



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

Children's and Families' Ministry

Use your gifts to serve God and others in the name of Christ



CONNECT



Training for Children's and Families' Ministry

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 a Ministry that enables parents to be the primary disciple-makers of their children.

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

**Growing in God**

What are Children and Family Ministers?

Family comes in all shapes, sizes, backgrounds and practice and enabling inter-generational connections is a focus of our activity.

Our Children's and Families' Ministers may be working alongside their church, school, community, toddler groups, children's clubs, Messy Church, Baptism families and with young people exploring their faith journey.

"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".

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"I joined the Connect course after my vicar at the time persuaded me to sign up. I have always been passionate about children and family's ministry and was keen to learn new ways or get new ideas that could help me.

I had no intention of becoming a licenced minister when I started the course. But I began to realise that becoming licensed could enhance my ministry.

Starting Connect with a group of people from all over the county gave me my team. Here was a group of like minded people who could pray, share and grow together and the course was great." ”

Sandra Cresswell, Lay Children's and Families' Minister in Carlford Benefice.

Training

The Diocesan CONNECT course covers aspects of Children's 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 deeper understanding of discipleship and intergenerationality underpins the course, offering insights into engagement with children, their families and the wider church and community.

This is a course is a contextualised Leadership and Management course, rather than a 'how to', although it draws on good practice locally, nationally and internationally. There is no formal assessment process for this course. However, feedback at the conclusion of the course will evaluate attendance, discussions, personal and professional achievements, a presentation, portfolios, reflection and/or journals.

There is no charge for this training but donations and contributions to cover hospitality costs would be appreciated. The sessions are held at Woolpit, Suffolk and the dates for 2022-23 (Saturday mornings or full days*)

2023: Saturday 23 September*, 21 October, 25 November

2024: 20 January*, 24 February, 20 April, 18 May*, 16 June and 13 July*

The course covers all aspects of Children's and Family Ministry exploring:

- What is Family Ministry?
- How Children Learn
- Leading and Building Teams
- Vision into Practice
- Being and Growing Disciples
- Culture change and Being Intergenerational
- Supporting Households
- Travelling the Journey of Life
- Looking Back and Going Forward.

Mentoring is offered, and the course is delivered and supported by Theologians, Practitioners, Theorists and past participants.

Discernment

CONNECT course is intended for people with some experience of Children's Work and Family Ministry, who want to explore their calling more deeply, and develop the knowledge, and understanding necessary to put children and families right at the heart of life of their church. The learning takes place in a safe, inspiring, and supportive community enabling participants to develop their skills as reflective practitioners. You will be required to complete the course (or an agreed equivalent level training or qualification) and all portfolio work to a satisfactory standard to show evidence of learning.

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. An application requires successful completion of the CONNECT course, references and local agreement, and a short interview with the Bishop, or his representative. Licensing is for five years, after which it is renewable.

All candidates will need a DBS check and attend a Safeguarding course, in line with Diocesan Policy on Safeguarding.



Are you called to be a Children's and Families' 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

There is a vibrant network of those involved in Family Ministry across the Diocese. The key support and ongoing personal development is through a new Growing Younger forum 'ReConnect' which meets monthly in person or on Zoom.



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For more information

Please visit our website pages for exploring your Christian calling available [here](#), where we also have a list of [key dates](#). Resources specific to this role are also available on the diocesan website.

For all enquiries about Children's and Families' Ministry, the Connect course or ongoing training opportunities, please contact: Hilary Wordsworth-Sewell
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THE CHURCH
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