



GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

#122 - September 3, 2020

Best Practices: Adult Faith Formation for Today's Current Events

We have one more issue devoted to "Some Principles and Practices for These Times" (some guidelines that have surfaced for us in these unique times).

Following that issue, I'm working on several related ones: "Some Things Living in Pandemic Times Have Taught Us."

Interspersed with those, too, will be issues that curate some of the many resources to help us during these times.

This issue takes a pause to look at a few (among many) things that parishes are doing right now and this fall to connect faith and life. Adult faith formation is designed to deepen and strengthen who we are as disciples in our world today. The topics, themes and explorations of adult faith formation are never ethereal and removed from real life. People have questions about the challenges of today; authentic, trustworthy and faithful adult faith formation and parish ministry responds to the questions (rather than giving answers that they're not asking for).

- Saint Patrick's Pro-Cathedral in Newark, NJ, immediately reminds all visitors to their website that these times have not changed who we are.

THE MISSION IS (STILL) ON

A pandemic doesn't change our mission to help people encounter Christ through proclamation of the Gospel in word and in action, to challenge them to grow as His disciples, and to serve Him in whatever ways they can. The mission is still on, join us as we find new and creative ways to proclaim Jesus!

- Among many other offerings, St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Fulton, MD provides multiple ideas for individualized learning (<http://adultfaith.instrumentofpeace.org/individual/>).



Individual Learning

Adult Faith Formation provides a number of individual learning opportunities from topical webpages to full online courses. These opportunities are designed to be available 24/7 for use when and how you desire.

On this page...

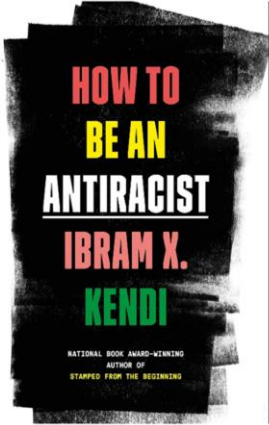
- Full Online Courses
- Links, Web Resources, Etc.
 - Catechesis for Current Events
 - Comprehensive Sites/Collections
 - Official Church Sites
 - Daily Prayer Sites
 - Faith Growth
 - Family/Parenting Issues

The section "Catechesis for Current Events" provides numerous resources in various areas:

- Voting
- Racism
- Environment and climate

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- St. Cecilia Parish in Boston, MA is in the process of a Zoom book club on the challenge of racism today.



Book Club: *How to Be an Antiracist*

When: Biweekly on Wednesday evenings at 5:30 PM

Starting June 22, hosted on Zoom

[Register by clicking here](#)

The Social and Racial Justice Ministry is excited to invite you to join a parish book group to read and reflect on Ibram X. Kendi's 2019 illuminating work, *How to Be an Antiracist*. While education is important, action is key to antiracism, and we hope this book will help orient the parish's future actions.

We recognize the diversity of our Saint Cecilia family, and realize that we are all coming to this conversation with our unique experiences and at different stages of processing systemic racism. All are welcome—we simply ask you to bring your faith, your questions, and a heart that is open to listening with compassion, and to sharing with love.

- In visiting the website of Holy Family Parish in South Pasadena, CA (<https://holyfamily.org/category/faith-formation/adults/>) you find various opportunities:
 - The Social Concerns Ministry formed a study group to discuss the issues of immigration through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching.
 - This spring, they launched their first anti-racism programming, a four-part online series, designed by the Inward Bound Center for Nonprofit Leadership called ["Racism in America: What is Mine to Do?"](#)
 - The parish also offered a mass for racial healing.
- In Chicago, Old St Patrick's Catholic Church (home to mostly white families) is focusing its racial equity energy on educational initiatives and on participating in "peace circles" with St. Agatha Catholic Church (a predominantly Black parish).

- St. Monica Catholic Community in Santa Monica, CA provides "Catholic Conversations," archiving past presentations (<https://stmonica.net/events/2020catholicconversations>). The topics cover various themes of faith, justice and living Catholicism today.
- Stephanie Holden, faith formation director at St. Ann Parish, Atlanta, GA (<https://st-ann.org/encounter>) shares, "My new focus has been to respond to the racial unrest right now. I firmly believe the church needs to be part of the conversation on what is going on in society. Our parish mission is dedicated to reconciling people to ourselves, each other and to God so it's important for us to have a voice even when it's uncomfortable."

I'm hearing people say they want to know what the church thinks about. I am creating a team who can help us respond to relevant events in the news quickly that would help people understand what the Church teaches about them. Not just speakers, but prayer events, discussions, etc. We are calling them "Pop Up Talks."



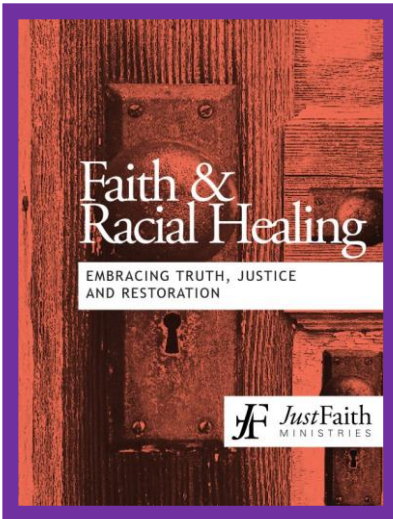
God calls us by name, not by color

This is the first Pop-Up Talk from Encounter. This discussion, led by Father Joe Aquino, features several people of color discussing racism they've faced in the world and even within the walls of our own church.

