

## (December 6 & 8, 2018 NCCYM Networking Sessions)

### Parent and Family Ministry Concerns and Great Ideas (attendee submitted)

- **Faith is not a priority in the home. It is not transmitted. It is outsourced**
  - Create urgency in the parents with SCFSCY, <http://nfcym.org/strongcatholicfamilies/>.
  - Parents value what helps their kids, so start helping!
  - Talk about the importance of parent's faith in the lives of their children.
  - Send interactive education information home with kids for parents.
  - Assign families to pray for each other – prayer partners.
  - Provide parent sessions on praying with family – Advent/Lent ideas for home – put resources in their hands.
- **Integrating cultures, languages**
  - Pray together bilingually.
  - Eat together.
  - International food and culture fair.
  - Multicultural Epiphany or Pentecost Mass with songs & readings in different languages & meal with ethnic foods.
  - Assess if meeting needs of various language groups.
- **Communication**
  - Advertise through all methods possible.
  - Connect through email, text, phone and just plain face to face talking!
  - One-one coffee chats with parents.
  - Be seen at Mass and other parish activities.
  - Introduce yourself.
  - Pray together.
  - Host activities with, by, for families.
- **Changing make-up of families**
  - Be flexible.
  - Don't judge.
  - Listen to their stories of faith.
- **Building relationships between families**
  - Intentional listening – encourage families to set aside time/space to listen/talk.
  - Personal invitation.
  - Ask families what they need to help support faith in their families.
  - One-One conversations.
  - Schedule family nights.
- **Bubble-wrapping kids – Happiness at all costs**
  - Witness talks on overcoming adversity.
  - Power of the Holy Spirit in our lives – especially in times of crisis.
  - Invite professionals to teach how to deal with stress and adversity.
- **Schedules, time, busy, over-extended**
  - Offer more than one option when fulfilling requirements.
  - Minister to one youth/family at a time and meet needs with varying resources.
  - Keep family life in mind when creating schedules and planning activities.
- **Resourcing Families**
  - Gather and Go parent meeting during religious education on Sunday morning.
  - Start with small ideas for parents so don't overwhelm them.
  - Strong Catholic Family Faith - <http://www.catholicfamilyfaith.org/>,  
<https://www.facebook.com/strongcatholicfamilyfaith>

- **Family-based catechesis**
  - Bring all ages to one event.
  - Take-home packets after faith formation sessions.
- **Building the Domestic Church – What is it?**
  - Families are Holy, Sacred, Evangelizing and Share Unique Gifts.
  - Hold Parent Night Discussions on Hot Topics like Catholic Parenting.
  - Evangelize Dads – use beer!?
  - Introduce concept during Marriage and Baptism ministry and resource family with seasonal information, prayers, and ideas.
  - Help families develop faith practices at home and coach to use resources in the home.
- **Sacraments are treated like tasks to be accomplished and graduated from**
  - Offer Sacramental ministry a few times a year in 6 sessions or less, not for a whole year.
  - Engage parents, families and kids between the sacraments – follow-up and find a place for them!
  - Sponsor parishioner mentoring program with Confirmation candidates and encourage ongoing dialogue after Confirmation.
  - Share importance of faith life.
  - Personal invitation to do the most they can to prepare for the reception of the Sacrament (not about jumping through hoops) and then keep “playing on the team” after fully initiated.
- **Lack of Mass attendance**
  - Develop personal relationships with parents and families by going to where they are – sports, schools, sacraments, shops.
  - Personally invite to come to Mass.
  - Breakfast Club – invite teens and parents to meet for daily Mass in the summer, one day a week, and go out for breakfast after Mass or bring your own bag breakfast and faith share about the upcoming Sunday’s readings.
  - Reach out in Prayer – Advent and Lent – Parish process to call to mind those who are away from the practice of the faith, pray for them and invite them to an activity at the parish, with the goal of inviting them to join you for Mass. Assist in removing all obstacles as best as you can through child care, transportation, etc.
  - Include youth and children in liturgical roles.
- **Recruiting, training and supporting parent leaders**
  - Invite them to attend workshops, conferences for ongoing training.
  - Personally invite them to participate and help them to feel comfortable in their role.
- **Raising “good people” vs. Disciples of Jesus Christ**
  - Small group discipleship-based youth ministry.
  - Small Christian Communities.
- **Dealing with program and resource changes**
  - Collaborate with staff and commissions.
  - Work with Faith Formation/Education/Ministry Board.
- **Lack of personal relationship with Jesus**
  - Alpha
  - ChristLife
  - Bulletin or social media posts weekly with different types of prayer.
  - Work with parents to encounter Jesus and also do this with their youth present.
  - Retreats – Dual Retreat for parents at the same time as teens or Family Retreat.
  - Create prayer spaces during reconciliation times for faith formation times.

