

# Pre1: Diocesan Coordinators Guide

Thank you for your commitment to developing strong Catholic families and youth. *The Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* national initiative and resources are designed to:

- a. motivate parents to take responsibility for the faith development of their children, and
- b. motivate parishes/schools to support and equip parents and families in passing the faith to their children.

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## Vision, Outcomes and Overview of In-Services

*Here's a snapshot of the vision of Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth:*

- A national trainer offers three consecutive in-services; one for parents, a second for parish, school, and diocesan leadership, and a third for the locally selected team of presenters and consultants. The diocesan team receives access and full copyright permissions to all *SCF* PowerPoint presentations and related materials for use in their diocese.
- A diocesan-appointed consultant will then meet with interested parishes and schools who wish to explore further the *Strong Catholic Families* process. These local facilitated conversations involve one of the diocesan facilitators conducting an initial meeting with the parish/school leadership to help assess their readiness for the *SCF* process and to help them prepare a path for integrating the *SCF* process into the life and structure of the community. This integration involves the local community forming an *SCF* Team and hosting parent presentations that serve as a powerful motivational message to parents urging them to take responsibility for the faith of their children.
- The parish/school leadership receives feedback from parents about what they need to help their families grow more strongly in the Catholic faith and, in conjunction with their

local *SCF* Team, begins to prepare a series of pastoral and formational responses that unfold over the course of the year. As needs are met, new needs will emerge, and additional strategies are developed locally to continue meeting the growing and deepening needs of families and youth.

- Your diocese becomes a part of a growing network of Catholic dioceses across the United States, sharing ideas, wisdom, resources, and best practices.

*Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* is not a program so much as a launch pad for a diocesan-wide initiative to help parish/schools more closely partner with parents in growing faith within the home. Those dioceses that understand this and prepare for this effort are those best positioned to utilize the *Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* resources to their greatest effect.

It is important to be clear at the outset that although these materials focus primarily on the in-services that will be offered to your diocese, their ultimate usefulness to your people will depend on your advance preparations not only for the in-services, but *especially for what happens afterward*. The in-services are designed to launch a diocesan-wide process that will entail offering the parish/school consultations and parent presentation to parishes, organizing further training and networking for your local presenters, orchestrating presentations with parishes/schools, and using the parish/school leader resources to spread the word to pastors, parishes, schools, and deaneries. Thus there are two major tasks for diocesan leadership:

- 1. Preparing for the in-services; and**
- 2. Preparing for what will happen after the in-services** (so that ideally you can announce your detailed plans for next steps at the in-services).

To accomplish these aims you need to develop a collaborative interdisciplinary diocesan implementation team composed of leaders from youth ministry, religious education, family life and perhaps other departments, such as Hispanic ministry, schools, and vocations. It will be the task of this implementation team both to prepare for the in-services and to develop a diocesan system for managing all the follow-up efforts. Dioceses that focus solely on sponsoring the initial training in-service are far less prepared to implement and benefit from the resources and strategies that are part of the *Strong Catholic Families* process.

### ***Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth Training Goals***

Through this training in-service, we seek to...

1. Model and train local consultants/presenters so they can provide consultation to parish/school leaders and present high-impact parent sessions throughout the diocese;
2. Develop a sense of urgency among parish, school, and diocesan leaders so they will be motivated not only to bring the parent presentation to their communities, but also to examine their own assumptions and practices and consider making changes;
3. Provide resources to help leaders equip parents for their indispensable role in forming the faith of their children; and
4. Launch a diocesan-wide effort, using the *Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* presentations and materials, along with other available resources, to place and keep parents and families at the center of your pastoral planning and faith formation programming.

## **Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth In-Services Overview\***

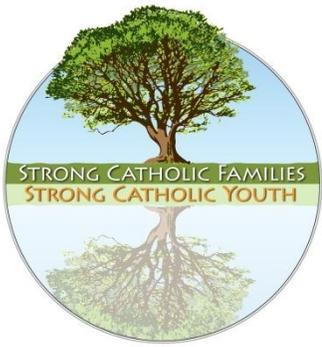
**Training Format:** The typical format of the in-services is as follows and can be adapted to better respond to particular diocesan needs and wishes:

1. **Evening of Day 1:** a two-hour *Foundational Parent Session* (typically 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. or 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.) held at a *pilot parish* (a parish that is centrally located in the diocese and is interested in being an early adopter of the SCF process). Besides interested parents and grandparents in attendance, interested parish and school leaders and those who have been recruited to learn how to present the *Parent Session* (see Afternoon of Day 2, below) are invited to observe this model session.
2. **Morning of Day 2:** a three-hour *Parish/School Leader Session* from 9:00 a.m. – noon (with lunch following if desired). This session is directed toward parish, school, and diocesan leaders, *including and especially pastors*. Those planning to attend are urged to attend the *Parent Session* the night before. The local presenters/consultants recruited by the Diocesan Implementation Team must be in attendance as well. Note: three full hours of presentation/process time is needed for this session.
3. **Afternoon of Day 2:** a three-hour *Orientation for Consultants and Presenters*, typically occurring after lunch from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. This session is for those who have been recruited to consult with parishes/schools and to present the *Parent Session* in the diocese, along with the members of the SCF Diocesan Implementation Team, who will coordinate the SCF follow-up activities in the diocese.

