

C21 ENGAGE

RESOURCES FOR ADULT FAITH FORMATION

COORDINATOR MANUAL

To Assist Program Implementation

DRAFT

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I. About C21 Engage

What is the Church in the 21st Century Center?

The Church in the 21st Century (C21) Center at Boston College is a catalyst and resource for the renewal of the Catholic Church in the United States. Drawing from both the Boston College community and others, C21 sponsors conversations on critical challenges and opportunities facing the Catholic community focused on four key issues: handing on the faith, roles and relationships in the Church, sexuality in the Catholic tradition, and the Catholic intellectual tradition. Now in its second decade, C21 continues to fulfill its mission through regular events, publications, and online video resources aimed to facilitate critical and faithful conversations. You can learn more about C21 at <http://www.bc.edu/c21>.

What is C21 Engage?

C21 Engage is an adult faith formation program offered by the Church in the 21st Century Center as a resource for the renewal for Catholic parishes, schools, organizations, and other intentional communities. To nurture the faith of Catholic adults, C21 Engage provides affordable, fully-developed faith formation programs as well as guidance and support for the local leaders to implement the program in their communities. All materials are available for download from our website or by request.

The Church in the 21st Century Center developed C21 Engage in response to Pope Benedict XVI's call for resources to support the new evangelization and Pope Francis's call to share the joy of the Gospel. In line with the USCCB's Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States (see Appendix), C21 offers this face-to-face adult faith formation program as a way to "help the faithful of all ages to grow in both human and Christian maturity, enriching the whole life with the leaven of the Gospel."

How is the C21 Engage adult faith formation program structured?

C21 Engage sessions are organized around a series theme, the first being "Catholic Spiritual Practices." Participants explore each theme through five sessions of 60 – 75 minutes focused on sub-themes or "topics". (We recommend that when planning you allow extra time beyond the 60 minutes for informal conversation and welcoming.) The session format can be adapted to fit the needs of each community (see p.5 below). Each session invites participants pray over, learn about, and discuss some aspect the Catholic faith, following a consistent structure:

- Prayer
- Engaging the Conversation
- Engaging the Tradition (Video presentation)
- Engaging Faith-for-Life
- Closing

This structure reflects the “Life to Faith to Life” approach to Christian religious education innovated by Dr. Thomas Groome of Boston College, which enables participants to access the wisdom of the Christian tradition in the way that they can understand and appropriate it most meaningfully—through the lens of their own questions and experiences. After moving from life to faith in this way, the latter half of each session moves back from faith into life, empowering participants to translate their learning into a lived response for faith.

Who is C21 Engage for?

C21 Engage is designed for use with small groups of adults in a parish, school, organization, or other intentional community. To facilitate faith sharing, we recommend an optimal group size of eight with a workable range of 6-10 participants. In a parish, this might be a mixed group of adults, or it could be targeted to men, women, or young adults. In a school, C21 Engage could be used for teacher professional development or enrichment for parents of students. While the curriculum is designed for small group discussion, it can work with a large group for the presentation portion followed by breakout discussion groups. To allow the program to help foster community in an intentional way, we recommend implementing this program for a cohort of people who can commit to the series, rather than having people come and go for various topics.

What does participation in C21 Engage involve?

The Church in the 21st Century Center invites you to participate in the C21 Engage program by utilizing the resources that we have made available through the C21 Engage website for the enrichment of your community. No formal commitment is required, and there is no charge to implement the program. All that is required is a desire to live out the Church’s evangelizing and catechetical mission. We simply ask that you note the name of the program, C21 Engage, and make reference to the Church in the 21st Century Center at Boston College.

We welcome you to contact C21 for more information, to consult about your plans, or to recommend improvements. It is also helpful to us to learn how and where the program is being used. If you would like your community to be identified as a participating site on the C21 Engage website, please send us some information about how your community is using the program. Lastly, we invite you to join our online community by sharing ideas, modifications, and success stories on the C21 Engage Facebook page.

