



FAMILY SERVICE IDEAS

By Susan Vogt

Things that the parish can sponsor:

1. “Parish “Family Service Day” one day when everyone from the parish is invited to participate in planned community service. Starts with prayer, culminates with fun.
2. Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) - providing food and shelter for homeless families; Could be a “host church” or a “support church”.
3. Christian Family Movement (CFM) – Start a CFM group. CFM has been around for a long time. About 5 families meet together (1, 2, or 3 times a month). Most meetings are geared to adults but periodically events are planned that include the children also. Action (often in the form of service) is a strong component. Helpful guidebooks are developed each year on modern themes.
4. Parenting for Peace and Justice Network (PPJN) – Sponsor a PPJN workshop or start a PPJN support group. PPJN focuses on the themes of peacemaking (violence prevention), diversity, simple lifestyle (includes media issues), ecology, and family service. Tries to integrate these issues with the ordinary daily lives of families. Many resource books available including Just Family Nights.
5. Advocacy – Through educational talks or literature the parish can inform members of political issues or community concerns that they can speak out about through letter writing, etc.
6. Support of Social Justice groups – In addition to (or instead of) becoming involved in direct service the parish can financially support groups and agencies that do important charitable or justice works.
7. Holiday Season of Conscience – This is a national campaign aimed at raising awareness of exploitive child labor practices both in the U.S. and in developing countries (focuses on wearing apparel) Good youth initiative.

Things that an individual family can do

1. Nursing homes – visit, carol at Christmas time, etc. (all ages)
2. Cleaning up public places (like parks) (all ages)
3. Give always – purge your home of extras and give to St. Vincent de Paul, Goodwill, etc.
4. Take walks, bike rides, shop, etc. in low income neighborhoods to raise awareness (This usually provokes discussion and may lead to a family response.)
5. *Habitat for Humanity* – Have to be about 12 for direct work on a house, but younger children can help cook the lunch for volunteers, etc.
6. Soup Kitchens – Often younger children are not allowed to serve meals but older children and teens can have an eye opening experience as they serve and visit the guests.
7. Homes for unwed pregnant women or women with young children such as Madonna House provide opportunities for families to put their pro-life commitment to work. Homes help the mothers get on their feet with employment, housing, child care, etc.
8. Invite an foreign student or family for dinner (especially good around the holidays)