FAMILY–BASED MINISTRY

The 'Why':
The lives of children and youth are over-saturated with activities that group them together – such as school, sports, clubs and social activities. Their greatest need is 'family time'. A Barna Group survey entitled 'Third Millennium Teens' found that 78% of teens identified their parents as the greatest influence in their lives. Churches should provide family-based ministry in order to encourage spiritual development in the area of greatest need – the family unit.

The Practice:

- Events and/or groups that offer children/parents/grandparents to come together for fun, food, prayer, Bible Study, and/or worship
- Events and/or groups for family components, such as a 'grandparents group' or a 'mother's group' that come together for study, prayer and/or support
- Parenting workshops that equip parents and grandparents with to handle conflict, divorce, bullying, behavioural problems, etc. Resources can be found online, in print or in local experts.
- Equipping families for spiritual development in their homes by giving them resources for prayer, Bible Study, and activities.

Starting Points:

- If your church has parents and/or grandparents present, start with them! Gather them together for a discussion about how your church could help them with their family's spiritual growth. Build your ministry on their suggestions.
- Host an event for families. A meal or a game night are attractive events, particularly if they are free or if they are tied to a 'family' day such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparents' Day or a holiday.
- Connect with family events and programs that are already in place in your community and in need of volunteers, such as a Parent-and-Tot drop in program. Or offer your church facility as a host location for a family program in the community.
- Invite a local expert (such as a school teacher) to talk to your congregation about the character and needs of local families.
- Check out resources online – just search for 'family-based youth ministry' and you will get thousands of ideas and resources!

My Parish's Plan…

www.dioceseofalgoma.com