

NAECED Survey Question (132 responses)

What recommendations would you make to your diocese for strengthening Christian education throughout its jurisdiction?

Have a staff person who focuses on formation work (40 responses)

- Get a staff person to give focus to formation work
- Have a quality diocesan staff member in charge of Children's Christian Formation like Sharon Pearson did in CT. It is a HUGE help to have a central person to coordinate and share information across the diocese.
- We need a staff person for Christian Formation. I am having to tap friends and networks and resources outside my own diocese for my EVERY need.
- Take CE for all ages seriously; place it as a priority rather than as an accessory. More hands on support, ideas, and networking...more emphasis to parishes about the importance of having a solid Christian Education program and paying people sufficiently to run it
- A CE staff person in Dio. of New Jersey
- Hire a Christian formation person
- Hiring an effective Christian Ed point person at the Diocesan level to provide support for individual congregations as well as offer workshops/training events.
- Continue supporting the work of the Missioner for Lifelong Christian Formation
- Hire a full time C.E. staffer
- Our diocese recently eliminated the position of Christian formation/Youth on the diocesan level
- There is what seems to be a total lack of support for Christian Formation on the diocesan level. It would be helpful to have one person designated with real ability in the area.
- Hire a full time priest in charge of Christian Formation & Youth
- Christian formation is the lifeblood of the church. Doing away with positions, under-funding Christian education & formation programs only hurts.
- Create and fund a full time Diocesan Christian Formation Director position. Offer the job to Heidi Clark!
- Need staff support for Christian Education/Formation
- Full time, fully funded positions for leadership.
- Have a diocesan staff person for CE and provide events and support.
- I have admired Sharon Pearson's work in the Diocese of CT and often refer to information she directs us to through the NAECED list-serve.
- Staff person - there's one for youth, but nothing specific to the children and adults in our parishes
- Children's Ministry Director support--more luncheons, etc.
- Hire a staff person for Christian Ed
- Continue to support the invaluable ministry of our diocesan Christian Formation missioner.
- Our Diocese emphasizes college and youth ministry that does not necessarily include Christian education. Yes these ministries often provide faith formation, but I believe the church, the diocese needs to look at faith formation at an earlier age in hopes of retaining young people. Our Diocese is very large and yet we have no Diocesan staff person for

Christian Education/Formation that seems to provide an unstated message of how CE rank of importance.

- Hire a diocesan formation professional.
- A diocesan staff person whose primary responsibility is Christian education/faith formation (IE Assistant to the Bishop for Faith Formation/Christian Education.) The diocese should be a place for resourcing the educational ministries of the church. A listing/tracking method for those responsible for Christian Education in churches. There is no current list in our diocese at this time.
- Having a Christian Formation Director that reaches out to rural communities
- A strong staff person who can direct and communicate with those in the field
- Hire a full time Christian education canon (not just youth or programs but Christian Ed)
- Retaining a part-time/full-time position for CE on diocesan level
- Elevating the position of Coordinator for Christian Formation to a full time equitable salaried position (my co-worker, not me) and Breaking out my position to part time. At present we share a job. She 3/4 time and I 1/4. She gets the very short end of the stick as her responsibilities far exceed mine and she is not compensated properly. We have an excellent program and are doing good work at the expense of the good will and sacrifice by a faithful worker.
- Have paid personal to oversee and coordinate ministry
- Hire a diocesan resource to help and advise churches
- Having a Diocesan Leader
- Create and sustain a full time position of missionary for children and youth
- Hiring a resource person/Diocesan Director
- A full time Christian Education Resource person whose primary job is visiting congregations and providing support to them and to the teachers.
- Paid staff position responsible for Christian Formation
- Add it (a position) back into the budget
- Hire one paid person to oversee just this
- Get a new staff person for youth and family ministries, who actually has some organizational skills, communication skills, and vision

Networking & Communication: Encourage and support local networks of Christian educators (39 responses)

- 90% of my resources come from sharing with other churches and Christian Educators.
- Encouraging networking especially among those who minister to children and families.
- Networking is not a priority of the diocese.
- Establishing group of "education coaches" to help small churches.
- More communications between parishes -- several people are working on similar problems/with similar challenges and possibilities (this is part of my task -- I'm working hard to create the communication channels and to connect people)
- Gather educators together to share ideas and resources. Reach out and include churches that don't have dedicated education staff. A local e-newsletter.
- More opportunities for sharing ideas and resources on both a diocesan and on local levels.
- Better communication among parishes
- As I am the diocesan missionary for Christian Education and Lifelong Formation, I would appreciate receiving the feedback from other people from Oregon.

