

# Join Us for a Time of Learning!



Dear Colleagues in Ministry:

[Faith Formation Ministries](#) (FFM) is starting its sixth experience of peer learning with the aim of supporting CRC congregations in faith formation. We've learned that inviting congregations to join a focused cohort to develop new faith formation initiatives or strengthen existing practices can bear rich fruit.

**We invite you to consider joining a cohort by December 18, 2021 to intentionally focus and strengthen faith formation using the Building Blocks of Faith for the people within your congregation.**

Is this right for you? Here's a quick snapshot:

## **What is a cohort?**

Faith Formation Ministries defines a cohort as a group of congregations that work together with a shared purpose in order to provide each other with encouragement and support. Listen to an FFM team member and two past cohort members describe the cohort experience in [this 7-minute video](#).

In this cohort relationship, FFM will:

- respect the uniqueness of each congregation.
- provide a coach to walk alongside as a partner who will listen, brainstorm, encourage, and hold your team accountable.
- connect congregation leaders to resources, resource people, and other leaders in the cohort whose trajectory is similar.

The participating congregations will:

- identify the health of their congregational home culture and their faith formation framework using the Building Blocks of Faith.
- explore how people are meeting the Building Blocks of Faith with assessments, evaluate the congregation's strengths, and determine how they can use these areas to better serve their people.

- discern what faith formation practices are working in their congregation.
- experiment with two or three ways to further strengthen faith in their church.

### **Why should we consider joining?**

Throughout the CRC, congregational faith formation is going through many changes, and most congregations are navigating these changes on their own. Previous cohort churches have found that working through times like this with a coach and other churches traveling a similar path can be beneficial for everyone. Addressing the faith formation needs with a coach and other congregations walking alongside has the potential for exciting ministry outcomes.

### **What's the price tag?**

Not much! Cohort congregations will

- contribute \$500 to FFM to support the ongoing work of coaching and resource building.
- give time to learning from suggested resources, cohort engagement, and some experimentation.

### **How do we discern whether this process is right for us?**

Here are some questions to help you think through your congregation's potential involvement in this cohort:

1. Do you have interested, creative leaders who would form a strong project team?
2. Is your council and ministry staff committed to providing what is necessary for this project, including input, encouragement, and finances?
3. Is your congregation ready to try one or two experiments that are guided by prayerful reflection?
4. Experiments always include failures. Are you able to learn from failures and persevere through them, as well as share them with your FFM Coach and other cohort congregations?

Further details are included in these documents:

- A [Timeline](#) for the Building Blocks of Faith cohort.
- A [Covenant](#) that explains what FFM will provide as well as the expectations of cohort congregations.

## How do we apply for the cohort?

First, we encourage you to reflect on the above information, jot down questions, and then talk with a member of the FFM team. Contact cohort leaders [Trudy Ash](#) or [Laura Keeley](#).

When you're ready, fill out the cohort [Application](#).

Your partners in ministry,

Chris Schoon  
FFM Team Leader

Laura Keeley and Trudy Ash  
Coordinators, Building Blocks of Faith Cohort 2022

### Regional Catalyzers, Faith Formation Ministries

Alberta: Ron deVries ([rondevries@crcna.org](mailto:rondevries@crcna.org))

California: Kristen Rietkerk ([krietkerk@crcna.org](mailto:krietkerk@crcna.org))

IA/SD/MN: Jill Friend ([jfriend@crcna.org](mailto:jfriend@crcna.org))

Korean churches: Ron Chu ([rchu@crcna.org](mailto:rchu@crcna.org))

Michigan: Laura Keeley ([laurakeeley@crcna.org](mailto:laurakeeley@crcna.org)), Cohort Coordinator

Midwest: Trudy Ash ([tash@crcna.org](mailto:tash@crcna.org)), Cohort Coordinator

Eastern Canada: Lesli van Milligen ([lvanmilligen@crcna.org](mailto:lvanmilligen@crcna.org))

Vancouver/BC: Liz Tolkamp ([ltolkamp@crcna.org](mailto:ltolkamp@crcna.org))