

My Report

Last Modified: 02/25/2015

1. What changes or efforts is your parish making in relation to the challenges posed by the cultural changes in the family, particularly in increasing the awareness of God's presence in family life, fostering social and economic policies that support the family, alleviating difficulties associated with the attention given to children, the elderly, and family members who are ill, and seeking responses to cultural challenges specific to your local parish?

| Text Response |
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| <p>Our St. James initiative, "Disciples' Way" (DW) raised serious questions about how our families and relationships within families are affected by our attempts to live the radical demands of the gospel as stated in Matthew 25/Luke 6. A huge part of DW has to do with heightening our awareness of God's presence within each of us, how that awareness changes the way we relate to one another. In addition, in DW we explored themes of forgiveness, healing, and compassion, and explored why the culture makes this difficult. In this year-long commitment undertaken by over 120 parishioners of all ages, genders and races, the movement culminated in an examination of Catholic social teaching and explored the ways we can move outside of the boundaries of home and out into the community in regard to charity and social activism.</p> |
| <p>I haven't witnessed any. We have a very strong CCD program for ages 7-14 [confirmation]. The parish offers a pre-school. In fairness, we have only one (1) full-time priest. He can't be expected to be everything to everybody. However, I haven't seen anything, over the past twenty-eight years, of this parish doing anything for or about the obvious cultural changes in the [typical] American family!</p> |
| <p>Most recently, our parish has cancelled our Sunday evening Teen Mass. I believe our parish has offered more "Funraisers" for families, but I honestly do not see much more than these two initiatives.</p> |
| <p>1. We are holding events that encourage whole family participation. 2. We encourage participation at weekend retreats.</p> |
| <p>We have more Spanish speaking families in the parish. The parish has a Mass in Spanish and has tried to have more activities for Spanish speakers and joint activities to bring all into the mainstream of the Parish. The parish has bilingual worship as well especially in Lent and on feast Days such as OL of Guadalupe.</p> |
| <p>Faith Formation (Religious Education) has been made into a joint experience of children and parent attending class together. This way they both learn church teaching and family values and both are reinforced with each other.</p> |
| <p>Presently, none at all. Our Parish is transitioning from Franciscan leadership to Diocesan leadership - not too smoothly.</p> |
| <p>Unfortunately I am not in a position to respond to the array of questions. As a delegate to the Synod, I have read the Lineamenta and am in full concord with its underlying premises and stated goals. And I will work with my pastor and his associates and our parish council in trying to carry out and even enhance the elements described.</p> |
| <p>test 1</p> |
| <p>At St Joseph Parish (Shelton) a young couples club has been formed that helps newly married and those couples in their 20's and 30's discuss life in the Church and the many issues facing them in a secular society. This is an extension of our PEARL (PARish Evangelization and a Renewal of our Life in Christ) initiative. The PEARL program calls for the formation of small groups within the parish to help foster a Catholic response/understanding of all the issues posed in this questions. A weekly meeting of The Sons of St Joseph often has twenty men (early30's to early 70's) who share the difficulties and successes of leading a family as husbands, fathers, and sons.</p> |
| <p>Changes & challenges to the family have been and continue to be met by our Family Formation program.</p> |
| <p>Our parish is very multicultural and has undergone so many structural changes as well as changes in leadership over these past few years. For now it seems the parish is just getting reestablished. There have been efforts to sponsor a parish picnic to bring families together. There is also an effort to celebrate the different cultures that make up the parish. For example, the Vietnamese celebrated their New Year and the Spanish speaking community had a special feast on the Presentation. There is a CCD program for children which includes children with disabilities. We also have people who visit the sick and homebound.</p> |