*Important: in three hours we can orient the local presenters and consultants to the four step process that they will lead parish/school leadership through, including the presentation of the Foundational Parent Session. However it would be unrealistic to expect this session to impart all the necessary skills of effective public speaking or delivering an effective PowerPoint presentation. It is strongly recommended that dioceses recruit presenters who already have these skills. Those who do not will need significantly more preparation before they are ready to serve as consultants/presenters to the parishes/schools in your diocese.*

4. **Follow-up with Diocesan Implementation Team:** The national trainer will meet with the diocesan team during or after the *Orientation Session* to discuss next steps and talk through the logistics for local implementation as well as do some debriefing of the entire training experience.

*\*This two-day format is the one that is suggested and utilized most often. However, a one-day Saturday model is also available. Saturday sessions are helpful in dioceses that have many volunteer leaders who cannot get off work to attend daytime programs. Some dioceses have scheduled additional parent and leadership sessions to accommodate geographical and scheduling challenges. Additional sessions will necessitate additional fees.*



# General Information for the Diocesan Host/Coordinator

*Supporting parents in their role as primary leaders of faith within the domestic church has the potential to transform ministry within your diocese. In this light, we offer the following recommendations to diocesan leaders in coordinating the Strong Catholic Families process.*

- 1. Do this collaboratively.** Begin the *Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* planning process by engaging in a dialogue at the diocesan level with other departments/offices that deal with faith formation and families in order to build a collaborative strategy for partnering with parents through the religious education, youth ministry, and family life ministries of the diocese. It is most effective if a diocesan team can be formed from early on.
- 2. Engage the bishop, clergy, pastoral administrators and deacons in the process.** Invite all clergy to attend the foundational parent session and/or the morning parish/school leader session. Ideally, those who attend the leader session also attend the parent session the evening before.
  - Seek their assistance as you promote participation by parish/school leadership in all ministries, given that all parish staff serves families and youth.
  - Request that the bishop encourage the priests to attend and invite him to stop by or attend either the parent or parish/school leader session.
- 3. Thoroughly read the Host Manual (D2) and the Consultant and Presenter Manual (C2).** These manuals are found on the *SCF* discreet website and will offer a thorough explanation of what the *Strong Catholic Families* process looks like from the standpoint of the Parish/School Host (D2 Manual) and the local presenters and consultants that you will be recruiting (C2). This information will be of significant help in determining pilot parishes/schools and potential presenters/consultants, as well as how you wish to set up the implementation process within the diocese.
- 4. Recruit pilot parishes/schools.** Invite family-friendly and willing parishes/schools in each area of your diocese to become *Pilot Parishes/Schools* who commit to attending the parent session and parish/school leader sessions with their pastor and parish/school staff, and who agree to implement the *Strong Catholic Families* process in their parish/school over the next few years. It is also advisable to have some of your local presenters/consultants come from these pilot parishes/schools. These communities will serve as models of how the *SCF* process is implemented and will become a source of helpful feedback and effective practices for future communities who undertake this initiative. A suggested template for recruiting these communities is included in the appendix (see p. 15).

*Note: attendance at the training sessions should not be limited to only pilot parishes/schools. All parish/school leadership should be invited to attend in order to learn more about the Strong Catholic Families initiative.*

5. **Determine your implementation process and costs.** During the parish/school leader session, the diocesan team will be asked to share the process for how an interested parish or school can implement the *Strong Catholic Families* initiative. Therefore, you will need to determine beforehand your registration process and any guidelines outlining the cost for the process. Because the copyright permissions to all *SCF* resources are extended to all parishes and schools within the diocese, it is recommended that the amount be kept as low as possible so no parish/school is prohibited in implementing the initiative based on cost. Additional elements to consider as you set your fee include stipends paid to presenters, costs for any duplication of resource and promotional materials, and any follow-up training/resources for local presenters that may be needed.
  
6. **Recruit local presenters/consultants.** The “presenters” are those who are trained to present the foundational parent session in parishes and schools. “Consultants” are those who meet with the parish/school staff in the initial step to help them determine their readiness to enter into the *Strong Catholic Families* process. In many cases these are one and the same. In some dioceses, only members of the diocesan staff serve in the consultant role. Who serves in what role is a decision made by the Diocesan Implementation Team as each role requires specific gifts and skills.

Ideally, these people should be recruited locally from various ministry areas prior to the in-service. After the training, presenters and consultants will serve as a resource to the local diocese, and should be available for local consultations and presentations with parishes/schools, including:

- Conducting the initial staff inquiry and assessment with the parish/school leadership
- Presenting the foundational parent session at the local community
- Coaching the local *SCF* Team as to appropriate pastoral responses and next steps

**Presenter competencies:** while the *Orientation for Consultants and Presenters* session can reasonably impart only a working familiarity with implementing the *SCF* process (see the *Consultant and Presenter Manual* for a full explanation of this), it is necessary to consider the following characteristics as you consider who to recruit as a local presenter/consultant:

- Collaborative approach to ministry
- Engaging and pastoral style with parents and leadership
- Strong public speaking capabilities with moderate skill in presenting with PowerPoint
- Ability to attend all three of the in-service training sessions
- Expertise with the *SCF* material, or the commitment to develop it

**Additional Considerations in Recruiting Local Presenters/Consultants:**

- In order to develop sufficient command of the research to competently present it, local presenters and consultants need to read *Soul Searching* and *Souls in Transition* (by Christian Smith, Oxford University Press, 2005 and 2009, respectively), ideally prior to the orientation of presenters session. You may choose to start a weekly chapter review among the presenters so these books may be digested and discussed ahead of time.

