

INTERPRETING THE DIVERSITY OF
RELIGIOUS & SPIRITUAL NEEDS
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21ST CENTURY EVANGELIZATION & FAITH FORMATION

GROWING DIVERSITY

- Generational
- Developmental
- Ethnic & Cultural
- Family Structures
- Faith Practice & Community Engagement
- Religious & Spiritual Needs





TWO CRITICAL UNCERTAINTIES

1. Will trends in U.S. culture lead people to become more receptive to organized religion, and in particular Christianity or will trends lead people to become more resistant to organized religion and Christianity?
2. Will people's hunger for and openness to God and the spiritual life increase over the next decade or will people's hunger for and openness to God and the spiritual life decrease.



FAITH FORMATION 2020

Dominant Cultural Attitude toward Organized Religion

Receptive

Low

High

People's Hunger for God and the Spiritual Life

Resistant



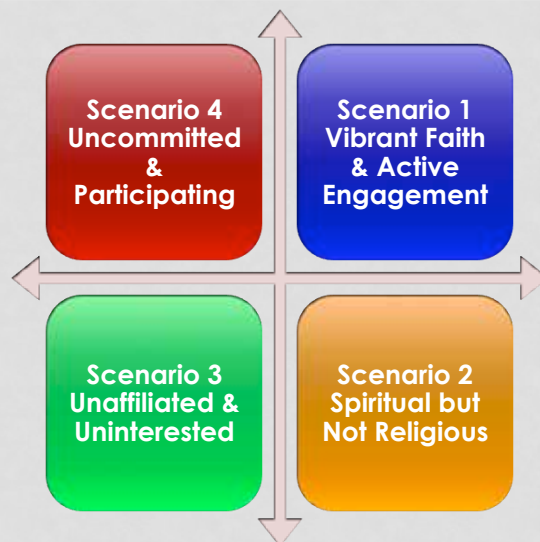
Faith Formation 2020 Scenarios

RELATIONSHIP WITH ORGANIZED RELIGION AND CHRISTIANITY

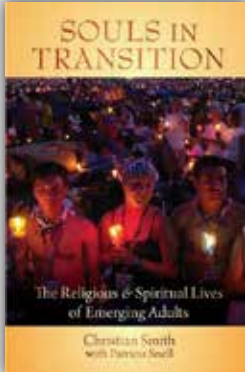
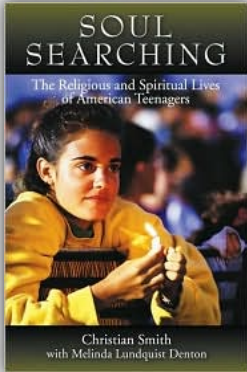
RECEPTIVE TO ORGANIZED RELIGION



4 SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE



NSYR RESEARCH



YOUTH & EMERGING ADULT RELIGIOSITY

Youth (teens)

Abiders	Adapters	Assenters	Avoiders	Atheists
20%	20%	31%	24%	5%

Emerging Adults (20s)

Committed Traditionalists	Selected Adherents	Spiritually Open	Religiously Indifferent	Religiously Disconnected	Irreligious
15%	30%	15%	25%	5%	10%

YOUTH RELIGIOSITY

- 1. Abiders:** highest levels of religiosity and practice: believe in God, pray regularly, engage in personal religious practice, attend services, serve others, think about the meaning of life; most likely to say their religion is the only true faith
- 2. Adapters:** high levels of personal religiosity + accepting of other people's faiths + attend religious services more sporadically
- 3. Assenters:** believe in God and feel somewhat close to God, but they are minimally engaged with their faith and practice only occasionally. Religion is tangential to other aspects of their lives.
- 4. Avoiders:** believe in God but have low levels of religious practice; God is distant, impersonal; and often don't name a religious affiliation.
- 5. Atheists:** don't believe in God and don't attend services.