| <p>My parish is a welcoming community. Since the installation of our pastor, our parish family has grown and there are more programs involving family participation, including monthly family Mass, and our religious education students practicing their faith by addressing social needs in our community. My parish has also reestablished a youth group, middle and high school age students, and they are engaging in activities that support solutions to family and cultural challenges, especially challenges concerning the elderly and people suffering with illness. Father's homilies are resounding messages resulting in actions of faith, especially his constructive challenge of spending less time texting, sitting at the computer, and watching TV and more time reading scripture, praying, and spending quality time together as family at the dinner table. He continually makes clear our responsibility to adhere to Christ's Gospel of love and living fully, actively, and consciously as disciples of Christ both as a worshipping community and a community of caring brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.</p> |
| <p>I am not aware of any efforts in this area.</p> |
| <p>I</p> |
| <p>My parish has a new pastor, but I haven't seen any.</p> |
| <p>The Diocesan Catholic Charities is very focused in their everyday activities which continue to grow in scope and reach as a vehicle supporting families with every day challenges. These challenges are broad based and certainly significant in each and every case presented to us. As best we can, we serve a very diverse cultural spectrum and have a special energy focused on young children and their families in 2 pre-k facilities for those with limited means. We find that the elderly, a rapidly growing segment of the population, need incremental assistance and that is on our radar.</p> |
| <p>We try to create an atmosphere in which the family is of central importance. Each individual family belongs to the larger family of the parish (and by extension, the Universal Church). And so we strive to encourage community life and participation in the life of the parish family. This draws people together and forms bonds of friendship and fellowship in the context of our shared faith in Jesus Christ. We are able to encourage families to pray together, worship together, and see God's presence in their daily lives. A particular area of concern is for children who have special needs and their families - our religious education program offers assistance to children in that particular circumstance. Efforts are being made or are planned to have a special event each month for fathers and their children which will bring them together for Mass and a time of fellowship or service to the community at large. Volunteers from the parish come together twice a year to visit every homebound or nursing home bound parishioner, and regular visits are made by clergy or lay extraordinary ministers of holy communion, as well.</p> |
| <p>Through our Rel. Ed. outreach and our Social Concerns programs we have various collections throughout the year for the needy, homeless shelter and daycare centers caring for disadvantaged children. This not only helps those in need but teaches our families social justice and charity. Our Parish Social Concerns also has outreach to the elderly, new parents or anyone needing help through our ACTS program(Assumption Cares Through Service). A team of 8 go to Merton House twice a month to serve breakfast.</p> |
| <p>Probably one of the most effective changes is the initiation of a monthly Children's Mass. Virtually all catechists, from every parish in the diocese, have commented that fewer than half their students' parents attend Mass. With the Children's Mass, with different age groups in charge each month, the parents of these children actually WANT to come to Mass. So do many other parishioners who enjoy seeing the youngsters on the altar.</p> |
| <p>Our ministries are working to invite more people into our Parish community and school.</p> |
| <p>None I am aware of.</p> |
| <p>We have an ongoing home bound ministry where parishioners, and a deacon and priest visit the shut-ins and bring them the Eucharist. Our pastor is also looking into parishioners being able to see the Masses through the internet. We have a children's liturgy during the readings and homily so children can hear them on their level.</p> |
| <p>I think that the Roman Synod is exactly where we are. All the issues are being spotted and identified and now we prayerfully move forward.</p> |