II. How do I implement the C21 Engage program?

If you are interested in C21 Engage, you might first consult your colleagues or peers to gain support and obtain appropriate approvals from the executive leadership (e.g., pastor, principal, etc.) of your community.

Scheduling

Three to six months in advance, or during annual planning meetings, designate the dates and time(s) you wish to offer the program. While C21 Engage can be used at various points throughout the year, the program fits for particular seasons, such as Advent or Lent, as people commonly seek faith formation during these times.

- When deciding on the day and time for a **parish** setting, consider time slots that meet the needs of different groups:
 - Weekday mornings for parents with children at home and/or retirees;
 - Evenings or Saturday morning for those who work full-time;
 - Sunday after Mass or Sunday evening;
- C21 Engage can be used for catechist formation, as an evening program or a Saturday mini-retreat at the end of the religious education class cycle.
- Depending on the schedule and structure of your religious education program, it may be fruitful to host a program for parents during their children's class time.
- A diocesan office may first try this with a group of parish directors of religious education or faith formation who might in turn consider the program at the parish level.
- For a **school** setting, consider time slots that are built into the school calendar, such as, regularly scheduled grade level, departmental, or other staff meetings, or teacher professional development days.
- C21 Engage might complement a school's strategic plan to strengthen its Catholic identity.
- The program might provide a parent-school organization a way to strengthen parent connections to the school mission.
- For parents of children in Catholic schools, consider a morning or evening program.

Tailoring the Program to Your Community

While the series is recommended in a particular order, the program can be tailored to meet the goals for your community. Particular sessions may be selected to work as a stand-alone event, combined for a half-day retreat, or linked to other events (e.g., liturgical celebration, communal meal, etc.). In order to determine how to best implement C21 Engage, Coordinators can review the content overview and goals for each session listed in each Session Guide.

Hospitality

When selecting a location for the program, be mindful of offering a welcoming climate. Provide a comfortable environment. Ensure a moderate temperature, chairs that will be comfortable enough for an hour, and lighting conducive to prayer and reflection. Choose a room that is quiet and ensures privacy for the session. We recommend arranging chairs in a circle to encourage conversation. Insure that participants know where the restrooms are. Post signs if needed.

Aim to accommodate a range of circumstances and abilities:

- If you are reaching out to parents or grandparents at home with young children during the day, consider offering childcare.
- Consider choosing a meeting space (if available) that is accessible by elevator or ramp to accommodate community members with limited mobility.
- To assist members with hearing impairment, you can hand out transcription texts of the video presentations. These are included with the session materials.

Decide whether to offer refreshments and who will handle set-up and clean up. A simple beverage and treats may be sufficient to encourage people to linger and engage in conversation. The group might wish to share a simple meal that can be provided by group members on a rotating basis.

Reserving Space

The schedule for implementing your program may be determined on the availability of space. You will need conversation space for a small group of 6-10 participants. Be sure the small group space is conducive to prayer, reflection, private faith sharing, and has enough chairs for each participant. If working with a large group such as faculty for a professional development day, the coordinator will need a large common space for the video presentations and small group breakout locations. Though not ideal, round tables or small circles of chairs in the large space might work for small group discussion.

Materials and Supplies

As with any small group meetings, you might wish to utilize nametags for the first few sessions. Depending on the session, Coordinators may need to print out discussion questions, a reading, or evaluation forms. Handouts (with the exception of evaluation forms) can be downloaded from the C21 Engage website. C21 Engage Prayer cards can be ordered for each participant in the program.

Multi-media Technology Equipment

C21 Engage is a web-based multi-media educational program. Having a computer and robust Internet connection at the program locale is ideal. However, this is not always an option. Below is a list of the equipment and strategies needed to ensure access to the program materials.