- **Lack of opportunities for conversion**
  - Parent Retreat
  - Alpha
  - ChristLife
  - Bring parents to Conferences like NCCYM.
- **Parish assumes what parents and families need**
  - Provide child care and food for meetings right after work.
  - Focus groups/Listening sessions.
  - Survey parents – Call with 3 questions over the course of 1 year. Use SCF process and survey.
  - “I’ve Been There” rolodex – Parents provide one or more tough issues they have already worked through and are open to accompanying another parent through.
- **Un-Catechized Parents**
  - Engage parents on the level of vocation – contact [everett.fritz1@gmail.com](mailto:everett.fritz1@gmail.com).
  - Create coffee houses to engage parents.
  - Formation sessions for parents during children’s catechesis and with children, especially in sacramental formation.
  - Assure parents that they do not have to be perfect in their knowledge – introduce them to resources to guide them – FORMED, commentaries, websites, blogs, etc.

## (December 7, 2018 NCCYM Networking Hot Topics)

### Engaging Parents - Ideas (attendee submitted)

- Key words/actions: **Invite, Give Direction, Involve, Follow-up**, repeat!
- Use **Gallup Strengths Finder** to identify to 5 strengths. Use **Gifts/Charisms Discernment** and then invite to use gifts in specific ways.
- **Meetings for parents and teens** talking about depression, anxiety and other important subjects.
- Create **opportunities for faith sharing and witness story sharing**.
- **Networking nights for parents with similar interests**.
- **Share a meal. Family meal nights**.
- **Invite parents to mentor other parents or youth**.
- **Coach parents to transmit faith in the home. Invite them to be involved in parish faith formation/youth ministry**.
- **Teen witness stories in support of parents**.
- **Prayer service where teens wash their parent’s feet and parents wash their child’s feet**.
- **Write Palanca letters** for teens on retreat.
- **Parent meeting nights** for Sacraments, faith formation, hot topics, Bible study, SCCs and **Q & A** with clergy and ministers. **Show videos, give short presentation and invite to discuss**.
- **Parents and youth attend Sacrament preparation together – RCIA included**.
- **Day retreats for parents** on same topic as youth retreat (weekend or day).
- **Parent nights to celebrate** the work of the children/teens.
- **Family youth ministry nights** once a month.
- **Weekly email to parents** highlighting material covered with resource suggestions and questions to discuss with their kids.
- **Build relationships wherever you meet families** – ESL class, sporting events, service opportunities, etc. and invite them to further activities like youth ministry gatherings, faith formation, sacramental ministry, etc.
- **Involve parents** in prayer and ice breakers/games, ministry kick-offs, information meetings.

- **Invite parents on a hiking trip, canoe/kayak trip, mission trips, conferences, service opportunities.**
- **Invite parents and families to pray together** before breaking up for age related faith formation, to prayer/penance services in Advent and Lent and other seasons of the Church (**connect parent event to parish event**).
- **Introduce parents to parish ministers.**
- Set up **dedicated space for parents and involve them** in faith sharing, reading, video, discussion, coffee, etc. which children/teens are in faith formation/youth ministry.
- **Celebrate milestones in families as a parish** – new driver, graduation, new job, marriage and anniversary, birthday...
- **Meet with families yearly to set a Spirituality Plan** for the individuals of the family – no one size fits all!
- **Survey family needs** and address individually and/or with programs or processes.
- **Assess current ministry opportunities for impact on families.**
- **Involve grandparents**, especially if they are raising their grandkids!

### Working with Over-Involved Parents (attendee submitted)

- **Know when to say, “No.”**
- **Sift through all the advice** to find the truth in what is being said or suggested and move on/with what is appropriate or needed.
- **Discern their gifts and assign specific tasks based on their gifts. Discernment retreat.**
- Give **parents an opportunity to grow** in relationships and faith, too!
- **Train to be SCC/small group leaders.**
- **Invite to serve** as catechist, faith formation/youth ministry leader, prayer leader, social justice leader, retreat leader, party planner.
- **Keep chaperones active and engaged.**
- **Coach parents** in discussion, faith sharing, teaching, and/witnessing techniques.

### Working with Under-Involved Parents (attendee submitted)

- Continually **invite and reach out respectfully**: A “No” answer or response may really mean, “Not now.”
- **Build relationships** and find out what is going on in their lives; **listen to their stories.**
- **Be compassionate.**
- **Don’t shame them.**
- **Discern gifts and invite parents to use their gifts to fill gaps.**
- **Youth witness talks** and youth invitations.
- **Give kids recognition** (milestone markers) and **invite parents to be present.**
- **Invite parents to provide** meals, snacks, prizes, etc.
- Invite parents to **make a retreat or attend an opportunity to experience conversion.**
- **Assess spiritual and social needs of families/parents/youth**
- **Accompany parents and families**
- Partner with parents in bringing home the faith. **Address their needs** with helpful **resources.**
- **Train parents to lead in various ways** – catechesis, SCCs, youth ministry, chaperone, social justice, prayer, retreats, party planner
- Create **job descriptions for specific areas of need/tasks** and **invite individually.**
- **Call parents and speak to them about ways to get involved and offer a personal invitation. Don’t overwhelm them with too many tasks at once.**