formation, like the Sisters had
 - Once a month or more often
 - Using **Echoes** & **Into the Fields**
- Form teachers, catechists, volunteers
 - To help them **transfer** it back to the school or parish effectively
 - Form a strong community
 - With an actual “formation process”
- **This becomes the engine of the parish**



The first steps

- Understand lifelong catechesis
- Make a firm decision
- Choose a leader
- Form a team
- Consider all the groups in the parish
- Survey available resources
- Start forming catechists intensely



The sixth step – overlapping...

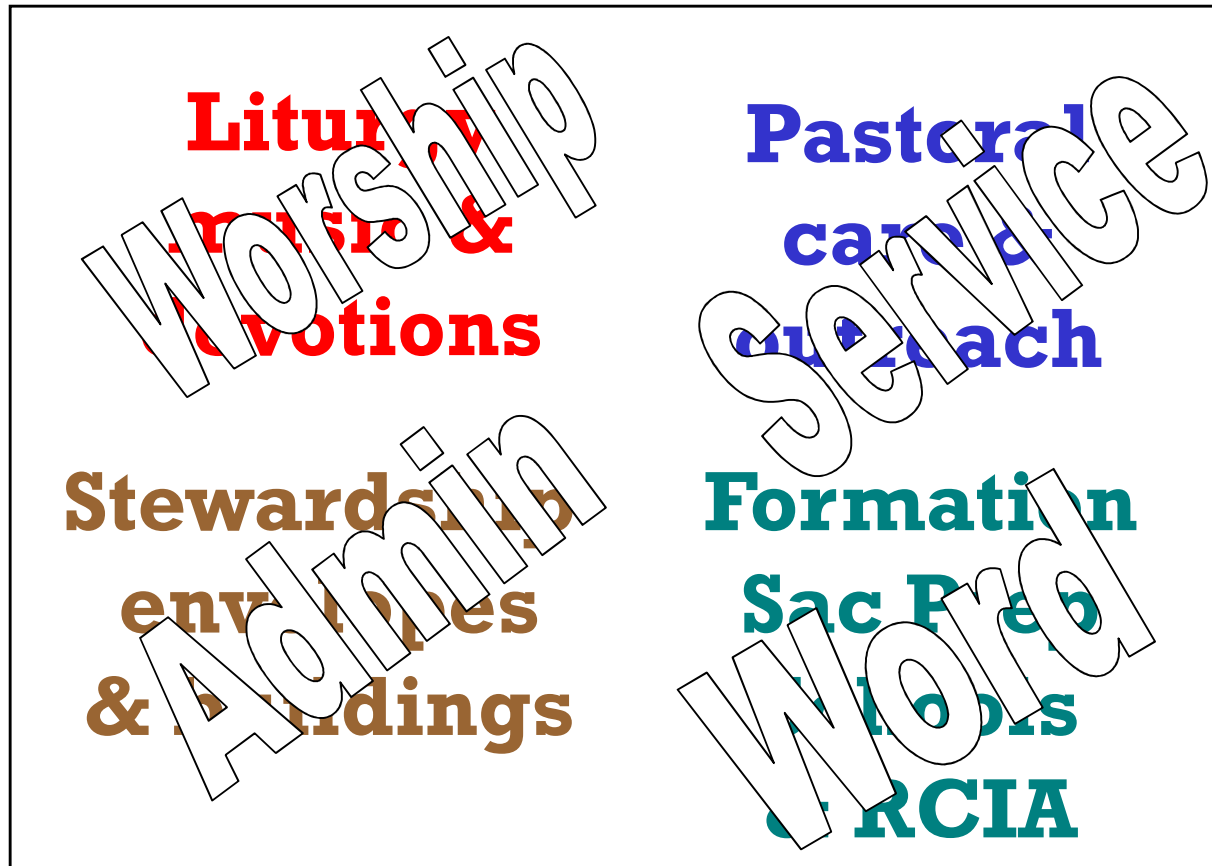
- Organize folks into small communities
- Or provide existing small communities with resources
 - Such as **CONNECT**
 - Which has no "end"
- Gradually grow the number of groups
- **This becomes your bedrock**



Now...