For Sites with Optimal Internet Connectivity:

- Laptop computer
- Projector, screen and speakers, OR television with computer connectivity
- Internet connection for streaming videos and materials online

For Sites with Limited or Inconsistent Internet Connectivity:

- Laptop computer
- Projector, screen and speakers, OR television with computer connectivity

- Download C21 Engage videos in advance using video download software. We recommend Wondershare Free YouTube Downloader. To access this program type the following in the navigation field of your web browser: www.wondershare.com/pro/free-youtube-downloader.html (Copying and pasting from this document will not work.)

To download C21 Engage videos using Wondershare:

1. Open Wondershare on your computer.
2. Find the video on the C21 Engage website that you want to download.
3. Click the “YouTube” button at the bottom right of video image; takes you to YouTube.
4. Copy the URL in the navigation bar above the video (e.g., www.youtube.com/xxxxxxx).
5. Return to Wondershare and click the “Paste URL” button on the top left.

For Sites with No Internet Connectivity

- Television and DVD player
- Order a free DVD of the C21 Engage videos (one for each group) **at least 2-3 weeks in advance** by email (church21@bc.edu) or telephone (617-552-0470).

Leadership Roles

C21 Engage suggests dividing the leadership responsibilities in the following manner:

- A program **Coordinator** to plan the overall logistics of the program including:
 - Obtain support from colleagues and approval from executive leadership.
 - Reserve a space conducive for small group discussions;
 - Publicize the program and manage registration;
 - Procure equipment, determine internet capabilities, and test the video stream function on the C21 Engage website with the projector in the room location for the program;
 - Download the videos or order C21 Engage DVDs 2-3 weeks in advance (if needed);
 - Order C21 Engage Prayer cards for each participant;
 - Facilitate a small group and/or recruit small group facilitators (as needed);
 - Hold facilitator orientation one to two weeks prior to program start date;
 - For multiple groups, you might assign groups to balance age, gender, or other relevant criteria;
 - Compile a roster of names and contact information;
 - Confirm logistical information with participants through an email or phone call;
 - Insure copies of materials are available for all groups;
 - Address participant issues/concerns that cannot be handled by the facilitator;

- Determine a plan for obtaining feedback from participants after the program through an evaluation form, email solicitation or informal conversation. Plan a program evaluation meeting with facilitators to review and reflect on their experience and participant feedback.
- A **Facilitator** (one per 6-10 participants) moderates a successful small group experience including:
 - Set up a prayerful environment for each session;
 - Determine prayers to be used and who will lead (if needed);
 - Set up refreshments or a simple meal (depending on group's agreement);
 - For a series, ask participants to let you know if they are unable to attend a meeting.
 - Be familiar with the material and the various components of each session in advance;
 - Check technology equipment and video presentations in advance;
 - Facilitate the conversation and discussion around each topic;
 - Offer time for evaluation (if applicable).

Registration and Promotion

We recommend a goal of 8 participants per group with a minimum of 6 and maximum of 10. If you have more than 10 signed up, consider offering more than one group OR have them meet as a large group and then break into small groups for discussion. Consider registering 8-10 people per group, assuming some absences. If you register too few, unexpected absences may lead to an insufficient number of people for a good conversation. Similarly, if a group is too large, it may be difficult for each person to have an opportunity to share.

Determine the registration dates with a clear beginning and end to sign up. You will need a participant's name, phone number, email address, information on any disabilities, and other additional pertinent information. Begin inviting participants with plenty of lead time (4-6 weeks) to give people time to plan accordingly.

Decide on the appropriate promotional strategies for your community:

- Email, social media, and/or website;
- Parish bulletin and/or school newsletter;
- Posters, flyers, and/or handouts (See sample flyers in Appendix II. These flyers can be downloaded from the C21 Engage website or requested in hardcopy form.);
- Announcement at liturgies or other meetings to draw attention to the program.

