

SEAT AT THE TABLE

DIOCESE OF ERIE – FAITH FORMATION OFFICE



Ages	0-2 years	2-5 years	6-12 years	13-18 years	19-35 years	35-50 years	50-70 years	70-eternity	
Key Human Questions	Is my world safe?	Can I do things myself? Am I good or bad?	How can I be good?	Who am I? Where am I going?	Am I lovable? Can I love and be loved?	Will I provide something of real value?	Have I lived a full life?	Is it okay to have been me?	
Spiritual questions and invitations	GOD	Is being with God and his people a safe and happy experience?	What is God like?	How is God present in the world and in my life?	What does it mean to be in personal relationship with God?	What is real faith and why do I need a Church?	How do I experience God's presence with increasing demands on my time and attention?	Where is God in the places I need to surrender?	Am I ready to meet God face to face?
	SELF	Am I safe, comfortable, and loved?	Is it good to be me?	What does it mean to do the right thing?	What are my gifts and talents and how can I use them?	What should I do with my future?	Am I on the right track in life?	Did I do a good job at living my life so far?	Where does my life find value?
	OTHERS	How should I act around others (later end of this period)?	What is the world like?	How can I be part of a larger community?	How do I share love in different relationships? (parents, siblings, dating, marriage, etc.)	How do I live my values?	How do I love in different seasons of life?	How do I find new ways to give of my time, love, and resources?	How do I find peace (esp. with past conflicts and current challenging realities)?
Church Support	Parent classes	Imaginative programs (i.e. Good Shepherd)	Mentor programs with conscious discerning and examining	Spiritual Direction	Discernment retreat; dating couples' retreat	Caregiver seminars / retreats	Conferences/ classes to help families come together after marriage	Prayer teams Storytelling workbooks and groups	

*This chart is consults the work of Erikson in his Stages of Psychosocial Development and their implications and James Fowler in his Stages of Faith Development

High Chair by Sarah JOY from the Noun Project, Stool by Creative Stall from the Noun Project, Chair by Gilberto from the Noun Project, The Directors Chair by Vectors Market from the Noun Project, Chair by sandiandra from the Noun Project, Chair by Creative Stall from the Noun Project, arm chair by Noe Araujo from the Noun Project, Chair by Maxim Kulikov from the Noun Project.



SEAT AT THE TABLE: YEARS 0-2

Diocese of Erie – Faith Formation Office

Human formation to remember: Developmentally, persons at this age are feeling-focused. They intuit safety, goodness, and joy. Reason is only beginning to develop at this stage.

Is being with God and his people a safe and happy experience?

What is fun and engaging?
Is the church safe and recognized as such?
Connection, holding / comfort, safety
Totally dependent
Trust: Who? Why? How?
Love
Introduction to faith
Can we go home?
Where is baby Jesus?
Does God sleep?
Can Jesus come down from the cross?
Who is God?
Where is God?
What is to pray mean?
Who is Jesus?
Where is Jesus?
At what age should I start attending mass with my parents?
Where can I sit at Mass?
Can I have a piece of that bread too?
Am I limiting my parents' participation at Mass, church activities?

Am I safe, comfortable, and loved?

What is fun and engaging?
Connection, holding / comfort, safety
Food - ex. gummy bears
Totally dependent
Family-belong / know
Looking for me . . .
Trust: Who? Why? How?
Love
How to keep them safe and "fed."
Stability and familiarity
Security
I'm hungry!
I'm wet
What am I going to eat?
Where is it?
Why don't I get a snack?
Why are you doing that?
Am I loved?
Am I full/healthy?

How should I act around others?

Love
I want a cookie too?
Dependence
What is. . . ?
Connection, holding / comfort, safety
Totally dependent
Trust: Who? Why? How?
Why can't I cry?
Why do I have to be quiet?
Can I cheer?



