

## **Developing a Parish Connection for and with our Younger Members**

As a parish community we want to prayerfully reflect upon, develop, and encourage everyone to foster connections with our younger families, and our young people. To do this well, we know that we need to ask you how, as a parish, we can develop those opportunities.

So, I thought I would start with a few ideas that can be developed/changed/added to by you and then we can go from there.

Some needs we identified are:

- Opportunities for young families to get together socially and foster support and friendships.
- Opportunities for older and teenage children to meet and develop/foster friendships
- Opportunities for us to make connections within the Cathedral Hub and feeling part of a wider Catholic community.
- Opportunities to support young parents/ parents of teenagers with their own faith journey at a time of life that can feel overwhelming and incredibly busy and exhausting, so parents and guardians are supported in sharing faith with your children
- Opportunities to foster inter-generational connections to affirm and encourage mutual support and understanding to each other.

Some ideas we had (through our discussion and discussions with friends in the Parish) are:

- Begin a youth group again for older children and teenagers. Built into that would be trying to develop connection with our Cathedral hub.
- Have family-orientated social occasions
- Begin a parent/child group that could meet regularly where parents can socialise and chat
- Provide space for ongoing faith-formation and consideration about relevant and real matters within a safe, non-threatening environment.
- Look at how, during school holidays how and where families can meet and do something together.

All these ideas, thoughts and suggestions will be considered and implemented in line with current statutory Guidelines; not least of which are the National Safeguarding Standards, and guidelines for its best practise within the diocese and parish. For detailed information on this, please visit <https://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/>

Equally, all this needs to happen and develop over time.

What is important is that at this stage we develop has meaning and value, smaller, slower steps are most important second only to listening to God. If you are someone reading to this and thinking 'Yes! This is what we need' and has even the tiniest mustard seed of passion for one of these areas it would be great to hear from you too.

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