Take care with the content of your publicity to make sure it is clear, specific, invitational, and attractive. You might answer the basic questions of what, why, where, when, and how:

- **What** this program is and what someone can expect from it;

- **How** it will be conducted (small group conversation around reflection questions and video presentations), length and frequency of meetings;
- **Why** this program is important and the value of community conversation, prayer, and faith sharing;
- **Where** and **when** it will take place.

In any publicity include a clear way to register and a name and contact (email and phone number) for further information. If you are limiting registration, mention “space limited” and the closing date for registration. You might indicate the program is free of charge.

Nothing is as effective as a direct, personal invitation. Spend some time thinking or brainstorming with a colleague about whom and how you might invite people. Consider:

- Individuals you know whom you think would enjoy being part of this program. Don’t forget to include people who are new to your community or those who do not typically attend special programs.
- Existing groups within your organization, perhaps tailoring the publicity to address that group, e.g., lectors, Bible study groups, women’s groups, department teams in a school, school parent groups, etc. It may be most fruitful to contact the heads of these groups:
 - Explain the program to them and the value of this program for participants;
 - Ask for their thoughts on whether this would appeal to their group;
 - If their response is positive, ask to set a convenient time and way to invite their group.

If planning a session or series as a professional development requirement for teachers, be especially conscious to highlight the value for them as individuals and as a community.

Communicating with Participants

The program coordinator is responsible for making decisions regarding cancellations and postponements, and for communicating these to the facilitators. Determine if the coordinator or the group facilitators will communicate any announcements of a routine nature. Any deviation from the schedule or location should be announced in advance.

Evaluation

It is best practice for leaders in ministry to seek the continuous improvement of their programming. One method of evaluating a program is to obtain feedback from participants. This may take several forms:

- Ask participants to complete an evaluation form, either written in person or electronic via a follow-up email from the program coordinator;
- Facilitate an informal discussion at the end of the program to solicit reactions as a group;
- Invite 1-2 particularly astute participants to meet with the planning team to debrief afterwards and to help plan for future programming.

The exact approach for evaluation may vary somewhat to reflect the questions and concerns of the leaders of the particular community offering the program. Your evaluation should address several aspects of the program. Here is list of sample questions that might be included in an evaluation:

- Learning outcomes: *What was the best bit of wisdom that you took away from the program? In what ways did this program help you to engage your faith in a more intentional manner?*
- Logistics/communications: *Was the program advertised accurately? Were the communications from the program coordinator clear, timely, and helpful to you in preparing for the program?*
- Hospitality/environment: *Did the program offer a prayerful environment? Was your group conducive to fostering an open, honest, and respectful conversation? How might the group facilitator provide a more hospitable environment for future sessions?*

Seeking feedback from participants needs to be introduced at a time and in such a manner that is conducive with the program goals to establish a prayerful, reflective, and welcoming atmosphere. Take care to explain when you are asking participants to shift out of the intended reflective space and into a more programmatic, evaluative mode of thinking. We do not recommend having an evaluation form following every session. We do suggest waiting until the end of the program (or possibly at a midpoint) to ask for feedback in a form that will elicit rich and representative feedback from your participants.

Prayer for C21 Engage Leaders

We conclude this manual with an invitation to pray with other C21 Engage Leaders to ask for God's guidance in this ministry to help adults nurture a mature faith in the context of a Christian community.

*Good and Gracious God,
You called us to continue the work of Jesus.
Infuse us with your Spirit,
that we may be servants of hospitality,
of compassion and love, and of listening and respect.
Guide our work, and hold us in your love.
Help us to see these participants as you see them.
Keep us free from judgment
and give us hearts full of loving acceptance for all,
that we may be humble companions to those seeking to grow in faith.
Give us the grace to trust your leadership in this work you have given us.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen.*

Appendix I: USCCB Summary of Vision and Goals for Adult Faith Formation

The Church's catechetical mission aims to help the faithful of all ages to grow in both human and Christian maturity, enriching the whole of life with the leaven of the Gospel. Consequently, appropriate goals and content will embrace all the faith dimensions of an adult life—for example, understanding and communicating the faith, skills needed for personal growth, the experience of family life, relationships, public service, and concern for the common good.