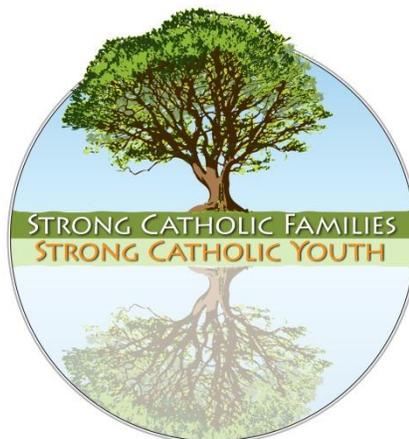
Another excellent related resource on the National Study of Youth and Religion is *Almost Christian* by Kenda Creasy Dean.

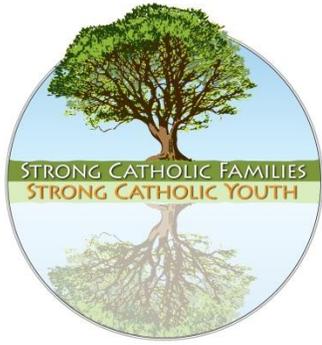
- Fewer but more experienced presenters/consultants (rather than one in every community) are recommended initially. Additional presenters/consultants can be brought on later once the process takes root and parent session demand increases.
  - There are strong advantages to recruiting presenters/consultants from a variety of ministries to assist in establishing the collaborative nature of this venture.
  - Presenters/consultants will normally receive a stipend from parishes/schools for their efforts. The exact amount of this stipend should be determined by the diocesan team in keeping with local norms for such activity. The initial staff consultation and the foundational parent presentations are each 90 – 120 minutes in length.
7. **Highlight local resources.** Invite a representative of the diocesan library or media center to be present with materials that might be helpful to parishes/schools and parents as they go deeper in this process.
  8. **Videotape the sessions for training purposes.** Many dioceses videotape the national trainer sessions for later training purposes and some have done a live streaming/video feed of these two sessions so that others not able to travel to the site may participate.
  9. **Program recommendations for parish host sites.** Make sure all parishes hosting an SCF program, especially the one hosting the first parent session, receive the document “D-2: Parish/School Coordinator’s Manual,” which leads them through the SCF four-step process.
  10. **Provide Promotional Materials.** A sample bulletin announcement for parishes hosting a *Strong Catholic Families* parent session is below and the appendix contains a flyer template.

***Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth***

*The research on teens and faith cannot be clearer: parents matter... a lot!*

\_\_\_\_\_ (parish/school name) is renewing our partnership with parents as we support your role as primary in growing faith within your family. Learn more about how parents can lead their children and teens toward a vibrant faith that embraces discipleship. Join other parents as we work together to bring the ‘good news’ to life around our family tables on \_\_\_\_\_ (insert session date, time & location).





# Task Timeline for Hosting the In-Service

*This is a checklist of tasks that should be completed in the order they are listed. Some tasks refer to additional information found in this document. Your national trainer will review this list with you and your Diocesan Implementation Team via a phone call. Please feel free to contact your trainer at any time with questions you have regarding any steps in this process.*

## Six to Twelve Months Out

- **Begin collaboratively; develop a Diocesan Implementation Team** that will be responsible not only for planning and implementing the in-services, but also to develop a system for bringing the process to parishes/schools across the diocese. Ideally this team will have representatives from various diocesan offices and departments that have responsibility for faith formation, family life, and youth ministry, along with other diocesan offices that may have interest and a stake in the future of faith formation in the diocese. As with any team, there will need to be a primary leader or convener who will call meetings, develop agendas, keep tasks on track in the diocese, and serve as the diocese's principal contact for the *Strong Catholic Families* Initiative.
- **Thoroughly read the Host Manual (D2) and the Presenter's Manual (C2).** These manuals are found on the discreet website and will be of significant help in determining pilot parishes/schools as well as in recruiting local presenters/consultants and implementing the process within the diocese.
- **Review the *Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* process with your bishop** and invite him to be present for one or more of the sessions (either the parent session or parish/school leader session).
- **Contact your assigned national trainer** to become familiarized with this manual and all the information available on the discreet website. Ideally this orientation would take place in a conference call with the other diocesan team members present. Some dioceses have done this with a laptop, Internet connection, and LCD projector, while the national trainer walks the group through the materials via the phone. It is suggested that you also set up a periodic schedule of phone calls/check-in with the national trainer every few months or as questions arise.
- **Consult the "wisdom on the website"** by reviewing comments from other diocesan leaders who have had the *Strong Catholic Families* in-services in their dioceses (found in document Pre2: *Diocesan Leader Survey Responses* and in the Effective Practices page that can be accessed from both the SCF public and discreet websites).

## **Four to Six Months Out**

- **Plan for the in-services**, including timing, site, fees, materials, etc. As noted above, some dioceses plan for multiple parent, parish leader, and/or presenter sessions in order to accommodate the unique scheduling challenges and geography of their dioceses.
- **Secure the host site(s)** for the foundational parent session (Session 1), the parish/school leader session (Session 2), and the orientation of presenters' session (Session 3). Review document D-2 with the staff of host facilities (Host Parish Instructions and Follow-Up Process).
- **Develop promotional materials** using the templates and bulletin announcements in this document as well as examples found on the website. Promote the in-services as broadly as possible to parish/school and diocesan leadership.
- **Plan for implementation after the in-services**, including
  - a. how the diocese will further train and organize its presenters after the in-service;
  - b. how the diocese will market and promote materials (note: templates for promotional materials are provided); and
  - c. how the diocese will develop a system of managing parish/school consultations and foundational parent presentations following the national in-services. This includes how a community will request a presenter, what stipend (if any) is paid, whether the diocese will purchase bulk quantities of the resource booklets/prayer cards for resale, etc.