The Heart of the Matter

The Current Pastoral Plan



The Current Pastoral Plan

**Liturgy
music &
devotion:**

**Stewardship
envelopes
& buildings**

**Pastoral
care &
outreach**

**Formation
Sac Prep
Schools
& RCIA**

**What's missing
in this picture?**

The Current Pastoral Plan

**Liturgy
music &
devotions**

**Stewardship
envelopes
& buildings**

**Pastoral
care &
outreach**

**Formation
Sac Prep
Schools
& RCIA**

**Parish based
process
where folks
experience
conversion**

The **New** Pastoral Plan

**Liturgy
music &
devotions**

**Pastoral
care &
outreach**

**Encounters
&
Retreats**

**Stewardship
envelopes
& buildings**

**Formation
Sac Prep
& RCIA**



Grapple with Conversion

Planning steps

- What is it in your own life?
- How do other people experience it?
- How can you **create opportunities** in the parish that give rise to the possibility of it?
 - Open the door for the Spirit to work!

Available resources

- Dreams & Visions
 - Chapters 3 & 5
- PastoralPlanning.com
 - Parish based initiatives
 - Retreats
 - Faith sharing (Q of W)
 - Wider use of mystagogia
 - Meeting “the poor”

www.PastoralPlanning.com



Breaking Open the Word

- **Question of the Week**
- From last Sunday's **Gospel**
- Sharing faith all week long!
- Begun by the pastor after the homily
- Or after communion by others
- Used at all meetings – and in homes
- The key: **Help folks share their faith with others**



“Living Christ” retreats

- Thursday & Friday evening and Saturday morning
 - Or another schedule format
- About **40 folks** per retreat
- Leaders and host team from parish
- Deepen communion with Christ
 - Grow in your ability to “die in Christ”
- End with 50-50 Covenant



OR – use another retreat

- Christ Renews His Parish
- Alpha for Catholics
- Koinonia
- TEC, Cursillo, Search, Quest...
- RCIA retreats
- Life in the Spirit seminars
- And other moments of faith sharing at every opportunity



Use more mystagoia

- It's very easy
- Even though the word is hard!
 - Just pause.
 - Return to what just happened.
 - Ask about how it touched them
 - About the "heart questions"
- Do this often! Send it home!



Add mystagogy!

- After every event
- When people return from work for justice, peace, or charity
- At the end of adult gatherings
- Teach parents how to do this at home

- This is a real key to holiness.



Retreats & Encounters

- Must be **at the parish** itself
 - There isn't time to send everyone somewhere else
 - And besides, this is **the core work** of the parish
- This must be **on a par** in the parish
 - with liturgy, education, schools, and all other ministries



Retreats & Encounters

- If we don't bring "Retreats and Encounters" up to par with other ministries
 - We'll see only lackluster results
 - We will not do our **Core Work**
- **It will appear to be optional**
 - But we all know it cannot be!
 - It must be **central to the parish.**

The **New** Pastoral Plan

What else is missing?