I am discouraged with this question. It really feels like there is very little going on other than the status quo - ie: same old thing. This Parish is serving a Spanish, Portuguese and English community. But I feel that they are three parishes sharing a Church. What can I say that I do or see in my parish really doesn't address the great needs of the wider Parish. On a positive note, I will say that (1) Religious Education has put forth much effort to provide better Bi-lingual books for the children in the past 3 years. The Spanish and Portuguese programs have full materials for the preparation of sacraments and Parents materials are still undergoing a search for the most effective and engaging handouts. Children with disabilities are welcomed and prepared for Sacraments in Religious Education classes, and continue to study as much as they are able. Economically, we never send anyone away because they cannot afford any of the fees. The Parish has a fund for anyone who is in financial trouble that may be helped, but it could never pick up on the needs of the people here, in a way that many of the Spanish families sought from their Churches in their native countries. I do know that the elderly and ill get much help and attention. They are visited and supported. Changes or efforts could improve in this Parish if we fully accepted the Spanish and Portuguese communities and shared in their gifts, charisms and needs. There is so much in common and so much to celebrate in what we all have to bring to His table!

We are considering means of educating all members of the family (generally above elementary school) given the very serious lack of knowledge of our faith that most families have, and that is so even in an otherwise very well-educated suburb in Fairfield County, CT. Part of that education will be communicating the reasons that the Catholic conception of the family differs so radically from that promoted in many parts of our secular society, including our courts, and that the Catholic conception is correct and worth promoting.

They aren't making any at all

There are limited if any efforts under way. For years a group of active parishioners who are interested in outreach to our brother and sister parishioners who feel alienated, or who are under catechized have sought to encourage our Pastor to take on this challenge. This group has energy and ideas. The response to these efforts from the Pastor has been less than enthusiastic. He does not see the urgency to harness the energy of this dedicated group of parishioners who seek his leadership.

Solid liturgies that challenge families and evangelize them by raising the level to which they worship God. Programs for young adults such as Theology on Tap. Events for families to gather together, that bring families together for holy hours, pot luck suppers and prayer. Cultivating of parish life as a center of activity that allows lay people to see a strong ecclesial presence and encourages the laity to live a strong lay life; not by making them do clerical things, but showing the dignity in being holy in marriage, and in their work lives (Alessandro Marchetti - former member of The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist - now living in the Diocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis Wisconsin)

Our parish has a new pastor and new staff, so we will have to see what changes and efforts will be made. We are hoping there will be programs, homilies, and opportunities of service.

Through our Rel.Ed.outreach and Social Concerns programs, we have various collections throughout the year for the needy, homeless shelters and daycare centers caring for disadvantaged children. This not only helps those in need but teaches our families social justice and charity. Our Parish Social Concerns also has an outreach to the elderly, new parents, or anyone needing additional help through our ACTS program (Assumption Cares Through Service). We also have a team of 8 people who serve breakfast twice a month at Merton House.

They sent out a survey and are asking the questions.

St Rose of Lima Parish offers each person an opportunity to learn and grow as a valued person. From marriage preparation, to a broad offering of religious education from pre-school to adult formation, the parish addresses the faith formation needs of its members. In addition, there are focus groups for divorced and separated persons, a strong series of youth ministries, and ongoing adult retreat opportunities. There are many ministries that promote works of charity and social justice. The parish staff seeks to identify and to meet the needs of the persons with the greatest needs.

Increasing the awareness of God's presence in family life: Pointing out to parents what they are doing right Children's 9:00 a.m. Mass This week Fr. Karol dialogued with the 2nd grade children, sibling interaction the topic. In these weekly dialogues the parents should recognize the Church understands the dynamics of family interactions and how to help the children understand the importance of rules in their family. Fostering social policies: • Pro-life, we have an advocate for a community program Birthright, Kathy Hedtke. The Ladies Guild supports Birthright by sponsoring a baby shower in order to support the program. The gifts are collected and Kathy Hedtke delivers them to Birthright. Our church bulletin advertises the different programs related to this topic. • Prayer Shawl Ministry knit or crocheted blankets and baby caps are made. In addition wheel chair covers, and blankets for those in need. • The Ladies Guild Sewing Group meets once a week to make cancer pads for hospitals nearby. • A nurse is available once a month after Mass for those who wish to be checked. • An Alzheimer's and caregivers support group • For those having problems with alcohol there are three programs a week: Women AA, Alanon (to support adult children of parents involved with alcohol), and a general AA program • We have a food drive as well as a Christmas gift drive to promote taking care of the poor in our vicinity. Economic policies: I don't know if the church recognizes the burden the rise of the cost of living in this country has impacted the middle class. Tax increases impact all ages in the middle class. I am not aware of the church speaking up for the middle class. Alleviating difficulties associated with the attention given to children: St. Edward's has a Sunday morning Special Education Faith Formation program. We have a Frontier program to help the elderly in need of work around their home. Visiting the sick in their home by the priests and parishioners are routinely done. The majority of children in our parish attend the local public school system therefore the faith formation program is vital in order to prepare these students to recognize God's love and how they are to live a life based on Jesus. Beyond proclaiming God's Word, how does your parish community choose to be present with and draw near families in extreme situations? Our Pastor, Fr. Nick, provided the following helpful information: We are the only parish in our town, and because of that we have a greater connection to the town's communal identity. We offer financial support to families in need provided by a fund dedicated to the care of the poor. We also offer counseling services which are affordable for those who find themselves in need. In addition, we have the added support of Catholic Charities in our area and a strong local senior center which also provide services in the parish community.

