

Faith Formation Discernment Summary

On May 4 and 11 two virtual conversations were held to discuss the Faith Formation program as well as the Chorister program. Twenty different people attended over the two days.

Key Take-aways

1. The general consensus was that, if it is decided to have a Faith Formation Director, it should be a paid position and that person should embrace a progressive theology. There was discussion about its being a year-round position, and possibly adjusting the hourly requirements of the position to facilitate summer activities like Vacation Bible School, mission trips and other warmer weather activities.
2. There is a strong desire for activities/events/ gatherings for children outside of Sunday School, including Youth Group, but definitely not limited to.
3. The person hired should be someone who will generate enthusiasm among children, youth and adults and have a passion for their work.
4. The person hired should be adept at using social media, particularly those preferred by youth.
5. The person hired should be able to plan events and activities outside of Sunday School while collaborating with Sunday School teachers on Sunday School curriculum, and would encourage participation in conference and state-wide youth activities.
6. Children and youth should have opportunities for activities at church for which they can bring friends.
- 7 . While the person hired would not need to be in charge of all faith formation activities for adults, some kind of program or set of activities for adults is desired. Book studies? Adult Forum?
8. The pastor would continue to teach Confirmation but might also be involved in groups for adults, such as Bible study.

9. There were many comments about rebuilding a Faith Formation team to work with the Faith Formation Director, if we decide to have one. Discussion included whether a Faith Formation ministry team might eliminate the need for a Faith Formation Director.

10. In general, participants expressed a strong desire to maintain the Chorister program with a paid director who embraces a progressive theology. There was also discussion of officially increasing the age of participants in the Choristers program. Many participants mentioned great memories from our Chorister program or another youth choir when they were younger.

11. Some participants questioned the number of children currently involved in the Sunday School and Choristers programs and, though the numbers are admittedly down, it speaks to the need to develop vibrant youth programs. In tandem with our progressive theology, these programs may attract individuals and families in the community seeking a church with designated activities for children and youth. Growing these programs provides an opportunity for our youth to build relationships with like-minded peers and adults -- a support system sorely needed in this divisive world.