



## Parent Follow-Up Session

*This session is facilitated by the local SCF Team and should be offered within 2-4 weeks of the Foundational Parent Presentation. The date/time should be announced at the Foundational Parent Presentation(s) and the session should be planned by the SCF Team following the initial parent session(s).*

- A. For:** Those who attended the SCF Foundational Parent Presentation(s), spouses, and other interested parents (note that at this meeting all parents are welcome regardless of the ages of their children).
- B. Outcomes:** Parents will take away from the gathering...
- The kind words and blessing of the pastor/principal
  - Ideas and stories from other parents
  - Ideas for parents to support parents, and for the parish/school to support parents
  - Some practical ideas and resources from the SCF Team
  - The commitment to pray for one another
  - Specific plans for next steps
- C. Materials:**
- Refreshments
  - Nametags, markers, pencils, or pens
  - Results of the SCF Parent Response Survey
  - Extra copies of the *Family Faith Resource Booklet* for parents not having one.
  - Easel and newsprint, markers
  - Take home resources and perhaps a small devotional gift
- D. Agenda** (anticipate this to be a two hour gathering)
- 1) **Hospitality** (note this is vital and not to be skipped or rushed)
    - A comfortable, “adult” space, with furniture and environment conducive to a warm, welcoming, and comfortable adult conversation.
    - Food, drink, nametags, and designated greeters with a knack for putting people at ease welcome parents as they arrive. Perhaps some social time before the formal beginning of the meeting (e.g., “come fifteen minutes early for coffee, soft drinks, snacks, and conversation”).
  - 2) **Welcome, introductions and prayer** (5 minutes)
    - *Opening Remarks:* Leader warmly welcomes participants, acknowledges their interest and commitment, and commends them for their decision to come, then briefly explains the outcomes and agenda of the gathering.
    - *Kind Words and Prayer:* Ideally, the pastor/principle would attend at least the first few minutes of the meeting, offer some affirming words, and lead a simple, suitable opening prayer—it is recommended that one of the family prayers found on the back of the Family Faith Resource Booklet serve this purpose.

3) **Small Group Formation** (15 minutes)

- a) The Leader walks around the entire room calling out a particular wall space for each stage of family life and asks participants who fit that stage to move and stand in that space together as follows:
  - Couple without children
  - Family with mainly pre-school children
  - Family with mainly elementary school children
  - Family with early adolescent children (12-14)
  - Family with mainly older adolescent children (15-18)
  - Family with mainly college-age children (19-23)
  - Family with young adults (mid 20's to mid 30's)
  - Empty-nesters
  - Grandparents
  - Others? (note that leader at this point can affirm any who do not fall into these typical categories, and be sure they feel welcome)
- b) After all are standing, invite them to group up in small groups of 4-5 who are in or near their same family life stage. Once grouped up, they are to find out:
  - What drew them to this parent session?
  - What is one of the biggest change they have experienced as a family in this particular family life stage that was not present in the previous stage of family life?
- c) After 10 minutes, leader invites them to sit at tables as a small group for the remainder of the session. A SCF Team Member should accompany *each small group* at their table to act as a small group guide and recorder. If there are not enough team members, one person in a small group should be invited to act as the group's recorder.

4) **Brief survey of participants** (10 minutes)

- a) Large Group Leader asks participants to say aloud what they heard when they talked with other parents: Why did you/they come to the gathering? And one significant change for their family life stage (start with the first stage and go in order so those in preceding stage can hear what they should expect next).
- b) The SCF Team Member who prepared the summary of the Parent Response Forms should now be asked to offer that summary highlighting what the team heard when it gathered to discuss the response forms and its experience of the Foundational Parent Sessions.

5) **Small group conversations** (25 minutes)

- a) Small Group Leaders ask parents to refer to their Family Faith Inventory results located in their *Family Faith Resource Booklet* and invites them to discuss in their small groups:
  - Describe one or two things that you do as a parent with your child(ren) to model and share faith with them—things that you feel really good about.
  - Describe one or two challenges or frustrations that you face as a parent in rearing your child(ren) in the faith.

