

Assessing your children and youth ministry

What are your hopes for your children and youth ministry?

What are your fears of your children and youth ministry?

What would you like children and youth to have learned when they age out of your program?

What would your children and youth ministry look like?

Reflect on where you are now

1. View your church as an outsider
 - a. What is communicated about the children and youth ministry with
 - i. The building and objects in your parish?
 - ii. The church service?
 - iii. The activities (coffee hour, Sunday School, youth group, outreach, Bible Studies, etc.)
 - iv. Communications (bulletin, website, social media)
2. Analyzing your church's current culture
 - a. What are your leaders saying about the children and youth ministry in terms of the culture and values?
 - i. Clergy
 - ii. Vestry
 - iii. Matriarchs/Patriarchs
 - b. What are the leaders DOING about children and youth ministry (what are the real values)?
 - i. Clergy
 - ii. Vestry
 - iii. Matriarchs/Patriarchs
3. Stake -holders (children, youth, parents)
 - a. What do the stake holders say about children and youth ministry in your parish?

How would you describe the church's current culture?

4. Actions (activities and programs) - What are you doing for children and youth ministry?

- a. In the worship services

- b. Community time (coffee hours and whole parish activities)

- c. Sunday School

- d. Youth Group

- e. Supporting parents and care-givers

- f. Formation at home

- g. Connecting to mature Christian adults in the parish

- h. Outreach

- i. Intergenerational programming

- j. Other:

Looking at your assets

Leadership

- Who is currently involved in children and youth ministry?
- Who do you think you can call on to be involved?
- What is the biggest challenge with getting people involved?
- What would get more people involved?

Participants

- Who is currently involved in children and youth ministry?
- Who do you think you can call on to be involved?
- What is the biggest challenge with getting people involved?
- What would get more people involved?

Finances

- What is reasonable to commit to investing each year?
- Are there other sources of money if need be?
- Are parents/families able to pay for events?

Space

- What are the spaces that children and youth ministry are currently using?
- Are there dedicated spaces for children and youth ministry?
- How do children and youth spaces appear to an outsider?

Time

- What is the time line for implementation?
- When do children and youth meet as a group (Sunday School, youth group)?
- How busy are the children and youth outside of the church-time?
- How much time can the adult leaders give to planning and implementation of the programs?

Difference Between Program and Ministry

Children and youth ministry include all that connects with children and youth. Formation and ministry happen each time a young person walks into your church. How are they greeted, who interacts with them, how are they viewed by the adult congregants? The program are the components

- Age-group gatherings
- Intergenerational gathering
- Intentional Education
- Spiritual Formation
- Fun & Fellowship
- Worship
- Worship leadership (acolytes, choir, readers, ushers)
- Outreach
- Diocesan and wider-church activities
- At home (with families and alone)
- Support for families and care-givers

Planning your program pieces

This is where intent is important. What is your goal, why are you doing each piece?

1. Start with the calendars – the Episcopal calendar, parish calendar, school calendar
 - a. Fill in important dates (and “sacred cow” dates) – Easter and Christmas, but also school holidays, parish picnics, etc.
2. Look at what your goals/hopes are for the year
 - a. Do you want to build the program (not caring as much about content, but getting people there)?
 - b. Do you want children and youth to feel comfortable and have some knowledge of the worship service?
 - c. Do you want them to learn some specific things (way of love, bible study, catechism)?
3. Look at how much time you have (throughout a week)
 - a. Sunday morning
 - b. Wednesday or other evening program
 - c. At home
4. Find content (lessons, etc.) that fit your goals/hopes

Content

Worship: Eucharist and other prayer service, along with including children and youth in worship

Classroom: Age-specific, intergenerational, set curricula, youth groups, Sunday School, etc.

Seasonal: Advent, Lent, Common Time, and all others - resources about these times and activities to do at home and with groups

Home with Families, Friends, and Alone: Helping your parishioners practices their faith at home.