



THE BUILDING BLOCKS
OF FAITH

Toolkit

A USER'S GUIDE



Christian Reformed Church
**Faith Formation
Ministries**

crcna.org/FaithFormation





Welcome to the user's guide for the Building Blocks of Faith toolkit—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.

In the toolkit you'll find

- * an **introduction** to four crucial Building Blocks of Faith that can change how your congregation helps people of all ages develop a strong, vibrant faith.
- * **assessment tools** to help you discover whether the Building Blocks are alive and well in your church.
- * **ideas from congregations** on how to use the Building Blocks.
- * **resources** for using the Building Blocks to strengthen faith formation in worship, in congregational programs, and at home.
- * **communication tips** for introducing the Building Blocks concept to your congregation.

How to Use Our Toolkits

This toolkit, like others designed by the Faith Formation Ministries team, was created in collaboration *with* CRC church leaders *for* CRC church leaders.

With your particular needs in mind, we've done the work of gathering great resources on a variety of faith formation issues into online locations organized by topic. Visit crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits to see what's available or in development.

Our toolkit resources are gathered from real-life church practices, from online sources, and from published materials. We've tried to glean and share the best of the best, and we'll add other great new resources as we discover them, so check back often!



Bookmark our toolkit page for easy reference:
crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits



BY LAURA KEELEY

BELONGING— NO MATTER WHAT

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.”**

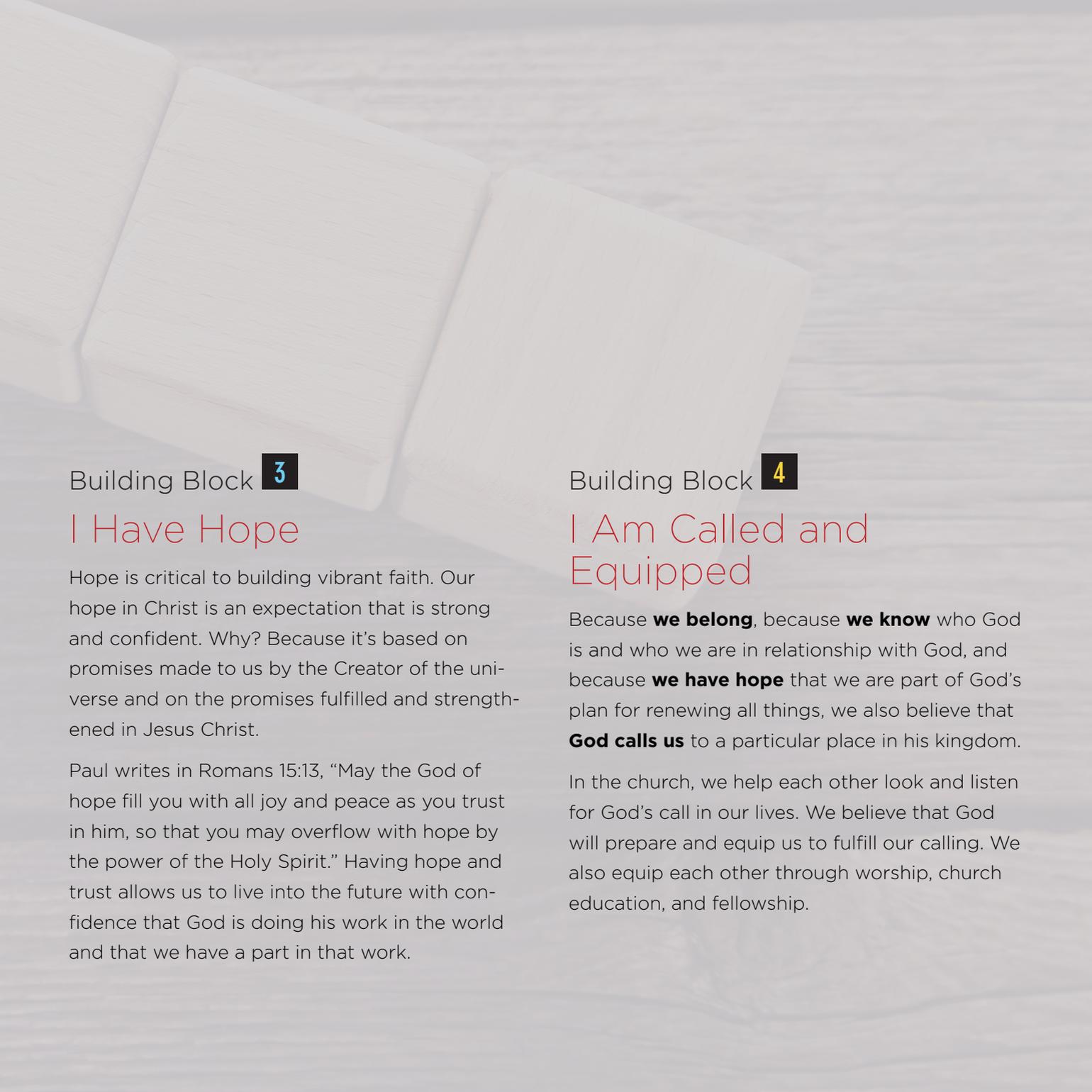
We are people who belong to God and also to a community, the church. We are created with a longing to connect to God, but we are also hard-wired to live with and learn from other people. So God graciously places us with brothers and sisters in Christ. With them we worship and serve, share our joys and 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.



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.

7 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. Use the chart to ask, “What programs do we have that meet this age group’s needs? In what other ways could we meet their needs?”
- 3** In small groups, share how you experience the four Building Blocks of Faith in your life and in the life of your congregation.
- 4** Plan a four-week sermon series on the Building Blocks of Faith.
- 5** Use the language of Belonging, Knowing and Understanding, Having Hope, and Being Called and Equipped in children’s sermons and in faith milestone presentations.
- 6** Use the Building Blocks as a guide for one-to-one discipling conversations in elder visits, in mentoring relationships, and more.
- 7** Share your stories of faith and hope together. (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).



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