This plan will need to be presented during the parish/school leadership session. Be sure to include provisions for further training and supervision that you will require so that your presenters are well-prepared before heading out to parishes/schools representing your diocese.

- **Establish a budget for (a) the in-services, and (b) your follow-up efforts.** The budget ought to include expenses and a fee structure for the in-services, as well as all the costs and fees related to implementing *Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* in your diocese, including promotional materials, administrative support, stipends for local presenters, etc.
- **Invite priests directly**, preferably through the bishop's office.

## **Three Months Out**

- **Recruit those who will facilitate the consultations and present the parent sessions in your diocese**, including but not necessarily limited to, the ministry areas that make up your *SCF* team. *Important: please review the information in the General Information section on "Recruitment of Local Presenters/Consultants."*
- **Recruit pilot parishes** that will commit to attending both the parent and parish leader sessions, ideally with their entire pastoral staff. See the General Information section for more on pilot parishes.
- **Meet with the staff of the parish host site** and review document D2: *Parish/School Coordinator's Manual*. In addition, walk through the set-up of the upcoming parent session and review the supplies that are needed (data projector, power cords, seven foot or larger screen or white wall area in center of presentation area, plus a podium and microphone).

## Two Months Out

- **Plan for on-site coordination** of registration, hospitality, meals, and environment as needed at each session venue.
- **Arrange for a representative of the (arch)diocesan library or media center** to be present at the parish leader/training of the presenters sessions with recommended materials for parishes and parents.
- **If any of the sessions are to be videotaped** for the team of local presenters to refer to, make arrangements for equipment and personnel.

## One Month Out

- **Arrange for lodging, meals, and ground transportation** for the in-services trainer.
- **Prepare the resources required for each of the sessions** as outlined in this document and on the discreet website, including assembling the presenter manuals.
- **Order any additional *Family Faith Resource Booklets and Prayer Cards*** that you will want to distribute during the in-services.
- **Prepare the post-training promotional materials** that you will use to market your in-service parent presentations after the training so they are available at all the in-service sessions.
- **Photocopy your plan for implementation after the in-service** (see item above) so that you can provide copies of your plan to your presenters as part of their orientation at the presenters' training session.
- **Establish your administrative structure** to acknowledge and respond to requests for parent and/or parish leader presentations, to schedule presenters for those sessions, to secure evaluations of those sessions, and to organize further follow-up efforts.

## Week of In-Services

- **Invite the Diocesan Team to be available to meet with the national trainer** to review next steps either during or soon after the consultant and presenters orientation.
- **Reimburse trainer** for airfare/other out of pocket expenses on the day of training or the week following.
- **Enter the contact information** for all local presenters and diocesan coordinators on the spreadsheet provided on the website and return it to Michael Theisen at NFCYM.
- **Submit a check request** for the remainder of the in-service payment to NFCYM.
- **Contact Michael Theisen** to offer a summary evaluation of the in-services (via phone 202-674-4209 or e-mail: [miket@nfcym.org](mailto:miket@nfcym.org))

## Within Two Weeks After the In-Services

- **Implement marketing plan, including** the Parish Information Flyer to parish leaders (D-1 on discreet website). Offer to review the *Strong Catholic Families* process at vicariates, regions, and other gatherings of parish priests, staffs, catechetical leaders, youth ministry, and family life leaders. Plan to use the Parish Leader Session PowerPoint and related materials (E-3 and E-4).
- **Manage requests for consultations and parent presentations**, including scheduling presenters, communication, providing parishes with marketing materials, etc.
- **Meet as a diocesan team** to conduct the diocesan follow-up session found in Appendix 7 of this manual. This will help your team determine best responses and next steps for implementation.
- **Follow-up with local presenters** to provide further training as needed, to evaluate their work, to offer encouragement and support, and to learn what they are learning so as to fine-tune.

## Two Weeks to Six Months After the In-Services

- **Implement your follow-up plans** by scheduling parent and parish leader sessions, completing the training of your parent session presenters, and administering parent and parish leader sessions (including evaluating them and offering feedback to your presenters).
- **Meet as a diocesan team** to monitor progress, evaluate, problem-solve, develop new materials, and build on the foundation you have created. Establish regular meeting times, perhaps monthly, or every six weeks.
- **Use follow-up materials** provided with the *SCF* package and develop more of your own.
- **Identify and publicize best practices** that parishes develop in response to the in-services and subsequent parent and parish leader sessions. Commend and celebrate parishes that pioneer fresh, creative, and fruitful ways to place parents and families at the center of their faith formation and parish life. Develop a network of idea sharing and celebrating victories.