Liturgy
music &
devotions

Pastoral
care &
outreach

Encounters
&
Retreats

Stewardship
envelopes
& buildings

Formation
Sac Prep
& RCIA

The **New** Pastoral Plan

**Liturgy
music &
devotions**

**Stewardship
envelopes
& buildings**

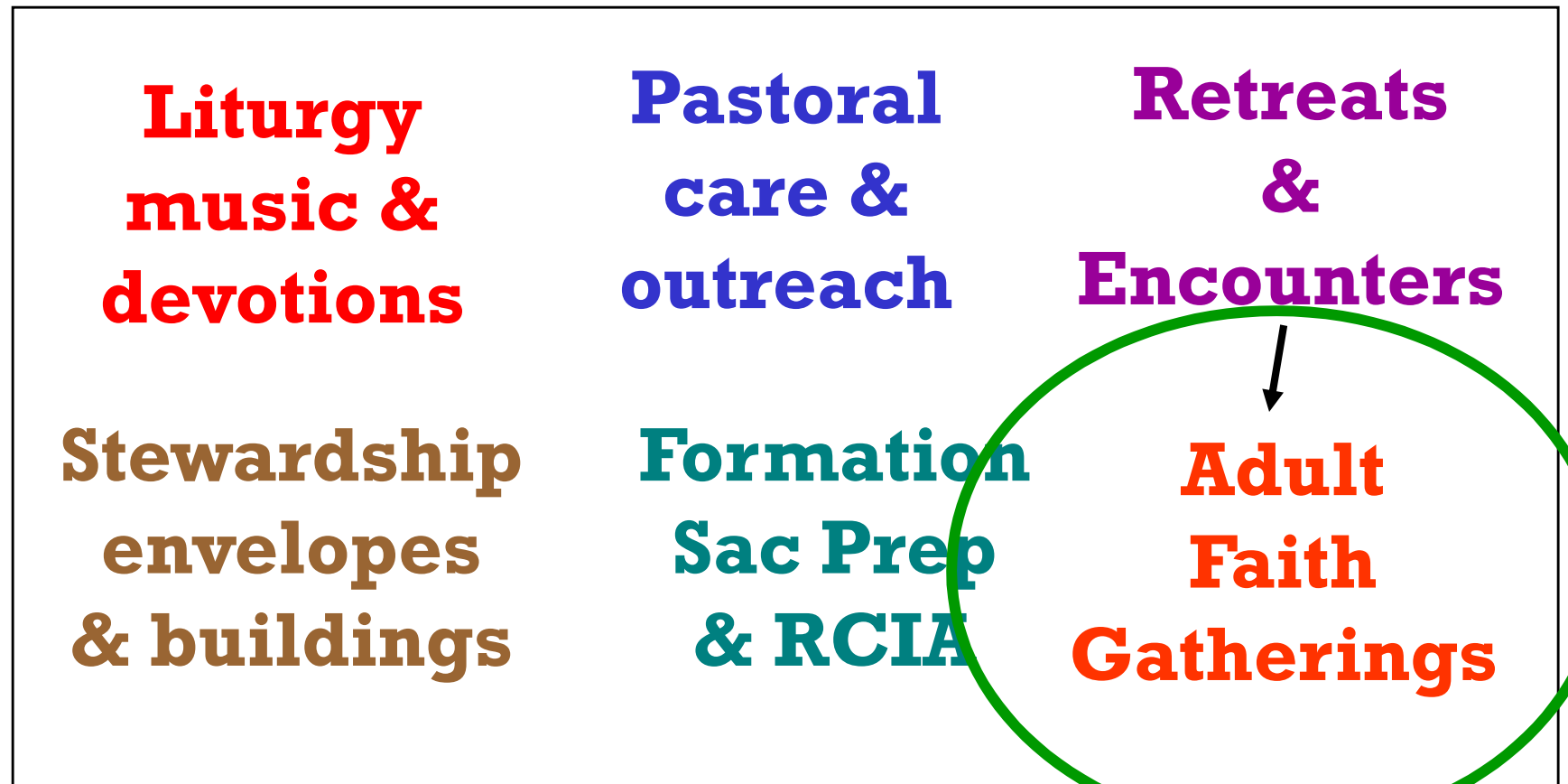
**Pastoral
care &
outreach**

**Formation
Sac Prep
& RCIA**

**Encounters
&
Retreats**

**Adult Faith
Gatherings
to
sustain
conversion**

The **New** Pastoral Plan





Grapple with Faith Gatherings

Planning steps

- How do you help people **sustain faith**?
 - Neophytes after Easter
 - Candidates for full communion
 - Young people after Confirmation
 - Parents
 - Average Marys and Joes

Available resources

- Dreams & Visions
 - Chapters 6 & 7
- PastoralPlanning.com
 - Lots of resources
- Other strong resources from the Catholic Publishing community

Scope & Sequence:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
God & Creation	JC & first sacraments	The Church	Morality	Sacraments	Old Testament	Various programs	

Linear or developmental
Scope & Sequence



Spiral Scope &
Sequence



Lifelong Catechesis

Scope & Sequence:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Youth 9-12 Young adults Households with kids Middle aged Senior adults

God and Creation

Jesus Christ & Sac Prep

Every unit in the children's books.....



Problem & Solution

- Adults don't want and will not attend "classes"
- Another option:
 - Gatherings designed for adults
 - Active, enjoyable, informative, with **FOOD**
 - **Based on the children's series**
- *Faith Gatherings* on a regular schedule
 - Well planned and prepared!

