

12 ways to increase enrollment

IN YOUR FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM

Growing your enrollment is all about getting the word out. Developing a multifaceted marketing effort with signs, posters, attractive flyers, information sessions and compelling announcements before or after Mass will take some time but if you can implement just a few of the ideas presented below (and the Lord blesses the effort) you will see positive results this fall.

#1 Host information sessions: Set up two or three parent information sessions immediately after Mass or in the evening to help parents understand the benefits of enrolling their children. Distribute the schedule of classes and any other information you have about what people should expect from the program. Have one or two current students speak about how their faith has grown because of participating. If you opt for an evening session, provide childcare if possible.

#2 Make announcements: Write a heart-felt appeal that can be delivered by a parent or one of your older students before or after Mass that speaks to the benefit of faith formation and invites the younger children to participate.

#3 Set up an information table in high-visibility location: Create an attractive display that includes copies of the students' work, informational materials, copies of the religion textbooks, and handouts with registration information. A tri-fold display board with photographs will encourage people to stop by. Ideally you would have parents and students staff the table and answer questions.

#4 Create compelling bulletin inserts: ComCenter has designed some graphics that you can download for free that will make your bulletin insert eye-catching. www.comcenter.com/graphics/

#5 Make your registration form as simple as possible: Review your form periodically. If you can remove some of the hurdles to registration it stands to reason that more people will sign up.

#6 Use online registration: Create a simple online registration form that makes it easy to enroll. ComCenter has created a free tutorial that shows you how to do this yourself, and provides some nice graphics to make your form attractive. www.comcenter.com/forms/

#7 Keep inviting students the first few weeks of classes: Use the first few classes to encourage parents and students - "There is still time for you to invite your friends to join us." Having to order a few extra books because your class was bigger than you expected is a nice problem to have.

#8 Make observance of Catechetical Sunday a big deal!

"Catechetical Sunday is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the role that each baptized person plays in handing on the faith and being a witness to the Gospel. Catechetical Sunday is an opportunity for all to rededicate themselves to this mission as a community of faith." – USCCB website

#9 Include the faith formation program in the Prayer of the Faithful: Write a petition asking the Lord to draw more young people to formation. This allows the entire parish to pray for an increase in the number of children in the faith formation program.

#10 Display an attractive banner outside the church: Display a marketing banner to promote your program and to let people know how they can learn more or register. ComCenter has designed several inexpensive banners for this purpose. www.comcenter.com/boostenrollment/

#11 Invite in the spring – and again in the summer – and again in the fall: Have three "invitation" seasons to give parents time to think about the importance of having their children grow in the faith. Some families will register in the spring and tell their friends over the summer.

#12 Offer scholarships: If your parish charges a fee for faith formation classes, find a generous parishioner or two to fund a few scholarships. Then in your marketing materials you can say, "Please do not let inability to pay the fee stop you from participating. Contact the office if you need a scholarship."

For more resources, visit www.comcenter.com/12-ways-to-increase-enrollment/