- A diocesan list-serve for Christian Educators
- Form a diocesan community of the current Christian educators
- Have newsletters keeping communication open for learning opportunities for education
- There is no networking currently either within the Episcopal diocese or among churches. Other denominations seem to offer much more local support.
- We are working at building a network of C. Ed workers. We need to improve communication and shared resources. All parents and parishes need to "buy in" to the importance in C. Ed.
- At minimum, a part time Christian Formation/resource library director. We need someone who will be able to reach out to congregations and help them train teachers and support their programs for children, families, young adults and adults.
- That there needs to be a real presence among the diocese with some energy and excitement. There also needs to be time for those of us in Christian Formation to gather so that we know one another.
- Regular diocesan meetings of CE directors
- Better/consistent communication
- Regular networking and support opportunities, we are each other's best resource, care of our spiritual growth
- Deanery Programs for connecting High School youth
- Communication, Teamwork, Organization
- Connecting people from different churches better sharing of information
- Support ongoing CE network within the Diocese and the CE Annual Conference (SHRINE MONT in Orkney Springs, VA); Also if there is another way to promote the Provincial network of CE in a more personal way than just through the diocesan office.
- List-serve; periodic e-newsletter to keep us abreast of options/resources; opportunities for collegial discussions of what is being done/used
- List-serve would be good with the Christian Ed Directors
- Just add DCF to the parochial report . . . that way we have a person to contact.
- Continued networking and resource sharing with one another
- Let lay volunteers know what is out there for support. Give us a brochure or email outlining the resources that the diocese recommends that the priests can pass on. I feel like I'm reinventing the wheel. I had no idea that there were all these resources.
- Develop a network of WNY Christian Educators
- Contact all the churches and all the people involved in CE and YM, not just the ones you like. Be aware of your calendar of youth and children's event and not double book.
- Make it easier to share ideas between Episcopal Education Directors
- Organize the creative work of the CE directors and make available to all!
- Access to Christian ed materials via the internet and guidance in implementing them, please
- Get more resources into the hands of all the educators (even volunteers). Educate us about all these different groups available so we don't feel so much that we are on an island.
- Finding a simple way to let leaders know what is available. It seems like there is a ton of information from a myriad of sources. I don't know where to begin.
- More contact and communication regarding Christian Education
- Yearly Diocesan conference, every other month meetings.
- Meet at least quarterly and do the conference at Kanuga
- Create a Christian formation e-newsletter (like one Diocese of CT had)

Provide training and support (21 responses)

- Offer trainings, workshops and conferences for volunteer teachers for ages 3 to 5th grade. That doesn't exist in our diocese
- I would say finding more workshop type programs that can be led by anyone and tailored. We have many congregations that do not have dedicated resources and we need to start back at the grass roots level and rebuild.
- As a diocese we do many things. There are workshops throughout the year and a wonderful annual M&M (Ministry and Mission) conference for parishes. Not enough time is the main issue.
- Help develop standardized training & certification for lay professionals
- Get (those of us who desire to be) certified as lay professionals
- I'd like to see a return to an annual Christian Ed. conference on a larger scale (over a couple of days, perhaps).
- Help inspire adults through learning opportunities regarding children. Continuing ed for those already involved
- Certification of Catechists in rural parts of our diocese where there is an absence of clergy.
- Improving the resource center.
- Offer certification and in depth training programs for DCE's
- Training of clergy and vestries as to the importance of children's ministries programs.
- Making Safer Church Training guidelines less strict for volunteers that are never left alone or lead children
- Funding for programming; continuation of scholarship funding.
- Having a website page available which would have all trainings which are going to be close to our areas and other trainings that are further away but beneficial.
- Offer more workshops and training programs, and more educational programs in general encourage small parish education
- Offer trainings for adult facilitators to empower more lay people to facilitate adult learning opportunities.
- Continuing Education for all Christian Educators. Local & Regional networks of Christian Educators, either online or in person or both.
- Subscribe to Diocesan level for Journey to adulthood program.
- Fund it more
- Have more workshops; have more adults involved
- More professional support

Prioritizing Christian formation and education (19 responses)

- Suggest priority of Christian Education to clergy
- Stress importance of adult education
- For ministries with children -- stronger message and support for clergy and DCEs to stop overlap of children's formation/education with worship time (i.e., preventing children from having worship time, treating education as something appropriate for children and worship as appropriate for adults)
- Christian Formation needs to have more support from the Bishop's office - not money only,

but active support and encouragement. There needs to be support not only for diocesan-wide youth programs, but for lifelong learning (babies - adult)