The youth group is planning to attend the Steubenville East and assistance from parishioners is requested to help support teens with partial assistance for this retreat, they hope to bring about 40 this year. Healing prayers are asked for the sick who are listed in the weekly bulletin along with two prayer groups that pass the names of others who call and ask for prayers. Funds and baby supplies are donated to the local Danbury Birthright fostered by the Ladies Guild. The Knights of Columbus have Lenten Fish Fry open to anyone to attend and sponsors events for the youth to take part in, a Christmas Poster Contest, Awards Soccer Challenge and other fund raising events such as the spring auction gala. Every year "Homefront Day" project brings together parishioners of varied ages who volunteer to repair a home for someone unable to do so. The Parish offers counseling from Dr. Dan Joyn Ph. D CT licensed Professional Counselor to help individuals, couples and families. Several times during the week there are meetings that serve to help with AA and Al-Anon. Holy Communion is brought to those who are sick and homebound.

We visit the local nursing home weekly bringing Holy Communion and visiting and praying with the Catholics there. We have eight Eucharistic Ministers that bring the Eucharist to the Home bound. Our Religious Education program does many outreach projects for a daycare and after school program for needy children

We are having specific designated masses for children. we also have a children's choir. Fr. Joe constantly tries to encourage parents to bring their children to church regardless of how old they are. He constantly works at making parents with young children feel welcome. When the children attend CCD classes on Sunday, parents are encouraged to attend mass with their children and not just drop them off for classes and mass.

Prayers, we need to find more ways to start work on it.

Started a Faith Community Nursing ministry that includes care for the sick and homebound (Parishioner initiated)

Our Parish does well reaching out to the elderly in local Nursing homes. Our parish offers one children's mass per month. Our parish often does food drives for the poor.

I am unaware of any such efforts in our parish.

My parish, The Basilica of St. John The Evangelist in Stamford, has a comprehensive and rich list of spiritual and cultural programs steeped in doctrinal tradition. Our priests hear confessions everyday, 1/2 hour before every Mass. The doors of our church remain open until 4PM Monday through Friday, Saturday and Sundays closes after last Mass. This is very significant, a palpable sign of the Catholic Church welcoming even the casual passerby to enter, light a candle, kneel and pray. A Catholic Church should be mother to everybody, a beating heart for all the children of God. The Holy Rosary, "A remedy for society's evils" Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical "Supremi Apostolatus" (Sept. 1, 1883) is recited by one of the parishioners every day after Noon Mass, Monday through Saturday. Holy Name Society for men, meets every Friday, 7AM - 7:50 AM for Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction and coffee, in the Rectory. Mom and tots, meet in the church once a month. St. Anne's Society: a family society that meets on Sundays with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament and prayer, supper and a lecture. Francis and Clare: Co-Ed High School youth group; St. Dominic Savio: For spiritual formation of young men, 6th - 8th grades; St. Maria Goretti Society: For spiritual formation of young ladies, 6th - 8th grades. The Legion of Mary. St. John's Flock (20's and 30's Young Adult Ministry) The Flock is a group of Catholic young adults that meets regularly each month. A multi-cultural program: St. Monica Institute for Patristic Studies; Latin Patristic reading group; Intermediate Studies in Biblical Greek: Intermediate Grammar. Job Seekers: No charge, helping find jobs. Lastly our Priests deliver solid, truthful homilies based on the teaching of our Catholic Church, true to the Magisterium. Pastoral exhortation for the Sacraments, especially for Confession as a means of Reconciliation with God and in the family. St. John Basilica Church is well known for attracting young families who are open to life, resourceful families for Ecclesiastical and Civilian communities. These families bond with each other and with our priests to grow spiritually and be strengthened by good examples of sound moral values. Our parish has solid Marian Devotion, under whose patronage our priests Sanctify and are increasing the congregation. (Maria Marchetti - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist - Teacher Religious Ed)

