



# 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 middle childhood (6-10), pre-adolescence (11-13), adolescence (14-18), and parents, with age appropriate content for each. Over the course of 6 self-led Mini-Series at-home, and/or 6 Family Meetings at-home, and 7 Sessions at-church, 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 at-home and at-church material before implementing it.
- Families can be grouped into small groups (4-6 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 their experiences from the Mini-Series and/or Family Meetings and to prepare families for upcoming Family Meetings.
- 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.

# ROOT FOR PARENTS

*Root for Parents* is an 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. The *Root for Parents* content is designed to work with any combination of the middle childhood, pre-adolescence, or adolescence content.

## AT-HOME CONTENT

*Root Book* 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. An audio recording of the content is also available through a QR code or URL found on the inside cover of the book.

## AT-CHURCH CONTENT

It is important to have parents gathered periodically throughout the *Root* process. The goal of gathering is to:

- Break open the Mini-Series of reflections they have been working on at-home.
- 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 Meeting or guided discussion with their teen 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 Sessions held at-church

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throughout the *Root* experience for the whole family that are designed to complement and enhance the at-home content. The Sessions include different content for parents, middle childhood (6-10), pre-adolescence (11-13), and adolescence (14-18). They are sold separately to allow you to use the content combination that best fits your situation. Parents and their children will be separated for the first part of each Session. Each Session ends with a closing prayer for the whole family together that can be used with families that have children in middle childhood (6-10) or pre-adolescence (11-13). If families have children (6-13) and also adolescence (14-18), have the adolescence join for the closing prayers for the whole family. A closing discussion and prayer is also available when used with parents and adolescence only. There is plenty of content to fill a 1-1.5 hour time frame.

The Time is Holy Session is used to introduce *Root* and the rhythm of the process. The sequence then follows this pattern: Mini-Series at-home, Session at-church, and Family Meeting at-home if using the box. For example, after Time is Holy parents/adolescence would be invited to reflect on Mini-Series 1 from the *Root* Book at-home, then the whole family would come to Session 1 at-church, and then they would do Family Meeting 1 from the Root Box at-home. This same pattern occurs 5 more times.

There are some things that need to be pulled together to help bring these Sessions 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. We can not over emphasize the impact of simple but beautiful decor, great hospitality, and intimate prayerful spaces. For the closing discussion and prayer with parents and teens you will need a space where they can sit together. We recommend using your church, but if this is not possible you may need to move to a difference space for these closing experiences or have additional seating available in your space. 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. Do not be discouraged if some of the

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parents struggle to finish the reading before the Session, as they hear the fruit from those who have it will progressively inspire them to go back and read it for themselves. 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.

# ROOT FOR ADOLESCENCE

Root for Teens is a foundational catechetical experience designed for high school aged teens (14-18). 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.

## AT-HOME CONTENT

Root Book 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. An audio recording of the content is also available through a QR code or URL found on the inside cover of the book.

## AT-CHURCH CONTENT

It is important to have teens gathered periodically throughout the *Root* process. The goal of gathering is to:

- Break open the Mini-Series of reflections they have been working on independently.
- Find out what is going well and what they are struggling with.
- To prepare them for a conversation with their parents with inspiration and information that will support them.
- To meet and hear from other teens on a similar journey. There is wisdom in any room of teens!
- 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 Sessions held at-church throughout the *Root* experience for teens that are designed to complement and enhance the at-home content. The Sessions include content designed for adolescence (14-18). Parents and teens will be separated for the first part of each Session. A closing discussion

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and prayer is available when used with parents and adolescence only. If families have children (6-13) and also adolescence (14-18), have the adolescence join for the closing prayers for the whole family which can be found in the *Root for Parents At-Church Content*. There is plenty of content to fill a 1-1.5 hour time frame.

The Time is Holy Session is used to introduce *Root* and the rhythm of the process. The sequence then follows this pattern: Mini-Series at-home and Session at-church. For example, after Time is Holy parents/adolescence would be invited to reflect on Mini-Series 1 from the *Root Book* at-home, then the whole family would come to Session 1 at-church. This same pattern occurs 5 more times.