## Six to Twelve Months after the In-Services

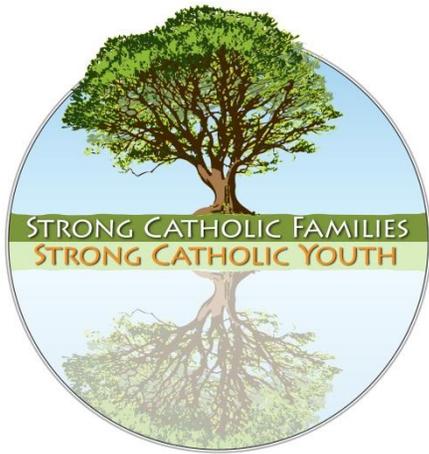
- **Host a gathering of local presenters and parish leaders** who have hosted the *SCF* presentations to further gather wisdom about what is working effectively and to discuss any changes/additions. Repeat this process annually, or as frequently as is helpful.
- **Incorporate workshops and formation sessions** on parent engagement, family prayer skills, the *Strong Catholic Families* process, etc. in diocesan-sponsored conferences, catechist training programs, and other formational opportunities offered regularly within the diocese.

# Appendix



## **Appendix 1: Diocesan Promotional Template for Parish/School Leader Session**

*(See the SCF discreet website right hand column for promo templates developed by others)*



The research on teens and faith cannot be clearer: parents matter... a lot! To help parishes more successfully engage with and pass on our Catholic faith, *(name of diocese)* is inviting all parish leaders to help us in building...

### ***Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth Partnering with Parents to Bring Home the Faith***

*Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* is a strategic process designed to equip parish/school leaders in empowering and supporting parents in leading their children and teens toward a vibrant faith that embraces discipleship. This process provides an excellent perspective of empowering parents and families that can be incorporated into all of parish life, particularly sacramental preparation, adult and child faith formation, as well as all parish ministries.

The two parts of this in-service include a two-hour evening parent session and a half-day parish/school leader session. Leaders are urged to attend both parts of this in-service to gain the full effect of the strategic dynamic that is involved.

#### **Parent Session (Date, time, location)**

- A two-hour parent program designed to model for parish/school leaders how their faith community can pastorally engage and partner with parents in the lifelong process of faith formation.

#### **Parish/School Leader Session (Date, time, location)**

- A half-day in-service for parish/school leaders that uses a change management strategy to critically examine the traditional faith formation system while highlighting a strategic process for moving toward an engaged partnership with parents in living and sharing the Catholic faith at home and through the life and mission of the faith community.

#### **Who Should Attend?**

Pastors, pastoral leaders, religious education and youth ministry coordinators, family life ministers, pastoral council leaders, key catechists, catholic school administrators, and high school campus ministers. Anyone who works with parents, children, and youth!

**(Insert presenter information)**

#### **Registration Information**

## Appendix 2: Parish/School Promotional Template for Parent Session

*(See the SCF discreet website right hand column for promo templates developed by others)*

# Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth

*Partnering with Parents to Bring Home the Faith*

*The research on teens and faith cannot be clearer:  
parents matter... a lot!*

*What is the church doing to engage and partner with parents in supporting them in their rightful role as primary leaders of faith for their family? What can parents do to take ownership for leading their children toward a vibrant faith that embraces discipleship?*

**Come find the answers on**

**Insert Date, Time & Location**

Join together with **insert presenter information** as we...

**Communicate** the reality of current religious beliefs, attitudes, and activities of teens today using contemporary research, which highlights the critical impact of the parents' faith, beliefs, and actions on that of their children/teens.

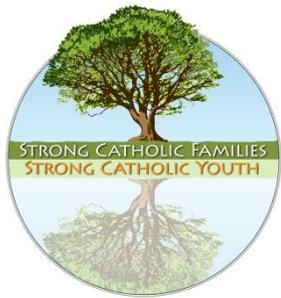
**Examine** the level of partnership between parents, school, and faith formation programs.

**Listen** to parent's hopes, needs, and concerns concerning the faith formation of their children/teens and how the parish/school can support them in their efforts.

**Create** opportunities to seek new ways to begin forming children and teens in their Catholic faith.

**Illustrate** practical ideas, strategies, and resources for growing the domestic church of the home through the development of a family faith formation plan that will lead families to deeper growth and involvement.

**(Insert Presenter Information and Registration Information if Needed)**



## Appendix 3: Pilot Parish Template

### **Pilot Parish Description and Expectations**

*A pilot parish is a community willing to explore and invest in the Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth process of engaging, empowering, & partnering with parents and families within faith formation and throughout parish life.*

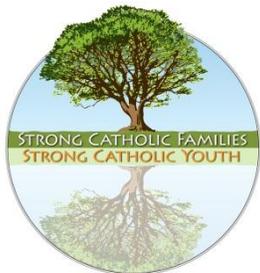
#### **Expectations of Pilot Parishes:**

- Attendance of pastor and faith formation staff at the diocesan-sponsored in-service training (parent session and the leader sessions) on **(insert date)**.
- By **(insert date 2 weeks from time of parish leader in-service)** the parish will schedule an initial *Strong Catholic Families* consultation to be held before **(insert date that allows parishes some planning & flexibility, but creates a deadline)**.
- Commitment to ongoing process and dialogue with the Office of **insert office name**.

#### **Expectations of the Diocesan Office (insert name of coordinating office)**

- Office will provide resources and support as needs arise.
- Personal consultation from diocesan office with the parish staff to walk/talk through the process and determine next steps:
  - Minimum of ninety minutes, can be adjusted to meet needs of parish
  - All parish staff and selected key leaders in attendance
- Commitment to ongoing process, dialogue, and sharing of best practices with other parishes/schools.