At St Patrick Church Father Joe does "family mass" twice a month where the families do the readings and provide the treats for after the 10 30 mass. This allows for socialization among church members and time to reflect on the service. There is the monthly collection of food for the poor and hat/glove collection for the homeless. The CCD classes have

each of the students do 20 hours each of community service in order to pass for confirmation. There are also food drives and an effort to assist pregnant Moms with money from the church community. This was done by sending home plastic baby bottles and then collecting the bottles filled with money and distributed among the less fortunate Moms to help them not abort the infant.

We are currently reevaluating how we communicate. We are also preparing to do a survey to see how we can best serve our community. We have also adjusted the way we deliver programs often doing two sessions (day and night) so that we can include as many as possible.

Extraordinary Eucharistic ministers, in addition to our Deacon, bring the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and homebound in the parish. The Parish has set aside a small amount of money to aid parishioners in times of need—for food, medicine, etc.

Our parish has a special and growing emphasis on youth programs. These include offering a comfortable place for socializing, extensive works of charity, and a mentoring program that encourages family and parish continuity after young people move away for college and career. The young people can and do bring their parents and families into the orbit of the parish community.

Every attempt is made to accommodate the moral and socio-economic challenges facing our families who worship at St. Margaret Shrine through our homilies and citing references from the Gospels that relate to the ever changing folkways and mores of our society. We are challenged by the ethnic, racial and age diversity of our parishioners. We are particularly sensitive to the needs of our youth, women and our Hispanic parishioners. We endeavor to honor and recognize the unique cultural characteristics of our parishioner through religious and social activities which are open not only to all of our parishioners but also to everyone living within the Diocese of Bridgeport. We have religious and social activities as well as statues honoring St. Anthony and St. Pio, Our Lady of LaVang, Our Lady of Fatima and Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The parish supports the Rachel Project which ministers to post-abortive women.

Support groups. Teach truth with love.

Ministry to the homebound and elderly with parishioners as volunteers, as well as our deacons and priests. This involves taking the Eucharist, helping with financial difficulties every so often (Deacon Paul Kurmay has established a fund to assist in this way), support of social workers and nurses who offer various health screenings. Counseling by our clergy is offered where appropriate. Clergy and parishioners visit hospitals and nursing homes.

Several efforts at our parish support these challenges in different ways: -At Home With The Word, a group of women/mom's who gather weekly to prayer, discuss and reflect on the weekly scriptures, allowing for support and bonds between and among these women and their families -A weekly book group (day and evening sessions) focused on a single "spiritual" book selection/recommendation...the sessions encompass a range of parishioners, from different generations, genders, life-stages etc. offering a beautiful and worthwhile discussion and sharing of support and prayers for many of life's significant day-to-day and sometimes unique challenges. Book group starts with Lectio Divino, followed by discussion of the latest book chapter. Again a bond of support, friendship and trust is developed from within these groups and discussions.

V

Recognizing the changes of the "modern family", especially in cases of single parent homes

Increasing the awareness of God's presence in family life: Pointing out to parents what they are doing right Children's 9:00 a.m. Mass This week Fr. Karol dialogued with the 2nd grade children, sibling interaction the topic. In these weekly dialogues the parents should recognize the Church understands the dynamics of family interactions and how to help the children understand the importance of rules in their family Fostering social policies: • Pro-life, we have an advocate for a community program Birthright, Kathy Hedtke. The Ladies Guild supports Birthright by sponsoring a baby shower in order to support the program. The gifts are collected and Kathy Hedtke delivers them to Birthright. Our church bulletin advertises the different programs related to this topic. • Prayer Shawl Ministry knit or crocheted blankets and baby caps are made. In addition wheel chair covers, and blankets for those in need. • The Ladies Guild Sewing Group meets once a week to make cancer pads for hospitals nearby. • A nurse is available once a month after Mass for those who wish to be checked. • An Alzheimer's and caregivers support group • For those having problems with alcohol there are three programs a week: Women AA, Alanon (to support adult children of parents involved with alcohol), and a general AA program • We have a food drive as well as a Christmas gift drive to promote taking care of the poor in our vicinity. Economic policies: I don't know if the church recognizes the burden the rise of the cost of living in this country has impacted the middle class. Tax increases impact all ages in the middle class. I am not aware of the church speaking up for the middle class. Alleviating difficulties associated with the attention given to children: St. Edward's has a Sunday morning Special Education Faith Formation program. We have a Frontier program to help the elderly in need of work around their home. Visiting the sick in their home by the priests and parishioners are routinely done. The majority of children in our parish attend the local public school system therefore the faith formation program is vital in order to prepare these students to recognize God's love and how they are to live a life based on Jesus.

