Family-Sensitive Adult Formation

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by Joseph D. White, Ph.D.

We can increase participation in adult formation as well when we take some steps to be more family–sensitive:

* Offer a variety of adult formation classes and experiences that allow adults to choose based on their interest and phase of life. Many Protestant churches offer adult classes for various groups, such as singles, young professionals, older adults, etc.
* Make adult formation practical. Offer topics that intersect with the dally life of the adult learner, such as being a faithful catholic in the workplace, raising Catholic kids and teens, and other real-life concerns.
* Make adult formation available and practical for families. Consider offering adult classes at the same time as children’s classes, when adults are already coming to the parish. Offer childcare for younger children.

Pope John Paul II famously said, “As the family goes, so goes society, and so goes the world in which we live.” We could just as easily say, “As the family goes, so goes the parish, and so goes the Church in which we live” — for our parishes are made up of families, and every child with a vocation to the priesthood and religious life is born within a family. For this reason, Pope Benedict has said, “The family…is the cradle of life and of every vocation” (Angelus talk, February 4, 2007). Let us renew our commitment to place families at the center of our catechetical efforts.