SEAT AT THE TABLE: YEARS 2-5

Diocese of Erie – Faith Formation Office

Human formation to remember: Developmentally, persons at this age are growing in independence and a sense of self that is distinct from parents and loved ones. They are inquisitive, sensitive, and tactile. Abstract reasoning is only beginning to develop.

What is God like?

What is fun and engaging?
Is the church safe and recognized as such?
Connection, holding / comfort, safety
Totally dependent
Trust: Who? Why? How?
Love
Introduction to faith
Can we go home?
Where is baby Jesus?
Does God sleep?
Can Jesus come down from the cross?
Who is God?
Where is God?
What is to pray mean?
Who is Jesus?
Where is Jesus?
At what age should I start attending mass with my parents?
Where can I sit at Mass?
Can I have a piece of that bread too?
Am I limiting my parents' participation at Mass, church activities?

Is it good to be me?

What is fun and engaging?
Connection, holding / comfort, safety
Food - ex. gummy bears
Totally dependent
Family-belong / know
Looking for me . . .
Trust: Who? Why? How?
Love
How to keep them safe and "fed."
Stability and familiarity
Security
I'm hungry!
I'm wet
What am I going to eat?
Where is it?
Why don't I get a snack?
Why are you doing that?
Am I loved?
Am I full/healthy?

What is the world like?

Love
I want a cookie too?
Dependence
What is. . . ?
Connection, holding / comfort, safety
Totally dependent
Trust: Who? Why? How?
Why can't I cry?
Why do I have to be quiet?
Can I cheer?



SEAT AT THE TABLE: YEARS 6-12

Diocese of Erie – Faith Formation Office

Human formation to remember: This age is especially marked with a new interest in and concern with community. Acceptance, friendship, and justice in community are strong values.

How is God present in the world and in my life?

How do I communicate with God through prayer?
Why pray? Does He really hear me?
Is there a God?
Where is God?
What is and where is heaven? Do animals go?
What happens when we die? Why did someone die?
What's the miracle of Mass?
Does God really get mad at me?
Why do we go to mass every Sunday or every day?
What is hell? Will I go?
Is this a sin?
Can we have donuts every Sunday?
Is N. a saint?
How do we become a saint?
Why does grandma have cancer?
Why is there suffering?
What happens after death?
Is Jesus really here in Communion?
How come I can't see God?

What does it mean to do the right thing?

Who are the examples in my life for making good choices?
Why do I feel depressed, stressed, anxiety?
Parents fighting - Is it my fault?
Will somebody take care of me?
How do I be a good person?
Why do I do the things I do?
Why do I have to do what my parents say?
Why do I have to go to Mass? or Religious Education?
Do I need to go to church? Why?
Why do I need to go to Confession/make first Confession?
How do I respond to bullying?
Do I have to forgive people who hurt me?
What do I do when something is unfair?

How can I be part of a larger community?

How do I deal with peer pressure?
How do I feel like I belong?
What does it mean to be a friend?
Why are we different?
Community
Who can I, or who should I trust or believe?
It's not fair . . . life. e.g. Christmas gifts, bigger house, etc.
How am I accepted?
How am I viewed by others?
How do I express myself? pray? care for others?
What happens if there is violence in my community? Will there be violence in my school/city?



SEAT AT THE TABLE: YEARS 13-18

Diocese of Erie – Faith Formation Office

Human formation to remember: Persons in this seat are transitioning from childhood to adulthood. With that transition, questions about identity, personal values, and relationship arise. It is also a time of considering one's dreams and potential impact upon community and the world.

What does it mean to be in personal relationship with God?

Why do I have to go to church?
Why all these rules?
Is the Eucharist real?
Is God real? Why doesn't he answer me? Does it matter?
Does God really hear me when I pray?
Why do I have to be confirmed?
How do I "fit in": church, peers, family
Church is boring! My friends go to church for the music.
Can kids be in the choir?
God won't care if I miss and go to practice.
Why do I need mass if I already pray?
I made some bad decisions so God is mad at me?
Why do Catholics do that?
Ownership and understanding of faith / prayer
How do I hear the voice of God?
Why the Church?
How can I learn more about the Bible?