We invite and encourage parents to come with their children to the 9:00 AM Mass as a family and we gear our service towards families. We have also added individuals by name to the prayer petitions at Mass and in our bulletin. We are very active in bringing Communion to the home-bound members of the parish.

I have not noticed any obvious changes made to address any of these concerns .

It is open to requests brought to attention Due to privacy rules most parishioners do not have knowledge of how resolutions are handled however they may be aware of what some do but not "for whom" When given permission, prayers are requested in special cases Parish family coffees and meals are done monthly.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 57 |

2. Beyond proclaiming God's Word, how does your parish community choose to be present with and draw near families in extreme situations?

| Text Response |
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| St. James, as part of its mission, is a relational parish - our motto is: see a face, learn a name, share a story, love one another. We wear name tags to mass and greet one another by name. At DW and other parish activities we begin with one-on-one relational meetings so that we can know and learn the hearts of our fellow parishioners. Because of this we are much more aware of family situations and the parish family reaches out in prayer, with emotional and material support. If you go to the witness talks on the homepage of our website you'll hear many stories of the myriad of ways that the parish community reaches out to families in need. Also, our pastor, Fr. Lynch is a skilled counselor, and makes himself selflessly available to families who are struggling. |
| It offers a pre-school program. It offers a wonderful CCD program, for children 7-14. It has a youth program, for high school students. The parish is an upper middle income parish. "Extreme family situations" would probably be known only to our parish priest. I have never seen public notification of diocesan family services made to the people of our parish. |
| Our Pastor sends e-mails to registered families regarding deaths in our parish and reminders for participation in outreach or fundraisers. |
| 1. We hold healing masses several times a year. |
| In stressful situations the priests and deacons have been very much present to families. An Albanian family lost a teen in a murder. The parish was very attentive to the grief-stricken family...not only at the wake and funeral. |
| Other than requested counseling, I am unaware of any. |
| Our ministries do try to help those in need, but so much more could be done. We need leadership, or at least we need to know that we are on our own, and be allowed to cultivate the ideas that I know our parishioners are capable of |
| I think it is done not so much as a formal "program" but rather through the very nature of the people of the parish. It is a natural response for individuals and families to come to the aid of those in need in the parish. This will be both through the corporal as well as spiritual works done for those in need. |
| Our priests visit homes & hospitals during times of stress. |
| I know of many families in extreme situations (especially financial) but am not sure how the parish is reaching out to families. It seems that many people desire to belong to a community of prayer. They are not clear on Church teachings. Sometimes I think that we need to be careful in our way of welcome those families in need. Very often they feel rejected because they are "not good enough." We need to make Sacraments available and welcome families in our parish in a way that is truthful and yet charitable. |
| My parish continually provides for families in need, such as our giving tree during Advent, annual sweaters, coats, and gloves collection, and Loaves and Fishes campaign during Lent. Our youth group is actively present by visiting shut-ins and volunteering at our soup kitchen. |
| Directly by the parish staff, but not in an programatic way |
| There is a strong sense of a pastoral presence: home and hospital visits by clergy, daily meals provided by other families when there is a tragedy, death or serious illness, Names of those in need of prayer in the bulletin and intercessory prayer at Mass |
| To the best of my knowledge, my parish does not seem to do anything special for families in extreme situations. |
| As best we can, we provide a personal and hands on experience with families as an expression of God's love. |
| Families in the parish are well connected with one another. Often when a family is in a difficult situation, other families come together to support them in practical ways (meals, transportation, etc) and spiritual ways (groups gathering to pray the Rosary, attend Mass, etc). Hopefully, all families in the parish know that they can rely on the support of the parish. |
