



Family-Friendly Youth Ministry

*How parents and youth leaders can work together
to make disciples of young people*

Good quality youth ministry in our congregations is more important, and more difficult, than ever before, but youth leaders alone should not carry the burden of responsibility for the spiritual growth of young people.

This video resource focuses mainly on church families and how parents and youth leaders can partner together to support the spiritual development of their young people. The video features parents and youth leaders from two Presbyterian congregations, Whiteabbey and Hill Street, (Lurgan), who share their perspective on working together to see faith grow in the lives of their teenagers.

The video can be used in a variety of ways, for example:

- in a team training meeting with youth leaders to help them consider their approach to working with parents and how they can partner more closely;
- in a parents meeting to help them consider ways that they can connect more with leaders;
- in a congregational context such as a worship service or special meeting concentrating on our shared responsibility for the spiritual welfare of young people.

Through the video there are 5 key points made on screen corresponding to the sections in the video:

1. **Family Friendly Youth Ministry:** Church is like a family – a group of people who share spiritual responsibility for young people;
2. **Parents' role:** Christian parents are the primary disciple-makers of their children and young people; in some ways family is like a church;
3. **Leaders' role:** parents still need and appreciate youth leaders to model faith and do vital work with teenagers;
4. **Partnership:** parents and leaders work together by sharing the same vision for the young people, communicating well and encouraging one another;
5. **Family of families:** in congregations we are “in this together”, sharing a vital responsibility.

If you are using it in a group setting, some of the following questions may help encourage fruitful discussion.

For youth leaders:

- What do you think about what was said in the video about Christian parents having a primary spiritual role with teenagers and leaders partnering with them?
- Where do you think are the best connections with parents personally and as an organisation? How have they shown appreciation and encouragement to you?
- What do you most appreciate about parents? What do you struggle most with?
- How can you personally build bridges with parents? Do you show them that you appreciate having their “most precious thing”?
- What practical steps can your organisation make to communicate with and encourage parents of teenagers?
- What can the wider congregation do to encourage a “family of families” where such partnership flourishes?

For parents:

- How does it feel to hear the parents in the video say they have primary responsibility for the spiritual welfare of their young people?
- In what ways does the wider context of this congregation help you to raise young disciples of Jesus?
- When do you feel you have most impact as a disciple-maker; when do you most feel you need others to help?
- What do you most value about the youth leaders in this congregation?
- Does anything frustrate you or concern you about the youth ministry here?
- How can you communicate well with leaders and show them encouragement and appreciation?
- What can the wider congregation do to encourage a “family of families” where such partnership flourishes?