




UNITARIAN
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Moving Towards Family Ministry

Faith Development Monthly Webinar
Central East Region of the UUA
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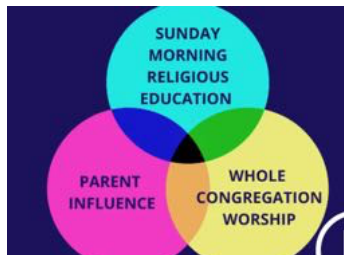
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The Future of Faith Formation



Kimberly Sweeney: The Death of Sunday School



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Non-"Traditional Curriculum" Models

- Family Ministry Focus
- Thematic Focus to connect across the lifespan
- Spirit Play
- Multigenerational Worship
- Full Week Faith
- Life Skills Focus
- Spiritual Practice



What is Family Ministry?

Family Ministry is an approach to faith development that recognizes that:

- Faith development happens throughout our lives, at all ages and wherever we are;
- Parents, grandparents, and caregivers are primary religious educators for their children, and
- Our is an intentional community for all ages.

Family ministry seeks to meet people where they are and include families of all kinds – as families – in the life of the congregation.

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What does Family Ministry Look Like?

Congregations moving towards a Family Ministry model typically emphasize:

- Whole congregation worship
- Social action and social justice for all ages
- Parent support and education
- At-home resources
- Whole congregation social and educational events
- Worship and education at times other than Sunday morning

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Binghamton Experiments



- Created family space in sanctuary
- Listening sessions
- Survey for feedback
- “First Sunday” with all ages worship, followed by all ages workshops.
- All ages social action
- Weekly email focused on Faith Formation
- Emphasis on at home resources; created a family library that supported monthly themes.
- Parent group

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The Binghamton Model

- Led by Ann Kadlecek during a two year interim period.
- Demographic changes and volunteer shortages were the symptoms.
- A decision was made to go through a “rapid change” process, likening to rebuilding a house – you can’t build slowly.
- The minister was on-board.
- They experimented with worship and all ages programming.
- A new Director of Family Ministry is in place and the experiment continues.

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UU Society of Fairhaven MA “Reimagining Sundays

- Strong collaboration between religious educator and minister.
- Challenge of “fixed content” in a changing culture
- 80 kids and 3 volunteers
- Asked congregation to co-own the process
- Lay leader investment is important
- Collaborative ministry: minister must be on board and must treat religious educator as a partner.
- Made a leap – fall forward.
- Reframed as “faith formation” so that it wasn’t shuffled to one committee/one staff member

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Reimagining Sundays in Practice

- A lot of work!
- All ages worship every single Sunday
- Active, engaging worship using a monthly theme
- Continued rituals like chalice lighting, joys and concerns, offering
- TFAA or brief sermon to frame an all ages activity
- Worries from parents, about elders, and concerns about children not have a choice.
- Took five weeks to acclimate
- Kid zone in worship space, in the front!

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Congregational Stories

Telling our
stories



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Resources

- GA Workshop: Reimagining Sundays
<https://ga-recordings.uua.org/>
- Death of Sunday School Discussion Guide by Kimberly Sweeney
<https://kimsweeney.com/product/the-death-of-sunday-school-and-the-future-of-faith-formation-discussion-guide/>
- The Binghamton Model by Ann Kadlecsek
https://reliminaltime.weebly.com/uploads/1/1/7/2/117268946/the_binghamton_model_7-10-2018_07172018.pdf
- Family Affirming Reflection Questions
<https://www.uua.org/families/ministry>

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