EMERGING ADULTS RELIGIOSITY

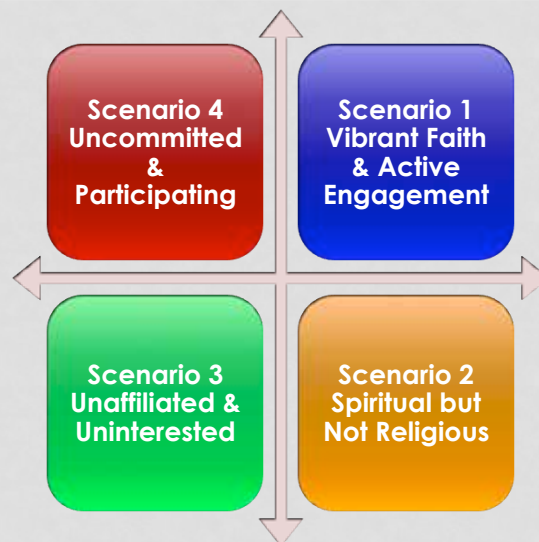
- 1. Committed Traditionalists:** strong religious faith; articulate beliefs; active practice; commitment to faith is a significant part of their identities and moral reasoning, at least somewhat regularly involved in some religious group
- 2. Selected Adherents:** believe and perform certain aspects of their religious traditions but neglect and ignore others; more discriminating about what they are willing to adopt of their religious tradition's beliefs and practices
- 3. Spiritually Open:** not very committed to a religious faith but are nonetheless receptive to and at least mildly interested in some spiritual or religious matters.

EMERGING ADULTS RELIGIOSITY

4. **Religiously Indifferent:** neither care to practice religion nor oppose it; simply not invested in religion either way; too distracted with and invested in other things in life and unconcerned with matters of faith to pay any real attention to religion.
5. **Religiously Disconnected:** have little to no exposure or connection to religious people, ideas, or organizations; neither interested in nor opposed to religion; faith simply has not been a part of their lives in any significant way.
6. **Irreligious:** hold skeptical attitudes about and make critical arguments against religion generally, rejecting the idea of personal faith



4 SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE





SCENARIO #1

- People are actively engaged in a Christian church, are spiritually committed, and growing in their faith.
- People have found their spiritual home within an established Christian tradition and a local faith community that provides ways for all ages and generations to grow in faith, worship God, and live their faith in the world.
- The future of faith formation in Scenario #1 is being significantly impacted by people in their 20s & 30s leaving established Christian churches, and the decline in family religious socialization and practice at home.



SCENARIO #4

- People attend church activities occasionally, but are not actively engaged or spiritually committed.
- They may participate in significant seasonal celebrations and celebrate sacraments and milestones (marriage, baptism). Some may even send their children to religious education classes.
- Spiritual commitment is low and the connection to the church is more social and utilitarian than spiritual.
- While receptive to an established church, their occasional engagement in church life does not lead them toward spiritual commitment, and their spiritual commitment does not lead them to engagement.



SCENARIO #2

- People are spiritually hungry and searching for God and the spiritual life, but most likely are not affiliated with organized religion and an established Christian tradition.
- Some may join a nondenominational Christian church focused on their spiritual needs, while others may find an outlet for their spiritual hunger in small communities of like-minded spiritual seekers, in local or global acts of service, or in online spiritual resources and communities.
- The Spiritual but Not Religious reflect a growing minority of the American population, especially among the eighteen- to thirty-nine-year-olds.

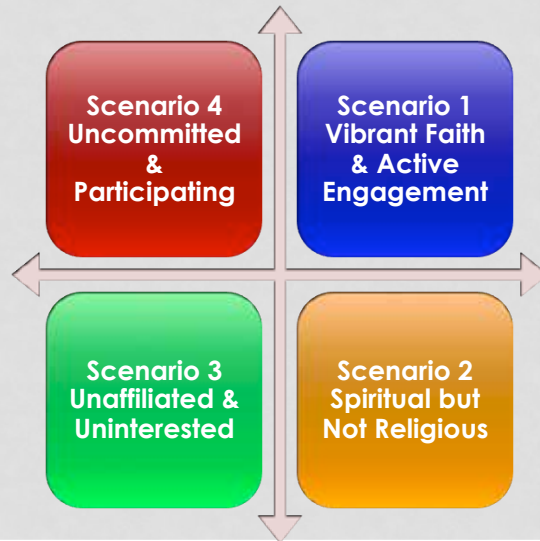


SCENARIO #3

- A world in which people experience little need for God and the spiritual life and are not affiliated with organized religion and established Christian churches.
- The Unaffiliated and Uninterested reject all forms of organized religion and reflect an increasing percentage of the American population, especially those in their 20s and 30s.



4 SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE



OUR GOALS

- To “put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ” (GDC no. 80).
- To “encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith” (GDC no. 66).
- “The object of catechesis is communion with Jesus Christ. Catechesis leads people to enter the mystery of Christ, to encounter him, and to discover themselves and the meaning of their lives in him.” (NDC 19 B, p. 55).

