

Windows on Family Ministry



Four Quadrants for Family Ministry

- i. *Pastoral:* Providing pastoral care and support for families and family members in their primary relationships; strengthening families through therapeutic and enrichment programs.
- ii. *Educational:* Educating families in ways that enhance their relationships; forming faith in family members through Christian education and experiential learning (in both age specific and intergenerational contexts); supporting and equipping the home as the primary context for faith formation.
- iii. *Communal:* Developing the congregational community as a welcoming “second family” for families and family members; enabling intergenerational relationship-building and faith sharing within the congregation; and connecting families with families for mutual support and interaction.
- iv. *Celebrational:* Giving attention to the way in which the worship life of the faith community connects with family life and to the relationship between corporate worship and Christian formation in the home.

Four Disciplines for Family Ministry

- a) *Caring Conversation:* The practice of caring, attendant communication with others, grounded in the love and mercy of God.
- b) *Devotion:* Attentiveness to prayer and the guidance of the Word of God in daily life.
- c) *Service:* Practical Christ-like service aimed at meeting the needs of and/or building up other persons.
- d) *Rituals and Traditions:* Routine patterns and behaviours that embody and communicate the meaning of the Christian faith

Four Ingredients of Family Ministry

1. *Life-Cycle Based, Home-Supportive Ministry*

Examples:

- Ministering to family members and families in the context of their primary relationships through integrated ministry across the life-cycle (e.g. pre-marriage, marriage, young families, childhood, youth, young adult, singles, “empty nesters”, retirement, grandparenthood).
- Developing ministry around church (e.g. baptism, first communion, confirmation, marriage, death) and societal rites of passage (e.g. birth, birthdays, starting school, graduation, adulthood, retirement) that strengthens primary relationships and the faith life of the home.

2. *Child/Youth/Parent Friendly Ministry*

Examples:

- Giving children and youth meaningful participation in the life of the congregation.
- Practicing sincere and warm hospitality toward children and youth: knowing them by name, affirming their giftedness and involvement, listening to their voices, hearing their stories.
- Acknowledging and ministering with sensitivity toward the various wider constraints (e.g. time, finances) on parents and family life.
- Proactively assisting families in periods of particular stress.
- Taking active interest in the child/youth/parent friendliness of the wider community, and partnering with other organizations to shape a family-friendly community.

3. *Family-Friendly Age-Specific Ministry*

Examples:

- Providing quality age-specific ministry throughout the life-cycle, from birth to death.
- Developing age-specific ministry around an awareness that ministry to individuals involves ministry to their family systems.
- Providing a safe, caring environment for children and youth to develop communities of peers within the larger community of faith.
- Programming ministry to children, youth and adults with a view to the significance of Christian formation in the home environment.

4. *Cross-Generational Ministry*

Examples:

- Facilitating intergenerational learning, fellowship, worship and service in congregational life.
- Bringing together persons of different generations for non-gathered relationship-building and faith sharing (e.g. mentoring, home-based activities).
- Providing for parallel learning in congregational life (e.g. integrated lectionary based education across the age spectrums).
- Building into age-specific programming opportunities for intergenerational contact, and promoting intergenerational contact through age-specific programming (e.g. developing skills in seniors ministry for communication with youth and children).
- Building networks of families for mutual support and ministry (e.g. family clusters).