There are some things that need to be pulled together to help bring these Sessions 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 teens into deeper intimacy with Christ and themselves. We can not over emphasize the impact of simple but beautiful decor, great hospitality, and intimate prayerful spaces. For the closing discussion and prayer with parents and teens you will need a space where they can sit together. We recommend using your church, but if this is not possible you may need to move to a difference space for these closing experiences or have additional seating available in your space. Your attention to detail tells everyone this is important, we prepared for you!

You can begin each Session with an icebreaker game that works with your community. We realize teens are in different places and stages in their own faith journeys. We have written Sessions we feel best take into account today's teens. The majority of the teens we encounter have very little theological background, but have the wisdom of their own lives to reflect on. We have found that when we give them helpful prompts and time to process, they do very well in sharing with each other. It is our hope that these Sessions meet families where they are at and slowly lead them into something more. Do not be discouraged if some of the teens struggle to finish the reading before the Session, as they hear the fruit from those who have it will progressively inspire them to go back and read it for themselves. Feel free to scale the material up or down. It is most important that teens leave with a positive experience of Church and community, feeling like they have a place in it.



# ROOT FOR PRE-ADOLESCENCE

*Root for Pre-Adolescence* is a foundational catechetical experience designed for junior high school aged children (11-13). 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.

## AT-HOME CONTENT

Root Box contains 1 Parent Guide and 6 Family Meetings. Each Family Meeting includes: a gathering ritual, opening prayer, check-in, experiential activity, teaching, and closing prayer. The gather includes leading the family in prayer by speaking aloud a statement of who they are in relationship with God. This gathering ritual will help provide a regular rhythm to begin the Family Meetings. Rituals are meaningful moments that, when continually shared, help to unite a family. As families gather, God fills the space around them and within them. The check-in is meant to get the conversation started between family members. The question is loosely based on the theme, and is one that is easy to answer. 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.” To end each Family Meeting, a prayer is included to be read by a member of the family.

Each family meeting is designed to take 20-40 minutes. We have chosen one aspect from the parent Mini-Series to focus on for each Family 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.

## AT-CHURCH CONTENT

It is important to have jr. high school aged children gathered periodically throughout the *Root* process. The goal of gathering is to:

- To prepare them for the Family Meetings at-home with any reflections, inspiration, or information that will support them.
- To have a positive experience with other children at-church.
- To pray together - for each other and for their families.

This resource has been provided to support you in facilitating Sessions held at-church throughout the *Root* experience for the whole family that are designed to complement and enhance the at-home content. These Sessions include content designed for pre-adolescence (11-14). Each Session ends with a closing prayer for the whole family. There is plenty of content to fill a 1-1.5 hour time frame.

The Time is Holy Session is used to introduce *Root* and the rhythm of the process. The sequence then follows this pattern: Mini-Series at-home, Session at-church, and Family Meeting at-home. For example, after Time is Holy parents would be invited to reflect on Mini-Series 1 from the *Root* Book at-home, then the whole family would come to Session 1 at-church, and then they would do Family Meeting 1 from the *Root* Box at-home. This same pattern occurs 5 more times.

There are some things that need to be pulled together to help bring these Sessions to life. We have given you supply lists. We have also suggested ways to set the environment. We feel it is critical to set holy spaces to lead children into deeper intimacy with Christ and themselves. 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!

Each Session includes a gather, check-in, activity, and teaching. There will also be other games and crafts that will assist in preparing the children to have a successful and meaningful intentional faith conversation at-home with their parents through a Family Meeting. The main teaching is the responsibility of the parents as the primary educators of the faith. What happens at-church is orientated toward the support of this. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the at-home content as well found in the *Root* Box. Feel free to scale the material up or down. Use all of the material or pick and choose the

## ROOT FOR PRE-ADOLESCENCE

sections that best fit your time. You can begin each Session with an icebreaker game that works with your community. We realize pre-adolescence are in different places and stages in their own faith journeys. We have written Sessions we feel best take into account today's pre-adolescence. The majority of the pre-adolescence we encounter have very little theological background, but we have found that when we give them helpful prompts and time to process, they do very well in sharing with each other. Due to maturity differences at this time it may be helpful to break the small groups up by sex. It is our hope that these Sessions meet families where they are at and slowly lead them into something more. It is most important that families leave with a positive experience of Church and community, feeling like they have a place in it.