What are my gifts and talents and how can I use them?

What is God calling me to do?
What kind of adult do I want to be? What do I want to do with my life?
What will my life become?
How do I "fit in": church, peers, family
Do I have to go to college?
Morality; Ethics & values; Peer Pressure; Political values
Discovering talents and gifts from God
Priorities / Time Management
Stressful questioning of future / career/ marriage / responsibility / suicide
Danger of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, etc./ Mental health issues?
What gifts do I have?
How can I help others?
How do I compare to others?
Identity, chastity, gender and sexuality questions?
How can I be independent but keep "my parents' beliefs?"

How do I share love in different relationships?

What does it mean to be intimate?
What do relationships look like?
How far can I go?
How do I "fit in": church, peers, family
Why do my friends make fun of me if I talk about God? or church?
Getting along with parents & siblings
My parents don't understand modern times!
Parents fight constantly - no marriage for me
Picking friends wisely
New experiences / schools / dating / peer pressure
Peer Pressure - Faith Formation
What do I want my friends to think of me?



SEAT AT THE TABLE: YEARS 19-35

Diocese of Erie – Faith Formation Office

Human formation to remember: This stage of life is marked by questioning, challenging, and taking ownership of faith and Church affiliation. Openness to engaging in messy questions is crucial.

What is real faith and why do I need a Church?

My friends are homosexual. Does the church have room for them? LGBTQ

Why did this happen to my family?

Why do I want to raise my children in a church that abuses children?

Why do I have to follow all the rules of this faith?

The "whys" of faith.

God asks: Where are you? Do you need me?

Why can't priests be married?

What would draw me back to the church? I've left.

Why is there evil in the world if God can fix it?

How do I become a part of the Church?

Some traditional images may not work well for me - e.g. father church

Why do I need the church or organized religion to have relationship with God?

We/I need Sunday for rest, family, etc. more than church.

Why should I bother?

Does God really exist?

What should I do with my future?

Vocation? Direction?
Identity?

What role can I play in different areas of my life - parish, school, job, etc.

What does it mean to be single?

Where do I turn when I need help?

Depression, stress, anxiety, suicide

What am I supposed to do with my life?

Why do we need to get married in the church?

College? If so, where?

Job?

Travel?

What do I do with my life?

Where should I live?

Should I marry or cohabit? Is this person "the one"?

How do I navigate single life when all my friends are dating or married?

How do I live my values?

What are my values?

What are my values based on?

How do I relate with others when we disagree?

How do I balance my life as wife and a career woman?

What do I truly believe - making my faith my own

Where/how does faith fit in?

Can I take care of another? (pet, spouse, child)

Family dynamics

Priorities, values? Value conflicts?

Rearing children

Balance life / work / family

Meaning of life? Purpose?

Why does faith matter?

What does real love look like?

Do my young children really need Baptism, sacraments, church, etc.

Can we express ourselves and question without being judged?

Felt unwelcome with young, crying children

No sense of hospitality. How do I make new friends/fit in?



SEAT AT THE TABLE: YEARS 35-50

Diocese of Erie – Faith Formation Office

Human formation to remember: The mid-life years are marked by providing for generations older than and younger than oneself. Persons in this stage are active, responding to multiple demands.

How do I experience God's presence with increasing demands on my attention?

How do I get my kids to want to be involved in their faith?

Am I doing God's will?

How can I find time to grow in my relationship with God?

How do I know / find out what is available to me in the church?

How do I "break into" a specific group / ministry?

Who can explain to me and focus on the substance of church teaching?

What more is there to learn about my faith? And how do I do that without getting another degree?

I am spiritual, not religious

Don't need organized religion

Various forms of meditation

What does prayer look like in this season of my life?

Why have my children left the church?

Am I on the right track in life?

What is my legacy?

Can I do something different?

Is it possible to have more than one vocation?

Not feeling good enough - stress, depression, anxiety

Vocations (ALL)

Support in lifestyle

Where do I fit in as a single person?

