



ROOT

Leader Guide



Faith and Family Life
Catholic Ministries

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AN INVITATION

You have been invited to accompany families as they grow deep roots of faith grounded in the essential beliefs of the Church. Whether a family is new to the faith or has been practicing for some time, we all can grow deeper roots and glean new insights from the richness of our Tradition.

Root is a foundational catechetical experience focusing on the Creed for children, teens, and parents, with age appropriate content for each. Over the course of 6 self-led Mini-Series, and/or 6 Family Meetings, and 7 At-Church Sessions, families will grow into a deeper understanding of our faith as they are led through the contents of the first part of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Initiatory catechesis is at the service of the profession of faith. Those who have already met Jesus Christ feel the growing desire to get to know him more intimately, expressing a first inclination toward the Gospel. In the Christian community catechesis, together with the liturgical ceremonies, works of charity, and experience of fraternity, “initiates them in knowledge of faith and apprenticeship in the Christian life, thereby promoting a spiritual journey which brings about ‘a progressive change in outlook and morals’ (AG 13)”. (Directory for Catechesis 34)

A FEW TIPS

- By reading and experiencing the content yourself, you will be best equipped to accompany this program. We recommend first becoming familiar with the material before implementing it.
- Families can be grouped into small groups (6-8 families) to share this journey with. Parents can learn from each other as they recount their Family Meeting experiences. Companions can help weave together these individual families into a small faith community.
- *Root* At-Church Sessions bring families together to share glory stories from past Family Meetings and to introduce and prepare parents and children for the upcoming Family Meeting.
- Begin with Time is Holy, included in the At-Church Support Materials which includes the Family Meeting Video Guides to help parents better understand how to lead a family meeting in their home.
- Check in with families regularly using our Family Follow Through system available on Martha or as a PDF. This helps with accountability.
- Share photos from the Family Follow Throughs in your bulletin, newsletter, emails, or bulletin boards.

AT-CHURCH SUPPORT MATERIALS

It is important to have parents gathered periodically throughout the *Root* process. We have created a full version, with 7 Sessions, for use with *Root* for Parents and *Root* for Children combined. We have also created a simplified version, with 4 Sessions for use when only using *Root* for Children.

The goal of gathering is to:

- Break open the series of reflections they have been working on independently.
- Find out what is going well and what they are struggling with in the *Root* Box Family Meetings.
- To prepare them for the next family meetings with any tips, inspiration, or information that will support them.
- To meet and hear from other parents on a similar journey. There is wisdom in any room of adults, especially parents!
- To provide experiential activities to help support and bring to life the studying they have been doing.
- To pray together - for each other and for their families.

This resource has been provided to support you in facilitating family Sessions held at-church throughout the *Root* experience. The sessions include separate experiences for parents and children, and a combined family prayer experience to close your sessions.

There is plenty of content to fill a 1-1.5 hour time frame. This material could be used from start to finish or you can use different sections to supplement things you may have already planned. We realize each of our directors have different gifts; some are wonderful teachers, some are storytellers, others are better facilitating small groups, some are gifted in finding volunteers to present. Use your strengths to lead your family Sessions, and look for others who can take the pieces you are not as confident in. It takes a team!

There are some things that need to be pulled together to help bring these lessons to life. We have given you supply lists. We have also suggested ways to set a mood in the room; candles, music, dimming the lights etc. We feel it is critical to set holy spaces to lead parents into deeper intimacy with Christ and themselves. The children's Sessions always begin with gathering around a prayer table covered with different items for each

lesson to help draw them into the experience. Depending on the size of the group, you may decide to break the group up into classrooms led by catechists and helpers. We can not over emphasize the impact of simple but beautiful decor, great hospitality, and intimate prayerful spaces. Your attention to detail tells everyone this is important, we prepared for you!

As a Church we are just beginning the journey of calling parents into the opportunity of forming their children and themselves more deeply. We realize parents are in all different places and stages in their own faith journeys. We have written sessions we feel best take into account today's parents. The majority of the parents we encounter have very little theological background, but have the wisdom of their own lives to reflect on. We have found that when given helpful prompts and time to process, they do very well in sharing with each other. Parents, for the most part, are coming to these sessions because they've been told they have to, and probably aren't expecting anything that will truly impact their lives. It is our hope that these Sessions meet them where they are at and slowly lead them into something more. Feel free to scale the material up or down. It is most important that families leave with a positive experience of Church and community, feeling like they have a place in it.

SEQUENCE

When used with Root for Parents and Children.



Time Is Holy

At-church Session to introduce the resources and model the method. Included in the At-Church Support Materials.



Parent Mini-Series

At-home parents study and reflect.



