

Faith Formation Initiative

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What Did I Do?

The goal of my project was to assist our school families to be more engaged in the faith formation of their children. I planned to gather best practices from families and share those with our families to provide them with easy-to-use resources. We would also seek guidance from experts in family ministry to determine what training we could provide for families as well as what programs we could implement during the school day to help children grow in faith. I felt the evidence we would see would be hard to measure, but could still be seen in acts of love and service, as well as positive attitudes and relationships.

Unfortunately, I'm unable to provide a package that states the programs and resources we shared with our school families and how that impacted their faith walk. However, there were a few "wins" this year. We began Monday morning meetings where we shared devotions as a whole school. We performed several community service projects throughout the year. Our students enjoyed many opportunities to spend time with their chapel families.

What Did I Learn?

While I already *knew* I shouldn't try to do things alone, I often do. The attention paid to Jethro and Moses (Ex. 18) during last summer's residency really hit me hard. I have a tendency to choose what I believe to be the "right" way, and run ahead screaming, "Follow me! This is the way to go!" Though, I was not able to fully utilize the Faith Formation team that I gathered at school this year, I found another posse. The Van Lunen faculty, staff, fellows, and consultants have provided prayer, support, counsel, and guidance throughout this year. I believe I've also learned better how to bring my team, and my church and school along through changes.

I knew they would come, but the spiritual attacks and discouragement that came my way were intense. I very seriously considered leaving ministry this year. To fight for spiritual health and to share the Gospel requires us ministers to have a strong support system. The Lord put us in communities of faith, because He knew we'd need them. The harder we fight for Truth, the more vicious the attacks will be. Cling to the Word and to the people whom the Lord puts in your life to walk with you in the darkness.

What Difference Is It Making in Your School?

While this was a difficult year for me, personally, I feel there is evidence of positive impacts on our school. One large change in our school ministry has been the addition of a child care program. Our students have shown great care and enthusiasm when the younger children are around. We have had fewer student discipline problems this year. I feel intentional conversations of forgiveness have been positively affecting relationships.

Though it can't be solely attributed to this process, I feel the greatest evidence of the impact our ministry efforts have had in our community is the response to a child in our school who had to undergo a series of brain surgeries. The community that surrounded his family, and thoughts that were shared on social media, show that the Spirit is alive and well in the greater Frankentrost region.