

Asset-Building Ideas for Family Programs and Activities

General Asset Building

- Get to know the families of children and youth—not just their names, but their interests and needs. This will send an important signal that you’re there to serve and support them.
- Offer parent workshops on asset-building topics, such as positive family communication and effective decision making.
- Address family issues in sermons and include take-home discussion starters for dinner table conversations in the worship bulletin or congregation newsletter.

Support

- Plan activities that bring together members of all ages to socialize and get to know each other as families.
- Create “extended family” for young people and parents. Establish adopt-a-grandparent, big brother/sister relationships, and supporters/mentors for parents.

Empowerment

- Ask families to be involved in worship leadership tasks together—such as reading scripture in dialogue, lighting candles together, providing special music, ushering, or delivering tapes of the service to homebound members.
- Design service opportunities that allow family members of all ages to spend time together. Include time for discussing what motivates their family to serve, and to share their faith values.

Boundaries and Expectations

- Coordinate your congregation’s boundaries and expectations for children and youth with parents so that children and youth receive reinforcing messages from both their congregation and their families.
- Offer parent education classes on effective and caring discipline and boundaries for children and teenagers.

Constructive Use of Time

- Respect limits on involvement. Make the times that parents are involved in congregation programs enriching, giving back to their families more than is taken away.
- Give families opportunities to have fun together. Family sports teams, family choir, game nights, camping or canoe trips, and dozens of other activities are great ways for parents and their children to spend meaningful and enjoyable time together.

Commitment to Learning

- Sponsor small groups of parents who might study a book, watch a video, or have another form of ongoing, peer-led discussion.
- Alert parents to parent education opportunities in the community. Have parents sign up, go as a group, then discuss the topic in a follow-up conversation at church.

Positive Values

- Send home discussion questions that prompt parents and their children to talk about values that are raised in their religious education classes, the media, current events school, or other settings.
- Help parents get comfortable talking with their children about their own beliefs and values, including their faith and values related to sexuality and alcohol and other drugs.

Social Competencies

- When offering parents workshops, include information and skills that parents can put into action immediately.
- Give parents and their children opportunities to practice working through problems, conflicts, and differences in healthy ways.

Positive Identity

- Host a retreat or other event for parents and their high-school-age children to talk about their hopes and dreams for the future.
- Provide support for families who feel overwhelmed by challenges as they move into the future.

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