"Everyone who has been born, everyone who will be born is a reflection of the divine," said Father Joe.

The parish also offered a JustFaith small group via Zoom on "Faith & Racial Healing: Embracing Truth, Justice and Restoration" which immediately registered the maximum number of participants. It

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will continue to be offered so that more parishioners may have the experience of conversations with others.

- For years, St. Camillus Parish, Silver Spring, MD has offered intercultural retreats, involving English, Spanish, French and Bangla translation. The retreats include experiences of prayer, faith sharing in intercultural circles, reflection on abundant life and gratitude, and a potluck lunch. (Headphones are provided for simultaneous translation.)
- St. Austin Parish in Austin, TX provides a section of their website for prayer, learning and action ideas (<https://staustin.org/justice-advocacy>):

- Pax Christi Parish in Eden Prairie, MN offers several opportunities for formation regarding today's questions.

JustFaith

JustFaith is a four-phase, 24-week program that uses textbooks, videos, prayer, and conversations about the most difficult topics of the day and an exploration of what the Catholic tradition says about addressing injustice in our world. [CLICK HERE](#) for additional information.

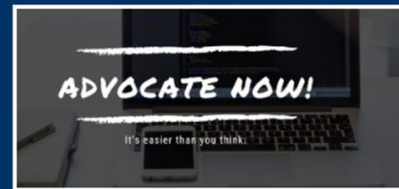
JustMatters

JustMatters is a small faith community exploration of a critical current issue such as hunger, prison reform, migration, nonviolence, and Christian-Muslim dialogue within a prayerful environment that invites personal transformation. Each issue is explored in eight sessions. Questions? Contact Joan Howe-Pullis, jhowe-pullis@paxchristi.com.

Speakers Series

The Justice Council hosts 6 sessions each year. Join us as we unpack the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in the light of the most pressing needs of our time. You can find the schedule of events on our [Justice Calendar](#). Questions? Contact Joan Howe-Pullis, jhowe-pullis@paxchristi.com.

PLAZAS OF JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY



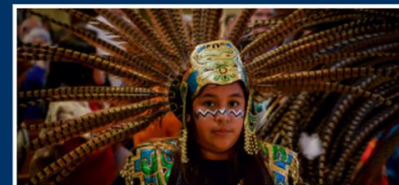
ADVOCATE WITH EASE!

Let's get some exercise! Pick up your phone! Move those fingers on your keyboard!



HOUSING

Open but not finished - we're still hard at work to add beauty.



IMMIGRATION



RACIAL JUSTICE

- Like all parishes, Blessed Sacrament Parish in Midland, MI is planning for the coming year. Lyn Pajk, director of faith formation, relates that their theme for the upcoming year is "Love Works." They are looking at rooting everything in service since they probably won't be able to gather in the normal groups for any of the programs.

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The parish is planning at doing once monthly whole community catechesis after Saturday and Sunday Mass around dinner/breakfast where people can share their service experience and some catechesis can be provided by the faith formation team.

- There will be prayer and questions for households to use before and after their actual experience as well as to prepare them for the gathered time.
- A video of each event will be posted on their parish website.

Some Resources for Formation for Today's Questions

- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: <https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-peace-human-development/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship>
- Take Action: <https://www.usccb.org/take-action>
- Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/migration/immigration>
- Just Faith Ministries: <https://justfaith.org/>
- JustMatters: <http://www.centerforsocialministry.org/programs/justfaith-ministries/justmatters/>
- Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center: <https://ijpcincinnati.org/>
- Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center: <https://www.ipjc.org/>
- Creation at the Crossroads: <https://www.renewintl.org/browse-by-topic?q=Social%20Justice>
- Catholic Climate Covenant: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/resources>

- Resources from Catholic Relief Services: <https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/research-publications>
- The Poor: What did Jesus Preach? What does the Church teach?: https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/top/church21/pdf/C21_FA_LL_2014_Resource_.pdf
- We Are Salt and Light: <https://www.wearesaltandlight.org/>
- The Institute for Peace and Justice: <https://ipj-ppi.org/>
- Resources for Combating Racism: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/ad-hoc-committee-against-racism/combating-racism-parish-resources>
- Restorative Justice: <https://catholicsmobilizing.org/restorative-justice>



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Past issues of **GEMS** are archived at www.janetschaeffler.com

Additional ideas for Adult Faith Formation Planning and Best Practices can be found in:

- *Deepening Faith: Adult Faith Formation in the Parish*
<https://www.litpress.org/Products/4652/Deepening-Faith>
- *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation*
http://www.lifelongfaith.com/store/p25/The_Seasons_of_Adult_Faith_Formation.html and <http://www.lifelongfaith.com/2015-adult-faith-formation-symposium.html>