Our adult faith formation ministry must engage the particular needs and interests of the adults in each local community. To be faithful and effective it will offer, over time, a comprehensive and systematic presentation and exploration of the core elements of Catholic faith and practice—a complete initiation into a Catholic way of life. It will do so in a way that is accessible to adults and relates to their life experiences, helping them to form a Christian conscience and to live their lives in the world as faithful disciples of Jesus. This integration of actual life experience, diverse adult learning needs, the study of Scripture, and the teaching of the Church's tradition will create a vibrant learning environment. For guidance, we offer the following goals, principles, content, and approaches.

Three major goals guide and direct efforts in adult faith formation:

1. Invite and Enable Ongoing Conversion to Jesus in Holiness of Life.

In response to God's call to holiness, our faith and life as adult disciples are grounded in developing a personal *relationship with Jesus*, "the Holy One of God" (Jn 6:69, Mk 1:24). Accordingly, "at the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. . . ." Catechesis aims at putting "people . . . in communion . . . with Jesus Christ." As its first goal, faith formation helps adults "to acquire an attitude of *conversion to the Lord*." This attitude fosters a baptismal spirituality for adults. It leads them to recognize and repent of sin in their hearts and lives, to seek reconciliation through the sacraments, and to embrace the invitation and challenge of an ever deepening faith in Jesus. It means putting on the mind of Christ, trusting in the Father's love, obeying God's will, seeking holiness of life, and growing in love for others. Deepening personal prayer is a significant means toward growth in holiness in daily life.

2. Promote and Support Active Membership in the Christian Community.

As adult believers, we learn and live our faith *as active members of the Church*. Our response to God's call to community "cannot remain abstract and unincarnated," but rather, "reveals itself concretely by a visible entry into a community of believers . . . a community which itself is a sign of transformation, a sign of newness of life: it is the Church, the visible sacrament of salvation." People find this community of faith in the parish and diocese, as well as in their families, small church communities, personal relationships, faith-based associations, and in the communion of saints of all times and places. Accordingly, faith formation helps adults make "a conscious and firm decision to live the gift and choice of faith through *membership in the Christian community*," accepting "co-responsibility for the community's mission and internal life."

