



USER'S GUIDE

TO THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF FAITH

Toolkit

View the toolkit at crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits



Christian Reformed Church
**Faith Formation
Ministries**

crcna.org/FaithFormation

A person's silhouette is visible in the lower-left foreground, looking up at a vast, starry night sky. The sky is filled with numerous stars and a faint, glowing band of light, possibly the Milky Way. The horizon is dark, with some silhouettes of trees and hills visible on the right side.

**“NOW FAITH IS CONFIDENCE IN
WHAT WE HOPE FOR AND ASSURANCE
ABOUT WHAT WE DO NOT SEE.”**

—HEBREWS 11:1



This brochure is a user's guide to our online Building Blocks of Faith Toolkit. The toolkit contains dozens of informative and practical ideas for ways your church can help people grow in faith. And many of these ideas are from Christian Reformed churches like yours! Before you read further, open the toolkit at crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits.

What's in This Toolkit

In the Building Blocks of Faith Toolkit you'll find all sorts of resources, including practical ideas, thought-provoking articles, resource lists, ministry tools, and more. Specifically, you'll find help for

- * **Learning** about the four Building Blocks of Faith
- * **Assessing** how well your church's programs are helping to build faith in people of all ages
- * **Using** the Building Blocks to strengthen faith formation in your congregation
- * **Incorporating** the Building Blocks into all your church's ministries
- * **and more!**

About Our Toolkits

The Building Blocks of Faith Toolkit is one of several topical toolkits created and designed by the Faith Formation Ministries team in collaboration with CRC church leaders for CRC church leaders. Our toolkit resources are gathered from real-life church practices, from online sources, and from published materials.

As new tools become available, we'll add them to the online toolkit. If there's a tool you need but can't find, or if you have an idea to contribute, let us know! You can contact us at faithformation@crcna.org.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP! For assistance with faith formation challenges in your church, contact one of our Regional Catalyzers at crcna.org/FaithFormation/coaching.



Visit the Building Blocks of Faith Toolkit at crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits



BELONGING— NO MATTER WHAT

BY LAURA KEELEY

Every Sunday, worship at Fourteenth Street Christian Reformed Church begins with a third-grader carrying in a Bible. When it was Gabi's turn, she was worried that her shoes weren't appropriate.

Mary, who was helping the third graders that morning, assured her that shoes didn't matter.

"You can be like Moses at the burning bush," Mary told Gabi. "He took off his shoes because he was on holy ground." So Gabi walked down the church's center aisle in stocking feet, carrying God's Word on behalf of the congregation.

That morning, Gabi learned something important. She learned that she has a place at her church. She belongs—no matter what.

Third graders, senior citizens, young parents, teens, unemployed people, newly retired people—everyone who comes into our churches has a unique set of needs and desires. They come with joyful hearts and with heavy hearts. They come with empty hands or full pocketbooks. They come with years of Bible knowledge or none at all.

Regardless of their situation, for people in your church to grow in faith, they must feel that four important things are true for them:

I BELONG

I belong to Jesus and thus to his body, the church.

I KNOW AND UNDERSTAND

I know the story of God's faithfulness, of which I am a part.

I HAVE HOPE

I have confidence, through Christ, in all of God's promises. God is making all things new, and he is using us to accomplish that.

I AM CALLED AND EQUIPPED

I am called to work in God's kingdom, and I am equipped to do that work.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF FAITH

Understanding the four faith formation needs, or the four Building Blocks of Faith, will help you assess and strengthen faith formation in your congregation. On these pages are descriptions of the Building Blocks, but for in-depth information on how to incorporate them into your church's ministries, visit our Building Blocks of Faith toolkit online at crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits.

Building Block **1**

I Belong

We all have a deep need to belong. That's why the first question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism is about comfort and belonging:

**“ . . . I am not my own, but belong—
body and soul, in life and in death—
to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.”**

We are people who belong to God and also to a community, the church. We are created with a longing to connect to God, but we are also hardwired to live with and learn from other people. So God graciously places us with brothers and sisters in Christ. With them we worship and serve, share our joys and our sorrows, and learn about what it means to be the people of God.

Building Block **2**

I Know and Understand

In addition to belonging, we need knowledge to grow in our faith. We need to know God's story and our place in it. This knowledge provides our identity and shapes us on our journey.

We need to know how people like Abraham and Sarah, Moses, and David played important parts in God's story even though they doubted and sinned. We need to see how the psalms can help us talk to God. We need to discover how the Gospels and Acts and the apostles' letters can help us be the hands and feet of Jesus in our daily lives. And, most of all, we need to know how Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection give us life.



Belong



Understand



Hope



Called and Equipped

Building Block 3

I Have Hope

Hope is critical to building vibrant faith. Our hope in Christ is an expectation that is strong and confident. Why? Because it's based on promises made to us by the Creator of the universe and on the promises fulfilled and strengthened in Jesus Christ.

Paul writes in Romans 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Having hope and trust allows us to live into the future with confidence that God is doing his work in the world and that we have a part in that work.

Building Block 4

I Am Called and Equipped

Because **we belong**, because **we know** who God is and who we are in relationship with God, and because **we have hope** that we are part of God's plan for renewing all things, we also believe that **God calls us** to a particular place in his kingdom.

In the church, we help each other look and listen for God's call in our lives. We believe that God will prepare and equip us to fulfill our calling. We also equip each other through worship, church education, and fellowship.

TEN WAYS TO USE THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF FAITH IN YOUR CHURCH

- 1 Use the Building Blocks Assessment Tools** in our online toolkit to take a “snapshot” of faith formation in your congregation.
- 2 Evaluate the ministries** in your congregation using the toolkit’s Building Blocks Chart.
- 3 Design a framework** for all your congregation’s faith formation activities based on the Building Blocks.
- 4 Plan a four-week sermon series** on the Building Blocks of Faith.
- 5 Use Building Blocks language** in children’s sermons and in faith milestone presentations.
- 6 Introduce the Building Blocks** in youth group discussions.
- 7 In small groups, share** how you experience the four Building Blocks of Faith in your life and in the life of your congregation.
- 8 Use the Building Blocks as a guide** for one-to-one discipling conversations in elder visits, in mentoring relationships, and more.
- 9 Introduce the Building Blocks concept** when training ministry volunteers.
- 10 Share your stories** of belonging, understanding, having hope, and being called with others in your congregation and community. (For more on this, visit our Faith Storytelling toolkit online at crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits.)

Learn More in Our Online Building Blocks of Faith Toolkit

The Building Blocks of Faith toolkit is an online resource designed to help you build a stronger faith formation culture in your congregation. You can access this toolkit and others at crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits.

For more information on how to use the Building Blocks in your church, contact one of Faith Formation Ministries’ Regional Catalyzers (crcna.org/FaithFormation/Coaching).



Christian Reformed Church

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Ministries**

Helping Churches Grow Faith for Life

crcna.org/FaithFormation