Small Group Leaders offer the following guidelines:

- The goal is to share our experience, so be sure each person has a chance to talk.
  - Try not to get side-tracked, and if you find yourself on a tangent, get back on track with the conversation leads.
  - Give each person a chance to talk for three to five minutes. (Leader will be tracking and announcing expiring time.)
  - Avoid discussion and especially problem-solving or giving advice; there will be time for that later.
  - If there are people in your group who are new to you, be sure to spend a bit of time at the beginning with introductions.
  - Groups will have 15-20 minutes.
- b) Leader tracks time and announces when five minutes are left making sure that those who have not yet had a chance to share are able to do so in the time remaining.
- c) At the conclusion of the small group time, the leader invites group members to write down the names of the other persons in the group inside the front cover of their Family Faith Resource Booklets. Group members are asked to hold these people and their families in prayer daily in the weeks ahead.
- 6) **Break (10 minutes)** – If you decide to show the Domestic Church video from the *Resource Sessions for Parents and Families* page ([www.strongcatholicfamilies.org](http://www.strongcatholicfamilies.org)), be sure to prepare that now.
- 7) **Large group conversation (30 minutes)**
- a) Large Group Leader reconvenes groups after the break and if applicable, introduces the Domestic Church video (4 minutes), inviting parents to think about their homes as small communities of faith.
- b) Large Group Leader explains that helping to make each home a vibrant domestic church is the goal of Strong Catholic Families and that the remainder of the time we have together will be spent on how this larger faith community can best partner with parents to make this happen. To start, each small group will be asked to spend ten minutes discussing each perspective as follows with the SCF Team members recording the input on newsprint.
- *Parent Perspective*—what can we do as parents to help, support, resource, challenge, nurture, etc. one another in this vital role of being leaders in our own domestic churches and modeling and sharing faith with our children?
  - *Parish/School Perspective*—how can this faith community and its leadership best help, support, resource, challenge and walk with parents to help us build up the domestic church of the home?
- c) Large-group conversation—taking one perspective at a time, the leader asks small groups to share “headlines” of what they talked about.

8) **Next steps in faith** (20 minutes):

- a) Large Group Leader invites small groups to help the SCF Team determine the priority of what the next steps/responses should be for partnering with parents to bring home the faith. Let the parents know that the local *SCF* Team is on hand to help develop, support, and implement the most desirable responses that arise from this session and subsequent reflections. Some possible next steps might include some from the list below (Leader should review these and have them posted on Newsprint or projected onto a screen).
- *Parent Networking*: if there is significant need to gather with parents and talk more in depth, then the parish/school leadership could develop strategies to gather parents together on a regular basis that will allow them to share their faith journeys, family faith practices, and other issues and concerns.
  - *Prayer and Faith-Sharing Skills Development*: if the need is for parents to further develop the skills of prayer and faith-sharing, the leadership could offer various approaches to helping parents with this (Note: See Resource Session 2: Sharing Faith at [www.strongcatholicfamilies.org](http://www.strongcatholicfamilies.org) ).
  - *Theological Updates*: if the need is for parents to better understand their Catholic faith so as to grow in confidence and the capability of talking about that faith with their children, the leadership could recruit volunteers to assist in developing various approaches to helping parents with this.
  - *Understanding the Other Generation*: if the need is to help each generation listen to and better understand the other's needs, hopes, fears, and faults, the leadership could plan on hosting an intergenerational session (Note: See Resource Session 3 at [www.strongcatholicfamilies.org](http://www.strongcatholicfamilies.org)).
  - *Parent Faith Sharing Groups*: if the need is for parents to join up with other parents in forming small prayer and faith sharing groups, the leadership could begin organizing these around willing parent leaders and family life stages.
- b) Give small groups 10 minutes to come up with a prioritized list of three next steps they would like to see occur to support them in growing more deeply in faith as a domestic church based on all the responses and feedback they heard during this session. These should be recorded by small group leaders.
- c) Large Group Leader invites each small group leader to call out one of their next steps noting that all will be reviewed and discussed by the SCF Team after today's session.

- 9) **Parent "Take Away" Resources (5 minutes)**: the Large Group Leader highlights helpful resources found in the *Family Faith Resource Booklet* and at [www.strongcatholicfamilies.org](http://www.strongcatholicfamilies.org) and other existing resources already owned or used by the faith community. If applicable, a free devotional gift is presented for participating parents.

10) **Leader concludes** the meeting with:

- Concluding remarks expressing gratitude, affirmation, and support.
- Reminder that the local *SCF* Team will be working to follow up on implementing the directions and ideas that were raised in this session.
- Final reflection question: *what will you do this week to bring this home to help your family live their faith "between the Sundays?"*
- Evaluation of gathering.
- Brief closing prayer (using one of the family prayers from the *Resource Booklet*).