

Ministry to Families with Younger Children

EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES

<p style="text-align: center;">Pastoral:</p> <p>Providing pastoral care and support for families and family members in their primary relationships; strengthening families through enrichment programs; supporting families in periods/stages of crisis or significant stress.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Educational:</p> <p>Educating families in ways that enhance their relationships; forming faith in family members through Christian education and experiential learning (in both age-specific and cross-generational contexts); supporting and equipping the home through education as a primary context for faith formation.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Communal:</p> <p>Developing the congregation as a welcoming “second family” for families and family members; enabling intergenerational relationship-building and faith sharing within the congregation; connecting families with families for mutual support and interaction.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Celebrational:</p> <p>Ministering to families through the corporate worship life of the congregation, including through preaching, prayer and the exercise of hospitality; marking significant “milestones” events in the lives of families through worship; creating worship experiences that are parent and child friendly; actively involving whole families in worship; connecting the corporate worship life of the congregation with the practice of faith in the home, providing related resources for use in the home.</p>

Pastoral

- Parenting courses for parents with young children.
- Parent support groups (or “parent support” elements in other programs).
- Marriage enrichment: courses, time together, renewal events.
- Practical help for the hard times.
- Family visitations.
- Remembering family “milestones”.
- Cradle roll ministry.

Communal

- Providing opportunities to get to know other parents and their families.
- Linking families with families.
- Looking out for families with special needs or characteristics.
- Using congregational sponsors.

Educational

- Giving parents ideas, aids and resources for practicing the “Four Keys”.
- “Passing on the faith” classes / study groups
- Providing “at home” resources through worship and Christian education.
- “Rocking Chair” classes for parents with 0-1s; “Come to Me” classes for 1-2s.
- “Stepping Stones” ministry: baptism (0), baptismal anniversary (1), prayer (2), Sunday School (3), forgiveness (4), the Lord’s Prayer/starting school (5) etc. etc.
- Developing a resource library: books, videos, games etc.

Celebrational

- “Child friendly” worship.
- Helping parents worship with their children.
- Helping the congregation worship with families.
- Involving whole families in worship.
- “Stepping Stones” worship celebrations.
- Linking worship to faith life in the home: rituals, prayers, conversation etc.
- Seasonal family workshops.
- Good facilities e.g. nursery, activity bags, front pews, the “five senses”.