



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich

Children's and Families' Ministers

Family Ministry is the intentional building of relationships between church congregations (expressed in a variety of ways) and families within the local community. It is also Ministry that enables parents to be the primary disciple-makers of their children.

"Building churches whose age range reflect our communities".

Family comes in all shapes, sizes, backgrounds and practice. Leading the way in supporting the vision for the inclusive, inter-generational establishment of church relevant to the lives of families, children, young people and the older members of our communities, is a challenge and a joy.

Changing the ways we grow the Kingdom of God requires the right conversations, the right relationships and the 'going alongside' all ages as they explore faith together. Family is all of us.

"It has re-inspired me to see children's and family work front and central to all that church does".

What are Children and Family Ministers?

A Children and Family Minister will already be working alongside their church and community with toddler groups, children's clubs, Messy Church, Baptism families, with young people in church or exploring their journey, or similar.

Many work as part of a Ministry team (including Readers, Elders, Pioneers, Evangelists and Youth Ministers) and are supported by the Incumbent.

Enabling inter-generational connections is a focus of any activity, and Family Ministers will have some experience of establishing creative ways to engage.

Training



The Connect course covers aspects of Children and Family Ministry by exploring child development, spirituality and formation, new approaches to Family Ministry and by expanding personal skills to enable participants to be visionary Family Ministry leaders within the parish and across the Diocese.

Taking a critical pedagogy (i.e. an approach shaped by many decades of experience) and relying on shared learning through dialogue and peer experience, participants will support the ministry of the local parish through a new or developed ethos of Family Ministry.

"A journey of discovering that we are discerning God's vision and hearing God's plans. The Connect course has given me confidence to put these things into practice".

A deeper understanding of discipleship and inter-generationality underpins the course, offering insights into engagement with children, their families and the wider church and community.

This is a course for existing practitioners, and is a contextualised Leadership and Management course, rather than a 'how to', although it draws of good practice locally, nationally and internationally.

Mentoring is offered and the course is delivered and supported by Theologians, Practitioners, Theorists and past participants. A vibrant network of those involved in Family Ministry across the Diocese is key to support and ongoing personal development.

"It is always helpful to know that you are not on your own; that there are other people who you can share ideas with, to encourage each other and to learn together".

There is no charge for this training, which takes place over monthly meetings (nine Saturdays) in term time only, supported by pre-work and follow up, and assessment based on course work and portfolio building. Reflective Practice is taught and encouraged.

Discernment

You will be someone who already has experience of Children's and Family work through church activity. Before starting the course, you are advised to discuss the licensing with your Incumbent, as parish priorities and personal gifts form key objectives of your journey through training.

You will be required to complete the Connect course (or an agreed equivalent level training or qualification) and all portfolio work to a satisfactory standard to show evidence of learning.

Completing the application form after conversation between yourself, your Incumbent and the course leaders, is followed by an interview, usually with the Bishop of Dunwich.

Licensing is for five years, after which it is renewable. Continued learning is required and supported through Diocesan training or externally, backed by a training allowance.

Are you called to be a Children and Family Minister?

- You have a desire to nurture the spirituality of young people
- You seek opportunities to build relationships with those of all ages and stages of faith formation
- You encourage children to learn more about faith, their part in the Body of Christ, their journey of wonder.
- You see the church growing through engagement with young people, just where they are and wherever they are going. You seek to build community and ecumenical links.
- You want to grow your team, lead through service and inspire others by example.

What does Licensing give you?

- Affirmation of God's call to serve children and families in your church and community.
- Training provided at a point of need, developed to suit your context and skills.
- Accountability for your vocation linked to the local church and Diocese.
- A learning community of like-minded passionate people.
- Opportunity to share ideas, gain support and develop personal skills in leadership
- A training allowance to support continued learning.

Support and accountability

Children and Family Ministers work within a Parish/Benefice Ministry team, under the authority of the Incumbent. A role agreement made between you, your Incumbent and a Course leader, will define the range of activity and responsibilities that will help your ministry flourish. You will be supported by your attendance at Diocesan events and through prayer locally and across the Diocese.

For more information

For all enquiries about Children and Family Ministry, the Connect course or ongoing training opportunities, please contact:

Hilary Wordsworth-Sewell
Diocesan Children's and Families' Enabler

Telephone: 07776 418344 | 01473 298500
Email: hilary.wordsworth-sewell@cofesuffolk.org

The logo for 'Growing in God' features the text 'Growing in God' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A small green sprout with two leaves is positioned above the letter 'i' in 'Growing'.

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