### ***Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth*** **Pilot Parish Response Form**



Our community would like to commit to serve as a pilot parish for the diocese in the *Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* initiative. We understand that this commitment includes involvement of our leadership, including the youth ministry leader, religious education/faith formation leader, and pastor as this process unfolds over the next several years.

Parish Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred dates for the initial *Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* staff consultation:

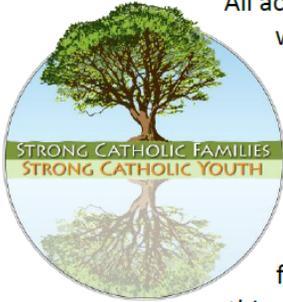
1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Insert Return Address/Fax Information Here**

## Appendix 4: Information Flyer

# B uilding Strong Catholic Families... It Takes a Partnership!

### Partnering with Parents to Bring Home the Faith



All across the country, pastors—along with parish and school leaders—are asking for effective ways to engage parents in the life and mission of the church, as well as seeking ways to help them take ownership as the primary leaders of faith within their families. To work together toward

this desirable goal, we invite you to consider a dynamic grassroots process, designed to reach out to parents in a way that empowers and challenges them to form *Strong Catholic Families*.

### What is Strong Catholic Families About?

*Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth* is an ongoing parish- or school-based process that engages and strengthens parents and families in growing as a domestic church through a close and vital partnership with the parish and school community.

### How Does it Work?

The *Strong Catholic Families* process is made up of four distinct steps that lead to numerous avenues of faith growth within families and the entire faith community.

The process begins with consultations between a diocesan consultant and parish/school leadership. During these meetings, the consultant presents an overview of the *Strong Catholic Families* dynamic and assists the leaders in assessing their readiness to begin building strong Catholic families and in thinking through the implications this direction will have upon current programming and structures. Once the leadership is prepared to make this initial commitment, it begins to assemble a local team of parents and staff to prepare for the next steps.

**Step 2** seeks to engage parents through presentations and dialogues with a diocesan-trained presenter who uses contemporary research combined with engaging visuals and pertinent stories to help parents understand the critical role they possess in how faith is lived in their home and especially in their children's lives. Follow-up gatherings will help engage parents in exploring their

emerging needs and concerns while exploring practical strategies for how to best grow in faith as a family.

**Step 3** involves additional critical reflection and discernment by all involved: staff, leaders, parents, and the local *Strong Catholic Families* Team, concerning the next steps in partnering with one another to empower and support family faith growth.

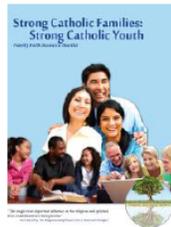
**Step 4** is an ongoing and evolving movement comprised of implementing new strategies, further reflection and evaluation, and continued commitment to supporting the growing partnerships between the institutional church/school and the domestic church. This cycle continues throughout the years ahead as more and more families become empowered to grow in their Catholic faith.

### What Happens as a Result?

In a nutshell, evangelization! But the specific look is as diverse as the hundreds of parishes and schools and the dozens of dioceses who make up the growing *Strong Catholic Families* network because each local community decides its best direction given the unique resources, culture, and history of the community. Some of these local responses have included the following:

- *Adjusting program structures to accommodate family faith gatherings between Masses.*
- *Parent groups that meet during sacramental sessions.*
- *Sessions on how to lead prayer and share faith in the home, developing family mission statements, and more.*
- *Coaching parents to pass on the Catholic faith to kids.*
- *Intergenerational Vacation Bible School programs.*
- *Online webinars for parents on Catholic faith topics.*

### What Is the Cost?



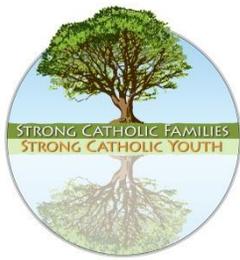
There is very minimal cost for this initiative because *your diocese has already purchased the copyright permissions for you to use every year!* A community may choose to purchase color copies of the *Family Faith Resource Booklet* and table tent prayer cards, which each family receives during the initial parent session, but permission is granted for these resources to be copied locally as needed.

### Who is Behind This Initiative?

The *Strong Catholic Families* initiative is presented in partnership by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM), the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL), the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers (NACFLM), and the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). It is also available in Spanish!



Contact Your Diocese to Begin Building *Strong Catholic Families* Today!



## Appendix 5: Preparation of Resources by Diocesan SCF Coordinator

*Prepare the resources required for each of the in-service sessions.  
All resources are on the discreet website.*

### 1. Parent Session

A1: Parent Response Form, one per person.

\*A2: *Family Faith Resource Booklet*, one per family, parish leader, and trainers.

\*A3: Table Tent Prayer and Blessing Cards: one per family, parish leader, and trainers.

*\* Note: Fifty copies of these two resources will be provided to the host as part of the program fee. Additional copies may be ordered at a discounted price from the NFCYM Store (go to: <https://store.nfcymoffice.net/shop/pc/home.asp>. Please be sure orders are made at least three weeks in advance so they arrive in time for the session. Permission to reproduce these documents in **black and white** locally is granted to participating dioceses and their institutions that use this program. Color copies must be purchased through the NFCYM store.*

### 2. Leader Session

E-mail the PDF of the article *“Forming Young Disciples: Are We Asking the Right Questions”* along with any other necessary logistical information in advance.

B1: Copy of each of the resources from the Parent Session if they do not yet have one.

B2: Leader PowerPoint slide handout PDF, one per person (check with your trainer to see which version should be copied and when it is handed out).