- Stop treating it as an ill-favored relative and recognize the power of CE and CXF to form and transform a people. Now more than ever I think we need to utilize education to help people understand the issues that engulf our church.
- Our diocese puts all adult CE work under the School of Ministry and youth under a diocesan staff member. Children are lost and forgotten in all discussions.
- The bishop's support is vital (which I am fortunate to have!). Continuous clergy involvement and participation.
- Fully fund line items for formation
- Advocate for corporate learning not just corporate worship; approach learning holistically.
- Inform everyone the true need of Children and Youth leaders and their value in the church- even if costs money!
- Get more serious about full-time; continue to support lifelong learning at every level.
- Diocesan vision for formation; a focus on lifetime formation
- Help people understand that learning is integral to everything we do, not just something that happened in the classroom when we were little.
- We have great support for CE in our diocese. Just continue to offer that support.
- Make sure people hear from many directions that learning together is key to congregational transformation and, therefore, stewardship rewards.
- Investing in our children is the only way the denomination will survive
- Christian Education for adults seems to be on tap; however, not so much for youth and children.
- Identify and support young people (in their 20s) who may have a call to work as directors of Christian formation. Raise the consciousness of clergy -- many of whom view Christian formation for children and youth as a low priority on their (clergy's) admittedly very busy schedules.
- Teaching the Bible to parents so that they can see the importance of sending their children to Sunday School

Encourage parishes in hiring parish Christian educators with equitable salary & benefits
(19 responses)

- Supporting and encouraging parishes to hire Christian educators with equitable salary and benefits and not use newly ordained in this position as a transitional job upon ordination.
- Set guidelines for vestries to consider so they have suggestions on what is fair for compensation
- Need to develop recommended pay scales
- Find sources of funding to assist parishes with growth potential to add Christian ed staff
- More training, more money, make more of the CE positions paid instead of volunteer
- Make positions full time with benefits and take advantage of professionals who are recently retired to lead programs and draft personnel
- Valuing Christian Education programs means not only funding budgets well, but showing value to your lay CE directors with competitive compensation / healthcare / pension / continuing ed opportunities, as is done for ordained persons in TEC.
- Better work practices, standardization of benefits and salary guidelines
- Current salary info for positions, support of parishes providing benefits for lay staff

- Educate vestries and clergy on what the job is, the importance etc.
- Inform vestries/rectors about General Convention resolutions on lay professionals and explain pension options to them.
- Stress the importance of continuing ed and the great wealth of the resources at CMT/VTS
- Encourage churches to value and reward Christian Formation in general and formation directors specifically. Encourage churches to employ formation directors full-time and provide them with health and retirement benefits, sabbaticals, and continuing education.
- Provide a just wage and value CE by providing a budget. It is all or nothing in the parishes. The new CE dept is a positive step but the most active members have both salary and budget. The reliance seems to count only on volunteers and there is no real support to develop a lay professional staff base in CE. I think this is a long way off.
- Support professional educators with health benefits, adequate salary, correct job descriptions and respect!
- Develop compensation guidelines for lay professionals.
- Giving Professional lay people the same benefits as clergy such as equal pension.
- Pass the word that Christian Ed for children and youth is a position worth supporting, paying, and acknowledging.
- Paid full time Christian Educators directors

(Develop/Strengthen) Diocesan Christian Formation Commissions (10 responses)

- We have done a very good job of strengthening Christian education through restructuring our Diocesan Christian Formation Department and Christian Ed is taken seriously in our Diocese.
- We need a commitment on the part of the diocese to support a committee of lay people and clergy passionate about education and formation, who could then reach out to congregations and help them get what they need for this vital ministry!
- Continue the good work begun in the last couple of years.
- Formalize the adult Christian education as it has the children and youth
- Continue to educate folks on the necessity of Christian Formation for adults
- Development of Christian formation leaders
- We are in such a state of flux that I can't really make specific recommendations at this time. I am a member of the still-forming Commission on Christian Education.
- Continued work of the Church Commission for Children in developing resource lists and presentation of workshops
- Christian educators need to be at the table when decisions about diocesan life are taken.
- Our Christian Formation Commission is in transition. We need a more cohesive team to carry out our good ideas.

Strengthen the Commission on Ministry to support the ministry of ALL the baptized, not just those preparing for ordination (3 responses)

- Press the Commission on Ministry to do more for all the Baptized
- Follow through on Commission on Ministry's requirement for ministry/education to all - lay adult education programs - not just the Ordination track
- Have a process that helps discern call to long term or career vocational Christian Ed or children/youth ministries for lay professionals as well as support these individuals as they gain experience and training

Miscellaneous (4 responses)

- Future? What future? Our diocese is in turmoil.
- Not familiar enough with the Diocese yet to comment.
- Get people to join NAECED
- I am involved pretty much just locally.