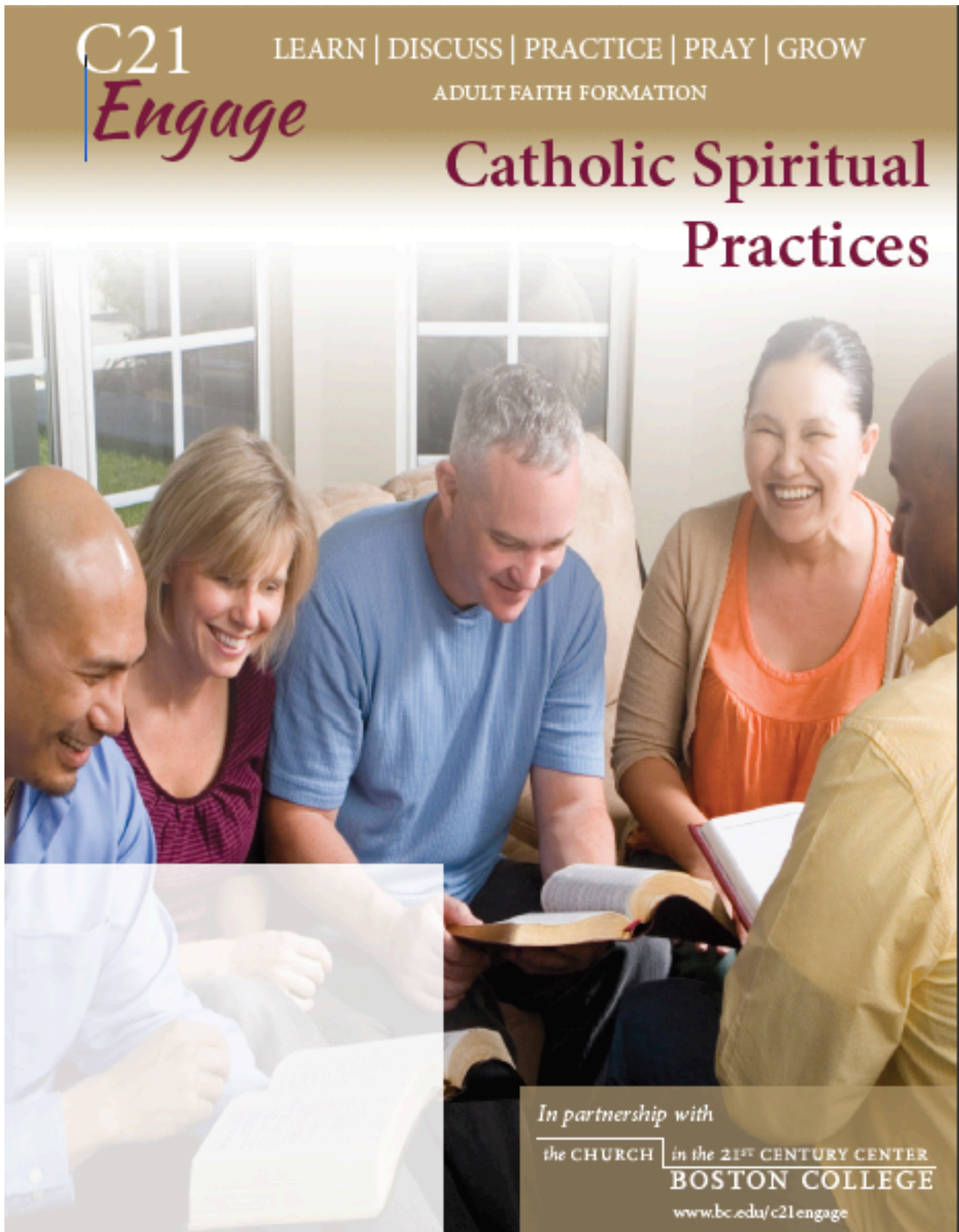
3. Call and Prepare Adults to Act as Disciples in Mission to the World.

The Church and its adult faithful have *a mission in and to the world*: to share the message of Christ to renew and to transform the social and temporal order. This dual calling to evangelization and justice is integral to the identity of the lay faithful; all are called to it in baptism. Accordingly, faith formation seeks to help each adult believer become "more willing and able to be *a Christian disciple in the world*." As salt of the earth and light for the world (cf. Mt 5:13-16), adult disciples give witness to God's love and caring will so that, in the power of the Spirit, they renew the face of the earth.

— excerpt from *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States*

Source: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/adult-faith-formation/>