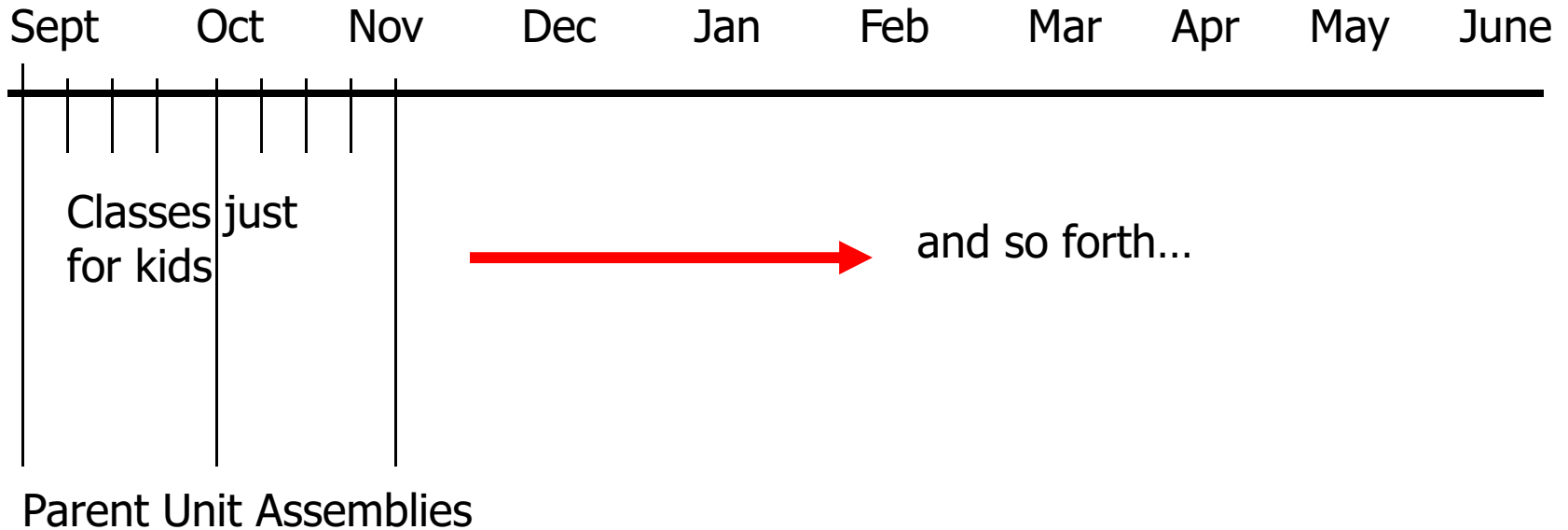


Faith Gatherings

- Continue classes for kids
 - using the usual text
- But at the start of each unit
- Gather all the parents,
 - *with* the kids or *without* them
- And invite others from the parish
- Create an event!