Session

At-church in separate Sessions, parents and children learn and reflect to prepare to share in their Family Meeting.



Family Meeting

At-home the family is lead through an intentional conversation of faith.



5X

Continues steps 2-4 in this same order 5 more times.

MASTER PLANNER

Download the Pathways Master Planner [here](#) to schedule and organize your implementation of Root.

ROOT FOR PARENTS

Root for Parents is a foundational catechetical experience designed to meet the fast paced lives of parents. Through short reflections, parents will get to know the Trinity and the essential teachings of our faith contained in the Creed. They will deepen their understanding of what we believe and be empowered to share faith with their families.

MODULES

The resource contains 6 self-led Mini-Series, of 5 (15 minute) Modules each. Each module includes a reflection on a short section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, reflection questions, practical suggestions, and concludes with a prayer. The print edition is available as a spiral bound book, while the digital version contains written and audio formats.

ROOT FOR CHILDREN

Root for Children is a foundational catechetical experience designed for elementary and junior high school aged children. Led by their parents, children will get to know the Trinity and the essential teachings of our faith contained in the Creed. They will deepen their understanding of what we believe through hands-on activities and meaningful conversations.

FAMILY MEETINGS

The catechesis is presented in the form of Family Meetings. Each Family Meeting includes: a gathering ritual, opening prayer, check-in, experiential activity, teaching, and closing prayer. Each family meeting is designed to take 20-40 minutes.

The content has been written to help families encounter the truths of our faith as they are presented in the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed is a synthesis of the central teachings of our faith. We have chosen one aspect from the parent series to focus on for each meeting. These six Family Meetings are meant to be conversation starters and seeds that we pray grow day to day as a family journeys in faith.

GATHER

The gathering ritual will include leading the family in prayer by speaking aloud a statement of who they are in relationship with God. Rituals are meaningful moments that, when continually shared, help to unite a family. This gathering ritual will help provide a regular rhythm to begin the Family Meetings. As families gather, God fills the space around them and within them.

CHECK-IN

The check-in is meant to get the conversation started between family members. The question is loosely based on the session's theme, and is one that is easy to answer.

ACTIVITY AND TEACHING

The activity provided is meant to teach the children through a fun and interactive experience. A teaching is also provided that coincides with the activity. Parents are given the language to teach an essential part of the catechesis related to the theme.

Children remember what they “do” and parents remember what they “teach.”

PRAYER

To end each Family Meeting, a prayer is included to be read by a member of the family.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Family Meeting	Theme	Activity
1	God knows us by name and wants to be known by us. We get to know him through the words and actions of revelation.	God rock with names or initials.
2	God is light. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.	Counting all the light sources and shining of flashlight.
3	Jesus grew up in a family just like us. He wants to be close to us everyday.	Smell test with printed scents.
4	Jesus saves us through the power of the cross. Love equals sacrifice.	Tying and untying knots.
5	God gives us his Spirit to continue to be by our side. His power is given through the Sacraments.	Olive oil on skin.
6	We are made to spend eternity with God. God helps us with the race.	Follow the Leader.



FAMILY FOLLOW THROUGHS

Time with family is precious. Following through with this family experience tells your child this is important. With your child, please complete the following tasks after each meeting to turn in.



- Family Meeting 1:** Email a picture of your rock with all your names or initials on it.
- Family Meeting 2:** How many light sources was your family able to count? Email that number to your catechist or director.
- Family Meeting 3:** What were some of your favorite smells? Email them to your catechist or director.
- Family Meeting 4:** Email a picture of your string with its untangled knots.
- Family Meeting 5:** Email the places you saw God today to your catechist or director.
- Family Meeting 6:** Email what the leader did to tire your family out to your catechist or director.

ROOT FOR TEENS

Root for Teens is a foundational catechetical experience designed for high school aged teens. Through short reflections, teens will get to know the Trinity and the essential teachings of our faith contained in the Creed. They will deepen their understanding of what we believe and be empowered to share faith with their families.

MODULES

This resource includes 6 self-led Mini-Series, of 5 (15 minute) Modules each. Each module includes short reflections based on a section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, is followed up by a reflection question that requires a response, and concludes with a prayer.

ROOT FOR SPONSORS ADD-ON

Similar content adapted for sponsors is also available. The sponsor course can be shared through Martha to the sponsors without needing an additional login, although there will be no ability to track progress or receive responses. The content includes 6 At-Home Teen and Sponsor Meetings. Ideally, both the teen and sponsor would be reflecting on the Modules from a Mini-Series before each Teen and Sponsor Meeting. The Meetings focus on faith sharing based on this content and are followed up by a follow through reflection by the teen after the Meeting.