

Some ideas for making your Parish more Welcoming and Family-Friendly

These ideas are just a few of the things your Parish could do. There are many other ways in which you can impact your church and community. The most important thing is that we listen to people's needs, try and understand them and where possible seek to meet those needs through our Parish resources/activities.

Ideas for meeting the spiritual needs of your parish community

- Prayer meetings for Sacramental programme. Rosary Groups. Adoration and other non-eucharistic opportunities for worship. Study groups
- Meetings for parents at Baptism/Sacramental programme. Prayer partners.
- Hospital and housebound visiting and/or Holy Communion
- Welcoming ministry and other outreach initiatives
- Parish retreats/pilgrimages. Family retreats

Ideas for meeting emotional and relationship needs:

- Pregnancy support, parenting or marriage preparation/enrichment events
- Counselling services/support groups. Bereavement support.
- Carer and Toddler groups. Coffee mornings
- Hospital/housebound visiting, befriending programmes, etc.
- Teen relationship meetings. Young adult groups. Singles' events.
- Divorce care groups. Retirement workshops, etc
- Support for families with a member in prison

Ideas for meeting people's physical needs

- Homeless shelter. Emergency food and clothing stores. Health clinics, etc.
- Soup kitchen. Lunch Clubs.
- Aerobics and fitness sessions. Walking groups.

Ideas for meeting people's social needs

- After-Mass coffee. Breakfast/Lunch clubs. Picnics. Social events.
- Carer and toddler club. Youth clubs. Over 60's Clubs.
- Family events. Outings. Garden parties
- Drop-in centre

Ideas for involving people of all ages in the Mass

- Offering a blessing to those unable to receive Holy Communion
 - Altar server teams. Young readers teams. A teen group dramatising the scripture reading. Children's choir
 - A mixed-age liturgy committee. Different aged welcomers at the door
 - Various groups within the church taking a special responsibility for a part of the Mass.
- A family writing/reading the bidding prayers together

Ways to care for church leaders and their families

- Protecting clergy and parish lay leaders' need for family time or time to visit their families. Honouring their day-off
- Helping provide times for relaxation, such as retreats and days out
- Supporting their ministry financially and practically. Remembering to say thank you!

Ways to ensure your Parish is safe and accessible to all

- Car-parking and toilets for the disabled, ramps, stair-lifts, induction loops, protective railings etc, etc.
- Buggy park. Nappy changing facility. An area within the Church where parents can take fractious children without feeling excluded from church.

Meeting the needs of families with young children

- A child protection policy (mandatory)
 - At least one Mass where parents with small children feel welcome.
 - Nappy changing facilities, accessible toilets, soft toys, paper/crayons
- An engaging children's programme and children's liturgy

Meeting the local community needs

- Carer and Toddler Groups, Playgroups, Lone parent support groups, After school clubs, Parenting groups, Contact with parish school(s)
- Over sixties club, Lunch clubs, Youth clubs, Sports events, Leisure classes
- SVP, Legion of Mary or other lay groups
- Projects to improve local facilities and the environment
- Themed evenings hosted by members of different cultural communities

Promoted by Accrington Knights of Saint Columba