B3: SCF Information Flyer, one per person.

B4: Session Evaluation Form, one per person.

### 3. Orientation of Consultants and Presenters

NOTE: those marked with an \* in this section should be copied double-sided and assembled in a three-ring binder in the order in which they are listed.

C1: Parent Session (Foundational) PowerPoint. Trainers should be given the discreet website password to download this PowerPoint directly onto their computers.

\*C2: Consultant and Presenter’s Manual

\*D2: Parish/School Host Manual

\*C3: Slide Summary for Parent Session

\*C4: Presenter Notes for Parent Session

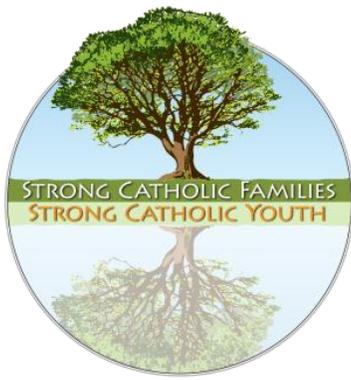
C5: Resource Price List Flyer

### 4. Material for Parish/School Hosts

*The material in this section is for the local presenters/consultants to use when they do a parish/school consultation and/or parent session. These items should be downloaded directly by each local presenter and distributed by them to parish/school leadership accordingly. **Local trainers should not give parish/school leaders access codes to the discreet website.***

### 5. Resources for Diocesan Coordinating Team

*Diocesan coordinators should follow the steps outlined in this section after the national training in-service has been completed.*



## Appendix 6: Parent Response Form

### ***Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth*** *Partnering with Parents to Bring Home the Faith*

*Completing this form does not obligate you to anything  
 nor add you to any mailing list.*

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

Parish \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Check those that apply:**

- I am interested in meeting with other parents for sharing ideas and support. Please contact me as groups begin to form.
- I am interested in helping our parish plan some follow-up steps to creating Strong Catholic Families and Youth.
- I am interested in receiving resources (print/electronic/e-mail) to help me parent my children in the faith.
- I am interested in becoming more involved in our church:  for myself  with my family
- Additional comments or ideas you wish to communicate to the leadership of the parish:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please rate today's Parent Presentation:**

	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Ok</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
Presenter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content of Presentation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

One thing I learned (or was reminded of) in this presentation \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

One thing I (or my family) might do differently because of what I heard today: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*“The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.”*

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican, Dec. 7, 1965

**Take a few moments to help us to better support and partner with you...**

Our Catholic Church and faith are here to support you with your children, your family, and in our parish community. **This means that whatever you are dealing with matters to the church.** We are here to celebrate what is working and to walk with you as you face life’s expected and unexpected challenges.

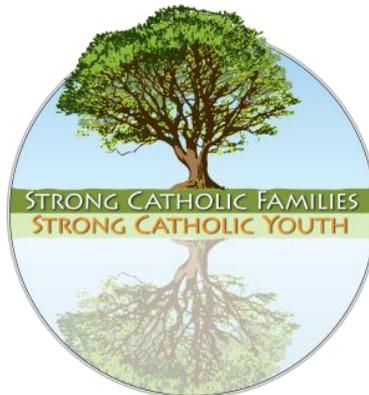
**Please let us know how we can be more supportive of you and your family by checking the area(s) below.** If you check any of the following, we will respond to you directly and confidentially. May God bless you and your family and know that our love, prayers, and support are with you!

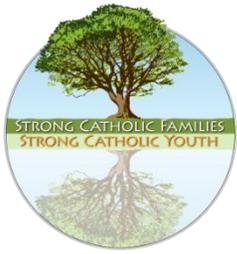
- |                                                                    |                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building family traditions                | <input type="checkbox"/> Support for my marriage                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family prayer resources                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Family counseling resources                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doing service for others with my children | <input type="checkbox"/> Need a parent support group                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ways to volunteer in our community        | <input type="checkbox"/> Stress and time management                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking about faith and morals at home    | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol, drugs, and addiction issues      | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding the other generation         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dating and adolescent sexuality           | <input type="checkbox"/> Health needs for family or extended family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Websites, books, & family resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Support for single parents                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making moral decisions in our family      | <input type="checkbox"/> Support for blended families               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with loss and grief               | <input type="checkbox"/> Support for incarcerated family members    |

Other requests or needs: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What is the best way to reach you during the day?**

- Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_





## Appendix 7: Follow-Up Session for Diocesan Implementation Team

*Following is a template for a follow-up gathering with the SCF Diocesan Implementation Team after they have collectively experienced the national training in-service sessions.*

**For:** Diocesan leaders from various offices, agencies, and departments. Led by the Diocesan SCF Coordinator.

**Outcomes:** At the conclusion of the meeting, diocesan staff members will have ...

- Discussed their own thoughts, feelings, reactions, and responses to the presentation(s) (assuming they have seen the parent presentation; if not, the parent presentation ought to be experienced by all participants prior to the meeting).
- Identified emerging priorities based on the information presented.
- Discussed and identified next steps.