OUR VISION

Churches want faith formation that helps people. . .

- grow in their relationship with God throughout their lives
- live as disciples of Jesus Christ at home, in the workplace, in the community and the world
- develop an understanding of the Bible and the Catholic faith tradition
- deepen their spiritual life and practices
- engage in service and mission
- relate the Christian faith to life today
- participate in the life and ministries of the faith community

THE NEW EVANGELIZATION - USCCB

The *New Evangelization* is a call to each person to deepen his or her own faith, have confidence in the Gospel, and possess a willingness to share the Gospel. It is a personal encounter with the person of Jesus, which brings peace and joy. The New Evangelization provides the lens through which people experience the Church and world around them.

THE NEW EVANGELIZATION - USCCB

- ⦿ Through our Baptism, we become witnesses to the Gospel and disciples of Christ. As disciples and witnesses, we are called to ongoing conversion.
- ⦿ To become evangelizers, we must first be evangelized. If we truly believe in the Gospel, then as a Church, we must take seriously Christ's commandment to "go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

THE NEW EVANGELIZATION - USCCB

- ⦿ We bring the Good News to all people and nations, including those who have never heard of Christ, those who are no longer actively practicing their faith, and all those who are fervent in the faith.
- ⦿ The New Evangelization challenges us to "re-propose" the Gospel to our missing brothers and sisters—those members of the Body of Christ who have drifted away from the Lord's Table.

OUR NEW STARING POINT

- We tend to think of evangelization and catechesis as two separate, church-based ministries, activities, initiatives, or (worse yet) programs.
- We tend to think “church-first” – “How do we get people back to Sunday Mass?”
- We tend to think “one-size-fits-all” evangelization and catechesis – “back to church” campaigns, age-graded curriculum, etc.

OUR NEW STARING POINT

- What if we thought LIFELONG FAITH FORMATION – which is both evangelical and catechetical – and engages people where they are in their spiritual journey?
- What if we started “people-first” – using the four scenarios as a interpretive tool to understand the religious and spiritual needs, practices, and religiosity of people today?
- AND what if we personalized and customized faith formation content and experiences for specific groups (ages, generations, families) – fashioning faith formation around the people?

THINKING 4-SCENARIO FAITH FORMATION

<u>Scenario #4</u>	<u>Scenario #1</u>
<u>Scenario #3</u>	<u>Scenario #2</u>

FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Scenario #4</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent faith formation @Baptism • Parent mentoring–Baptism & beyond • “Deepening Faith & Engagement” • Milestone & church year celebrations • VBS (w/ parents), early childhood FF • Mom’s groups / Dad’s groups • Family service, family camp • Online family resource center 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Scenario #1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith Practices @Home (rituals, Bible reading, devotions, service, prayer) • Parent faith formation & mentoring • Milestones celebrations • @Church family gatherings • VBS, family camp, family service • Early childhood faith formation • Online family resource center
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Scenario #3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family life center • Family events: movie nights, concerts, children’s festivals • Mom’s groups, Dad’s groups • VBS (with parents), family camp, family service • Parenting programs & resources • Online family resource center 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Scenario #2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group family experiences • VBS (w/parents), family camp, family service, children/family events • Parenting programs • “Spiritual Seeker” experiences for parents • Mom’s groups, Dad’s groups • Online family resource center

FAITH 2020
Faith Formation for the 21st Century

Welcome to the Faith Formation 2020 Resource Center

The Faith Formation 2020 initiative guides congregations and their leaders in imagining new directions for faith formation and designing 21st century leaders. The tools and resources on this website are designed to help you and your congregation design models, practices, strategies, and activities to address the spiritual and religious needs of all ages and generations in your congregation today and into the future. Be sure to check out **FF 2020 Strategies and Resources** which provides you with articles, resources, and web links to learn about, develop, and implement faith formation innovations in your congregation.

Read an Introduction to Faith Formation 2020.
View PowerPoint Presentations & Workshop Handouts.
Be sure to sign-up to receive news or additions to the Faith Formation 2020 Resource Center.

Four Scenarios for the Future of Faith Formation

- Analyze the driving forces influencing faith formation and the diversity of spiritual and religious needs of people and communities today.
- Envision the future of faith formation through four scenarios: 1) people of vibrant faith and active engagement in the parish community, 2) people who participate occasionally but are not actively engaged or spiritually committed, 3) people who are spiritual but not religious, and 4) people who are uninterested in the spiritual life and unaffiliated with religion.

FAITH 2020
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