Appendix II: Sample Promotional Flyers



C21
Engage

LEARN | DISCUSS | PRACTICE | PRAY | GROW
ADULT FAITH FORMATION

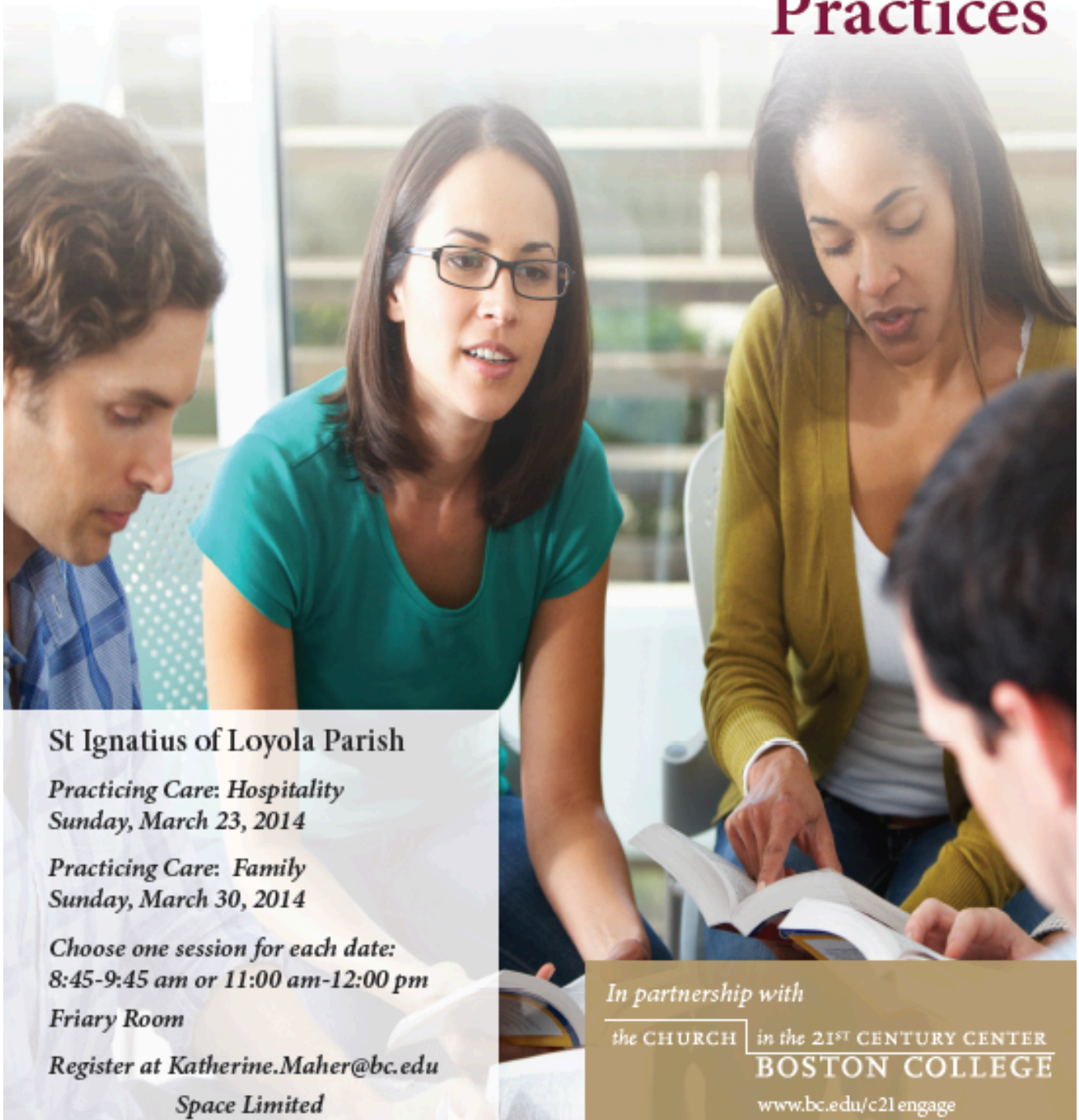
Catholic Spiritual Practices

In partnership with
the CHURCH in the 21ST CENTURY CENTER
BOSTON COLLEGE
www.bc.edu/c21engage

C21 *Engage*

LEARN | DISCUSS | PRACTICE | PRAY | GROW
ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Catholic Spiritual Practices



St Ignatius of Loyola Parish

Practicing Care: Hospitality
Sunday, March 23, 2014

Practicing Care: Family
Sunday, March 30, 2014

Choose one session for each date:
8:45-9:45 am or 11:00 am-12:00 pm

Friary Room

Register at Katherine.Maher@bc.edu

Space Limited

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