**Agenda:** *With the many and varied diocesan leadership structures here in the U.S., this agenda will necessarily need to be adapted for local circumstances.*

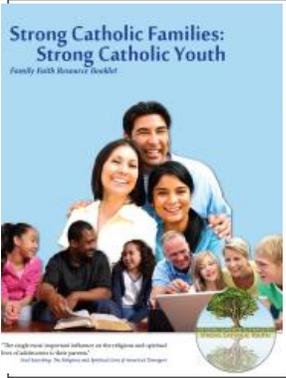
- a. **Round robin discussion:** each diocesan leader has several minutes to provide initial responses to the information, guided by the following:
  - What surprised you?
  - What struck you as most significant for the diocese? For your ministry/service area?
  - What did this information suggest to you that our diocese should be either strengthening or doing differently?
- b. **Common threads and emerging themes:** diocesan leaders take a few moments of quiet prayer to reflect on what they have heard, focusing on emerging common themes. Following the reflection, and by way of discerning possible emerging diocesan priorities, they brainstorm responses to these two sentence stems (rules of brainstorming apply, with no criticism of ideas and minimal discussion of ideas, so as to generate a list of material that will be prioritized in a subsequent step):
  - All of this says to me that...
  - We need (or need to)...
- c. **Prioritization:** after the brainstorming, the diocesan leaders discuss the various ideas that have been generated so as to seek consensus on what seem to be the emerging priority needs. Note that consensus is not the same thing as compromising, or finding the least common denominator that all can agree on. Rather it is the hard work of listening, seeking understanding, and moving toward ideas that gather the most general enthusiasm because of the potential for high positive impact. This step can be accomplished with a form of numerical prioritization (e.g., a scale of zero to five, with five being the highest ranked). However, this approach without conversation can bypass important insights and lead to a less satisfactory result.

- d. **Next steps:** these of course will vary greatly according to parishes, resources, demographics, size of parish staff, etc. **Following are four possible next step scenarios.** They are neither mutually exclusive nor are they necessarily sequential. Parent gatherings, for instance, may well lead to more substantial pastoral planning. Conversely, either a targeted or general pastoral planning effort can make good use of additional *SCF* presentations and parent gatherings across the diocese to generate interest, engagement, and leadership by parents themselves.
1. **Multiple parish leader presentations:** if the diocesan leaders discern that broad-based consciousness-raising ought to happen so as to increase the sense of urgency across the diocese, they may choose to orchestrate additional *SCF* parish/school leader presentations for the priests and parish/school leaders of the diocese, using the material on the discreet website, including the wide use of the *SCF* parish promotional flyer (D-1) with parish/school leadership.
  2. **Follow-up parent gathering(s):** perhaps in conjunction with *SCF* parent presentations, diocesan leaders may decide to collaborate with the *SCF* parishes/schools to plan and implement a variety of follow-up opportunities for parents.
  3. **Targeted pastoral/formational responses:** if the information presented in *SCF* calls for targeted pastoral or formational responses, the diocesan leadership may convene special task forces or working groups to pursue one or several of these or consider offering workshops or in-services at regularly scheduled diocesan gatherings on:
    - a. Parent Engagement by the Parish/School
    - b. Family-Centered, Parent-Empowered Sacramental Ministry\*
    - c. Resourcing and Building up the Domestic Church
    - d. Family-Based, Parent-Led Faith Formation
    - e. Whole Community Catechesis
    - f. Family Impact Analysis
    - g. Family Advocacy
    - h. Diocesan Symposium on “Putting, Families, Parents, & Children at the Center” or (“Growing the Marriage-Building Parish”)
    - i. Athletics in Support of the Domestic Church
    - j. Comprehensive Youth Ministry, Youth Ministry Leadership
    - k. Resource Development (ongoing, current, web-based and other “best” resources made instantly or immediately available to parishes and families)
  4. **Diocesan pastoral planning:** if diocesan leadership discerns that the information presented in *SCF* calls for a unified diocesan-wide pastoral response, convene key leadership to develop a collaborative broad-based planning process aimed at helping parish/schools to partner more closely with parents in passing on the faith.

## Materials to Support Trainings

# Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth

### Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth Booklet



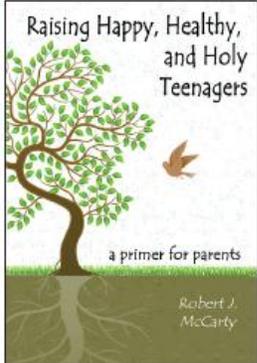
Parents are charged with the responsibility of passing on the gift of faith to their children.

This short booklet is full of great information and helpful tips for families to grow in faith together.

\$5.50 (1-39 copies)  
\$5.00 (40-79 copies)  
additional discounts available to \$3.00 per book

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### Raising Happy, Healthy, and Holy Teenagers



Parents of teenagers will find this short volume full of tips and recommendations on how to guide and support their son or daughter through the adolescent years. Principles discussed—affirmation, respect, effective communication, and modeling faith.

\$9.95 (1-49 copies)  
\$8.45 (50-99 copies)  
additional discounts available to \$7.95 per book

### Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth Prayer/Blessing Card (English or Spanish)



Colorful table tent cards are a great way to encourage prayer in the home. One side offers two different meal prayers. The other features two blessing prayers, a general blessing of family and a special occasion blessing.

Available in English and Spanish.

\$2.00 per card (1-24)  
\$1.80 per card (25-49)  
additional discounts available to \$1.20 per card

Find additional resources on our website.  
[www.nfcym.org/family](http://www.nfcym.org/family)

Purchase these items from our Online Store.  
[www.NFCYM.org](http://www.NFCYM.org), Click Online Store  
Plan ahead for your training. All orders are fulfilled within 10 business days.



Serving Those Who Serve the Young Catholic Church  
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