

What is the Pathways model?

(1) *Pathways* is about the church community mapping out possible steps in Christian spiritual/faith development for young Catholics from early childhood to young adulthood. It describes an approach to ministry with children and young people that is integrated and intentional and enables parishes and deaneries to vision and plan the shape and focus of ministry with children, young people and their families.

(2) *Pathways* is a concept based on the belief that an individual's spiritual journey is a life-long process.

How can we use the Pathways model?

Below is a simple process for parishes to self-evaluate their use of the Pathways model.

1. **Gather together the parish council, representatives from all ministries currently operating within your parish and all interested parties.** The whole parish could be invited to participate in this visioning process.
2. Using questions, **restate the Archdiocesan *Jesus, Communion, Mission* vision in relation to youth children's ministry:**
 - How are we helping children, young people (and their families) to embrace the person and vision of Jesus?
 - How are we helping children, young people (and their families) to build communion with God and others?
 - How are we helping children, young people (and their families) to engage in Jesus' mission in our world?
3. Discuss: **whose responsibility is faith formation of children, young people (and their families)?** Discuss this quote from the *General Directory for Catechesis* (#69): *The process of continuing conversion goes beyond what is provided by basic catechesis. In order to encourage this process, it is necessary to have a Christian community which welcomes the initiated, sustains them and forms them in the faith.*
4. The church has identified family, parish, school and movements as essential partners in the process of leading children and young people to faith. Discuss: **To what extent do families, parishes, schools and movements work together in our parish as faith formation partners to welcome, sustain and form the initiated?** (At this stage this is a question mainly for reflection, not in-depth discussion and planning – that will come at a later stage in the process.)
5. **Using the image of a pathway with stepping stones** (provided with the *Pathways* package), **identify and name the faith development opportunities** already available in your parish, such as State School Religious Education; youth ministry teams; children's Liturgy of the Word; youth bible study; sacramental programs. This could be completed by individuals or in small groups. However it is useful to present all the information in one diagram (stepping stones on a pathway) for all to reflect upon and clarify if necessary.

6. Having identified the range of faith development opportunities available in your parish, discuss – **Are there any obvious gaps?** An example of a ‘gap’ could be that no faith development opportunities are currently offered to support the Catholic children attending local State Schools or no social justice initiatives for young people to get involved with.
7. **Brainstorm possibilities for ‘filling the gaps’.** It is not imagined that a parish could or would be able to offer all possibilities. This is the ‘dreaming’ stage and it is important to try to creatively imagine and name as many options as possible for nurturing the spirituality of children, young people and their families.
8. Once you have exhausted your ‘dreaming’ have a look at the list below and see outlining a number of strategies and initiatives that can be used in youth and children’s ministry.
 - ◆ Provide Baptism preparation for families.
 - ◆ Offer social justice and outreach opportunities for youth and young adults.
 - ◆ Plan post Baptism sessions / celebrations. Send a Birthday or Baptism celebration card to families on the anniversary of the child’s baptism.
 - ◆ Provide opportunities for youth and young adults to be mentored.
 - ◆ Organise play groups and send special invitation to parents of newly baptised infants.
 - ◆ Provide scripture study and reflection programs for youth and young adults.
 - ◆ Establish Prayer groups for young parents. Include topics such as Family Prayer; Spirituality; Meditation; Lent; Advent; Christmas; Ordinary Time. Provide ideas and resources for parents to deepen their own prayer life. Provide ideas and resources also for parents to use with their families.
 - ◆ Organise an evening of different prayer experiences for youth and young adults.
 - ◆ Plan a program of ongoing catechesis for Catholic children not attending Catholic schools. This could be conducted in the afternoons or on the week end. It could focus on the Sunday readings and the liturgical seasons of the church. Include variety and fun in the sessions.
 - ◆ Connect young people with leadership formation and training.
 - ◆ Provide Children’s Liturgy of the Word celebrations. Invite and train youth to become leaders.
 - ◆ Offer opportunities for youth and young adults to take time out for prayer and reflection (e.g. Retreats).
 - ◆ Plan Family Activity sessions relating to Confirmation, Eucharist and Penance. Make this a combination of fun and faith-sharing with Scripture stories, activities, discussions, prayer, music, craft and movies. The Multimedia Resource Centre and Brisbane Catholic education Centre can assist with choice of suitable videos and DVD’s.
 - ◆ Form a youth ministry team to offer vision, direction and oversight of youth and young adult ministry in the parish.
 - ◆ Plan post sacramental sessions for families. Offer family focused sessions to deepen ‘themes’ covered in sacramental education sessions.
 - ◆ Connect with youth movements to see if they can support or supplement your ministry with youth and young adults.
 - ◆ Organise and conduct a Kids’ club, offering a variety of activities such as prayer, bible storytelling, games, music, craft and group discussion. Invite and train youth to assist.
 - ◆ Connect young people with the experience of World Youth Day.

- ◆ Organise and conduct Sunday school sessions with activities, prayers and reflections based on the Sunday Scriptures. Invite and train youth to assist.
- ◆ Offer young people the opportunity to participate in vocation awareness seminars and retreats.
- ◆ Offer Bible storytelling sessions for children. Invite and train youth to become biblical storytellers.
- ◆ With the parish liturgy team, plan Family Masses on a regular basis. Send a special invitation to families involved in previous sacramental preparation sessions. Invite Catholic children (and their families) from State Schools.
- ◆ Plan Family camps. For an essential resource, go to the Brisbane Archdiocesan website www.bne.catholic.net.au Browse the Policies and Guidelines section and download the Child Safety Guidelines.
- ◆ Offer Family retreats to highlight liturgical seasons.
- ◆ Learn about the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Invite and involve youth in training sessions.
- ◆ Plan Lenten discussion sessions for families. Invite and train youth to co-facilitate. Invite one or more guest speakers to reflect on the Scriptures each week.
- ◆ Conduct an Advent activity session to prepare families to celebrate Advent
- ◆ Prepare a Christmas family celebration where by families are invited to attend a fun session of craft, music, prayer and other activities based on the Christmas Scripture readings.
- ◆ Invite children, families and young people to share their time, talent and treasure with the parish. Provide a list of parish ministries and opportunities for involvement.