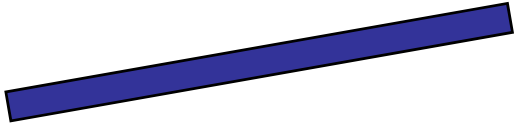
The calendar



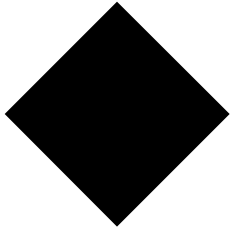


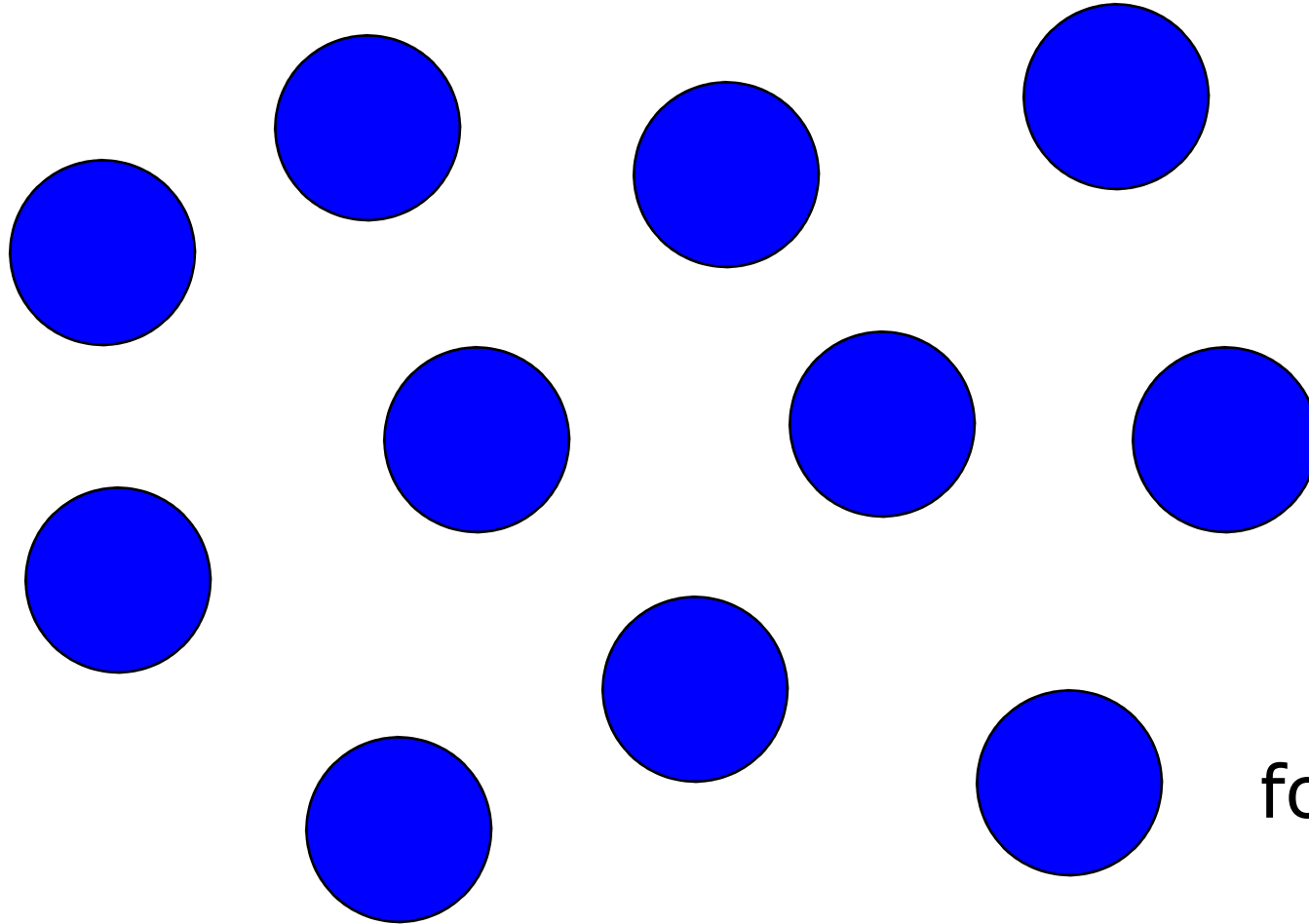
Faith Gatherings

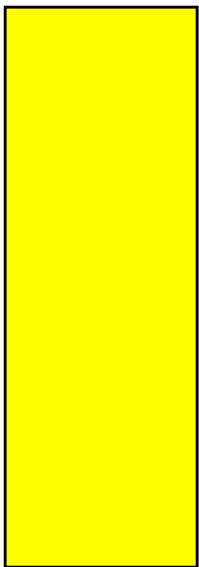
- A large room
- Round tables
- A lead or master catechist
- Table leaders
- Textbooks as usual
- Excellent media
- Aim for the adults
- And include the youngsters!


media screen

 lead catechist


music



food 



The Gathering:

- Generous welcome
- Music playing, name tags
- Break open the Word
- Content and faith sharing
 - Using *Growing Faith* as the resource
- Food!
- Send it home!*
- Close on a high note



* Take home kits

- Appropriate **adult resource**
- One **non-Sunday feast** of the church
 - For example: Feast of the Holy Cross on Sept 14
- **Invitation** to be in the Sunday assembly
- A **road map** “back to fuller participation in the life of the parish”
 - Parish based retreat invitation



Connect existing fragments

Of adult formation Step 7

- Scripture study groups
- Sacrament prep process folks
- Just Faith and other outreach, justice, and peace activities
- RENEW
- What unites this effort is having common **gatherings** and **resources**
 - Meet for specific purpose, then gather with all in the Faith Gathering



Step 8

- Write up a brief outline of your plan
- Put some budget numbers on it
- Lay out a calendar and facilities needs

- This is the practical part!
- Think about how those beach balls will be launched...



Step 9

- Invite folks to give feedback
- But be ready to be **prophetic!**
 - Your leaders have to “stick out their necks”
 - Some people will never be happy
- Evaluate often – use the form on the web site – be open to really “**hear**”



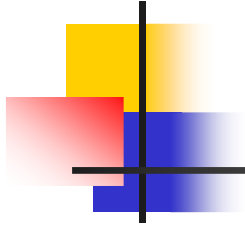
Step 10

- Begin to launch
- Slowly, one thing at a time
- Don't make this a big promotion
- It isn't a "new program"
- It's a new way of being church
- One "beach ball" at a time...
- Evaluate as you go.



Step 10½

- Keep on doing this
- The Pastoral Council (or Lifelong Formation Planning Team) has an endless agenda:
 - We live in a “modern world”
 - Keep making the church relevant



Some excellent,
promising practices
in parishes like yours



Ascension Parish

- Pastor was “on board”
- Coordinator named early in process
- But no team emerged
- Decided to endure a bit of chaos
- While they took time to build the foundation of understanding
- Drew folks from a public meeting & staff



Ascension, cont

- Key #1:
 - Reading groups
 - Into the Fields formation
 - Small communities
 - connecting people with their faith
- Key #2:
 - Identified and stuck to their **CORE work**



Ascension, cont

- Other features that worked
 - Great communication among staff members
 - Honest evaluation
 - A gradual launch
 - The hard work of that Inventory
 - group-by-group