

Igniting the Faith



OECTA's Role

As an Association, OECTA is called to play a particular role in the adult faith formation of Catholic teachers. As the united voice of teachers in Catholic schools, OECTA advocates at the provincial and local level for opportunities and supports for appropriately diverse, engaging, and purposeful faith formation experiences for teachers.

What sacred images are in your unit office? How can you depict Jesus, Mary, and saints with local significance or saints that were teachers in diverse and affirming ways?

Our faith lives often benefit from experiences where we can get away from our daily routines and responsibilities. Consider how your unit or work site can encourage this practice for members? Perhaps it might be partnering with a local retreat facility to offer a specific event for teachers. Provide subsidies for members, who attend a travelling retreat that visits different sites. Sponsor a "Lunchtime quiet" on site, or introduce different methods of prayer and spirituality. Consider that a retreat is an opportunity to get away or build community.

Consider selecting a scriptural motto that sums up your unit. Consider your history, geography, and vocation as Catholic teachers. You may choose to have a permanent motto or select a new focus each year.

Does your unit acknowledge milestones, birthdays, bereavements, or crisis? Ideas include birthday email greetings from the unit with a prayer, sponsoring a votive candle lighting or spiritual bouquet card for member or family bereavement. For schools in crisis (sudden death, unexpected diagnosis, environmental, or other damages) consider sponsoring coffee or breakfast, along with a spiritual bouquet of prayers from the unit.

Is pastoral care part of your crisis response and management plan?

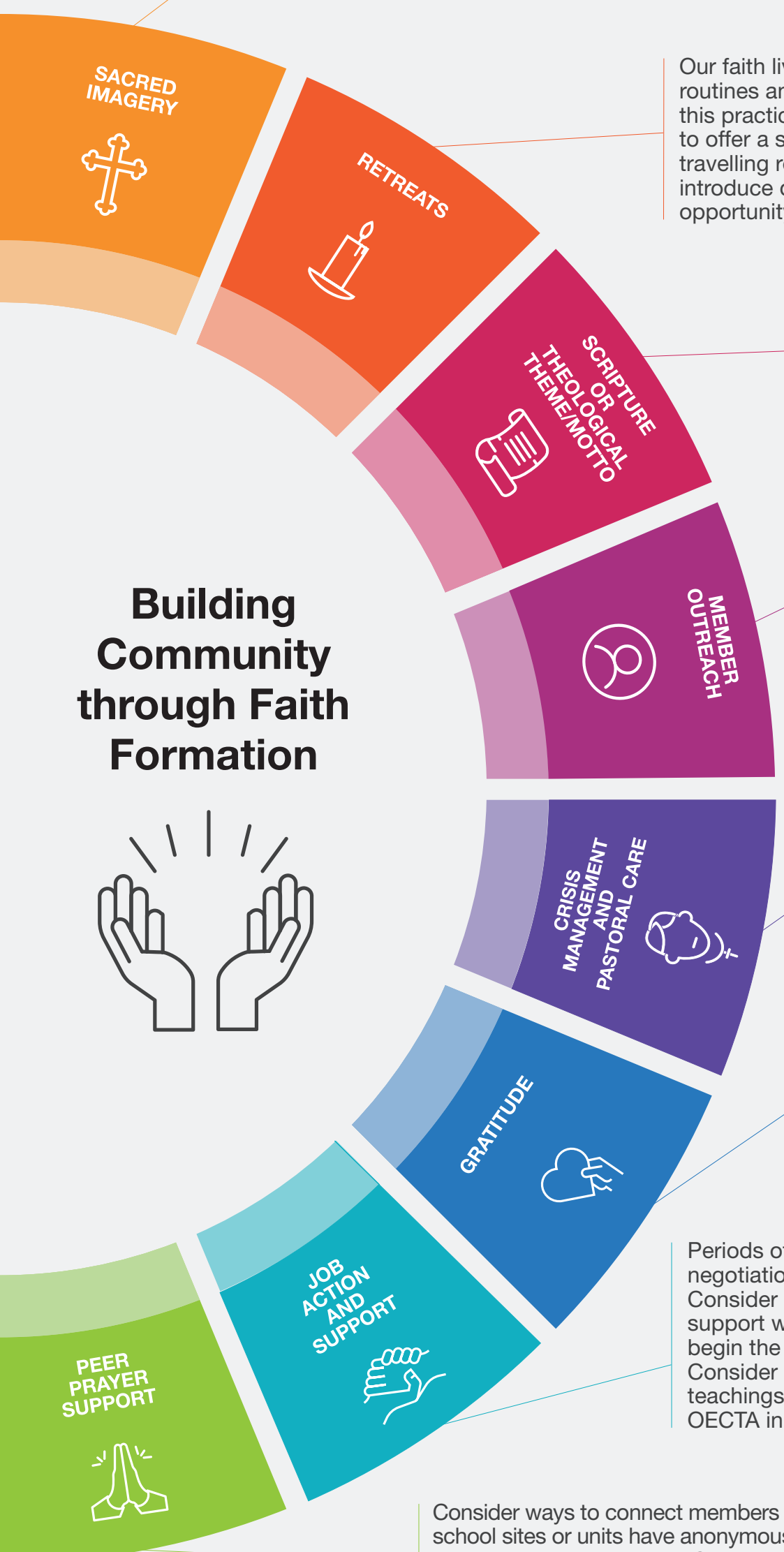
Consider reaching out and asking a few good spiritual listeners to be available to be on call to the unit, executive, or work sites in times of crisis.

The intentional practice of gratitude has many spiritual and personal benefits. Consider supporting members in this practice by recommending a gratitude journal or app.

Periods of labour action and contract negotiation are often stressful. Consider adding pastoral and prayerful support with a blessing or prayer to begin the day, action, or resources. Consider reflections on the social teachings of the Church or history of OECTA in the labour movement.

Consider ways to connect members in need of prayers. Some school sites or units have anonymous prayer networks or weekly or monthly lists with updates. Some units match members to "prayer angels" or keep an ongoing list of special intentions including ill, grieving, or celebrating members and their families.

Building Community through Faith Formation



HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

You are invited to envision this resource as a menu rather than a to do list. This menu of options invites us to look at the suggestions and explore how our schools, offices, local units, and regional groupings would benefit from building community through faith.

Consider inviting members to participate as an avenue for expanding member engagement.