# ROOT FOR MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

*Root for Middle Childhood* is a foundational catechetical experience designed for elementary school aged children (6-10). 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.

## AT-HOME CONTENT

Root Box contains 1 Parent Guide and 6 Family Meetings. Each Family Meeting includes: a gathering ritual, opening prayer, check-in, experiential activity, teaching, and closing prayer. The gather includes leading the family in prayer by speaking aloud a statement of who they are in relationship with God. This gathering ritual will help provide a regular rhythm to begin the Family Meetings. Rituals are meaningful moments that, when continually shared, help to unite a family. As families gather, God fills the space around them and within them. The check-in is meant to get the conversation started between family members. The question is loosely based on the theme, and is one that is easy to answer. 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.” To end each Family Meeting, a prayer is included to be read by a member of the family.

Each family meeting is designed to take 20-40 minutes. We have chosen one aspect from the parent Mini-Series to focus on for each Family 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.

## AT-CHURCH CONTENT

It is important to have children gathered periodically throughout the *Root* process. The goal of gathering is to:

- To prepare them for the Family Meetings at-home with any reflections, inspiration, or information that will support them.
- To have a positive experience with other children at-church.
- To pray together - for each other and for their families.

This resource has been provided to support you in facilitating Sessions held at-church throughout the *Root* experience for the whole family that are designed to complement and enhance the at-home content. These Sessions include content designed for middle childhood (6-10). Each Session ends with a closing prayer for the whole family. There is plenty of content to fill a 1-1.5 hour time frame.

The Time is Holy Session is used to introduce *Root* and the rhythm of the process. The sequence then follows this pattern: Mini-Series at-home, Session at-church, and Family Meeting at-home. For example, after Time is Holy parents would be invited to reflect on Mini-Series 1 from the *Root* Book at-home, then the whole family would come to Session 1 at-church, and then they would do Family Meeting 1 from the *Root* Box at-home. This same pattern occurs 5 more times.

There are some things that need to be pulled together to help bring these Sessions to life. We have given you supply lists. We have also suggested ways to set the environment. We feel it is critical to set holy spaces to lead children into deeper intimacy with Christ and themselves. 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!

Each Session begins around a prayer table with items related to that Session's theme. This helps to engage the imagination of the children and provide tangible connections to what they will be learning. There will also be other games, crafts, activities, songs and teachings that will assist in preparing the children to have a successful and meaningful intentional faith conversation at-home with their parents through a Family Meeting. The main teaching is the responsibility of the parents as the primary educators of the faith. What happens at-church is orientated toward the support of this. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the at-home content as well found in the *Root* Box. We have included a Saint for each of the Sessions. There is a short explanation tying them to

## ROOT FOR MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

the lesson. Children love to hear about the lives of these incredible examples. A Saint coloring sheet PDF is provided as well. You may choose to have the children color these during the Session, or they could be sent home depending on timing. It is good to tell the stories of our holy heroes as they connect to different parts of our faith story. Feel free to scale the material up or down. Use all of the material or pick and choose the sections that best fit your time. It is most important that families leave with a positive experience of Church and community, feeling like they have a place in it.

# ROOT BOX

## 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 Family Meeting.

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**Family Meeting 1:** Email a picture of your rock with all your names or initials on it.

**Family Meeting 2:** Email the number of light sources was your family able to count.

**Family Meeting 3:** Email some of your favorite smells.

**Family Meeting 4:** Email a picture of your string with its untangled knots.

**Family Meeting 5:** Email the places you saw God today.

**Family Meeting 6:** Email what the leader did to tire your family out.