What am I here for? Who really cares?

I've made some big mistakes. Is my life still worth it?

How do I deal with divorce? Help my children and family with divorce?

How do I love in different seasons of life?

Am I listening to my children?

Am I spreading myself too thin? How can I find time for myself?

Keeping young adult children engaged & active in the church

Balance everything: sports, work, activities, kids schedules, aging parents and relatives. Sleep.

How do I prepare my children to be happy, responsible, and good adults?

Social media pressures (cultural, society) that go against our faith,

How do you juggle all of your responsibilities along with those of your children?

How do I find healing from past wounds?

How can I find help for my marriage?

How do I help late teen and adult children when they are making choices that go against our family values?

How do I begin navigating the empty nest years?



SEAT AT THE TABLE: YEARS 50-70

Diocese of Erie – Faith Formation Office

Human formation to remember: This stage of life is marked by increasing levels of reflection, wisdom, and surrender.

Where is God in the places I need to surrender?

Is this really going to end?
What does the church still teach that I always believed?
How do I fit into a church that has changed since my youth?
Health issues / physical limitations
How can I deepen my relationship with God?
What is my role in the Church? How do I respond/what is God's will in my life?
How can I not despair over my fallen away children?
Do I have anything left to learn about the faith?
Is the Church able to minister to me in this stage of life?
How can I be more effective living my faith in community?

Did I do a good job at living my life so far?

Retirement / financial security
mid-life crisis (red mustang?) Impulsive thinking / actions.
Jesus asking, "how have you lead others to me?"
Did I raise my children in the faith well enough?
Am I a good parent?
What did I do wrong?
What's the balance between life & death?
Who's going to take care of everyone else?

How do I find new ways to give of my time, love and resources?

What do I do with the last quarter of my life?
Changes in family structure
Am I still useful?
How do I use my time as a retiree to use my gifts?
How do I serve? Remain relevant?
How can I, as a grandparent, bring my grandchildren to desire faith?
How can I encourage children/grandchildren to go to Mass?
How do I care for aging parents? Home? Nursing Home?
Do I have anything left to give that anyone wants?
Loneliness
How am I uniting the past way of learning to the new tech way?
How do I encourage younger families to participate in parish activities / lay ministry?
What does retirement look like?



SEAT AT THE TABLE: YEARS 70+

Diocese of Erie – Faith Formation Office

Human formation to remember: As persons in this stage face increasing physical limitations, they are invited to gratitude, reconciliation, and a special focus on eternity.

Am I ready to meet God face to face?

Where is God for me at this stage in my life?

Will I always have a place to turn in the church?

What is Heaven and Hell like?

What if I can't get to church?

How can we learn more about the Bible?

Why is it harder to pray?

What happens when I die?- Am I ready?

What does it take to be ready?

Final arrangements (parish, family, expense/need of a funeral?)

Will God still love me if I don't want to live anymore?
Sick, Nursing home

Where does my life find value?

How do I find purpose in my life at this stage of life?

What if I haven't done enough?

Am I worthy?

How can I accept the life I've been given?

How can I share my wisdom?

Why am I still here?

Does my life still have value and purpose?

How do I connect with other age groups at this stage of my life?

Am I a burden?

Who will/is taking care of me/spouse/family?

Will I be remembered?

What can I give you before I leave?

What do I have to contribute to my faith community? Family? How do I contribute?

How can I participate?

Did I make a difference?

What am I passing on?

How do I find peace?

How do I adapt to change?

How do I age gracefully?

How do I resolve conflicts that I've carried to live in peace?

How can I resolve differences with my children?

Help me to understand millennials.

How do I deal with the death of a spouse?

Have I done what I was born to do?

Unchurched Family - Fallen Away

Regret / Forgiveness

Dealing with loneliness

Limited resources - income

Health care

I've done all I've done. How do I make sure the things I care about continue?

How do I bring my children back to the faith?

How am I contributing to my family?