| We do have a Food Closet where families in need can come to get food and gift cards for perishables. We have a parish Crisis Fund to assist families in deep financial need. Anything on an extreme emotional level can be handled through meetings with the parish priests. |
| Individually, our priests are warmhearted and ready to spend as much time as necessary with people in need. There are no organized formats to assist families in crisis. |
| there is an internal support through the Parish office, Rel. Ed office and School office where those in need can reach out for help and support. |
| Active Catholic grade school and youth group. Nothing specific for the family. |
| We have an active bereavement ministry and request in our bulletin for parishioners to help with families in crisis. Staff members are encouraged to help people in crisis and our priests are available by appointment to counsel those in crisis. We have provided dinners to families whose members are receiving chemotherapy. |
| I wonder if you are referring to Prayer lines for those who are ill. But a fund exists for those with dire financial need, but it is small. Rel Ed has a Bake Sale every year to help keep it going. Food and gifts for Thanksgiving and Christmas are donated by the Parishioners and this is a big undertaking by the Parish. (Giving Tree and food collections- Socks, toiletries, and socks for the homeless. Morning Glory volunteers and donations to the needs of the ministry. Dorothy Day volunteers are a small group of Parishioners who help serve the needs of this ministry. Youth Group serves many needs through fund raising and serving at the local Senior Center and doing a scarf project. Small group support of families with children who are ill is done, but I feel that we need a ministry who can summon support of the entire Parish for many of these needs. |
| Extreme situation include strife that makes preserving the nuclear family -- for better or worse forever -- very challenging. We will discuss offering those families Catholic resources -- marriage and child counseling -- that can set the families aright and avoid further domestic disintegration. Do not forsake the families that are the (waning) mainstay of our Catholic families for "families on the margin" who are in need of care and are far from the Catholic community. |
| Other than direct pastoral connection, we are beginning a community nursing outreach |
| There is no organized approach. The parish has several programs, such as Stephen's Ministry, there are regular programs to keep local soup kitchens stocked but there is no concerted effort to reach out to families in need of spiritual healing. I fear that we do not even know who they are. The reasons are cited above. |
| The parish community could be much more present with and draw much nearer families - yet I realize this is difficult for people on many levels when they don't know the family. Primarily, I have experienced and have been very blessed to have many praying for my family, for my children. Very few invited us (the kids and me) to their home for a meal or for prayer/support gatherings. I have many thoughts and recommendations around all this. (George Szele - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist) |
| Certain members of the parish try to do what they can. Time seems to be what prevents people from doing more. |
| We do have a Food closet where families in need can come to get food and a grocery gift card for perishables. We also have a Parish Crisis Fund to assist families in deep financial need. Anything on a more emotional level can be dealt with through the Parish priests. |
| During the hurricane offering support for heat, electricity |
| The pastor has fostered a spirit of welcome that has extended to the parish family. The parish family is eager to accompany the wounded on a journey of spiritual healing. We enter into the pain, the joys, and the sorrows of the needy. |
| Our Pastor, Fr. Nick, provided the following helpful information: We are the only parish in our town, and because of that we have a greater connection to the town's communal identity. We offer financial support to families in need provided by a fund dedicated to the care of the poor. We also offer counseling services which are affordable for those who find themselves in need. In addition, we have the added support of Catholic Charities in our area and a strong local senior center which also provide services in the parish community. |
| please see comments re the licensed Professional Counselor named above and also the Pastor and the Associate Pastor are available for help in counseling anyone in need. |
| We have a food closet that gives food that is donated by our parishioners and a grocery giftcard for perishable items monthly. We have a parish crisis fund to help on a one time |

basis for an emergency need Pastor works with families in extreme situations

We are constantly having food and clothing drives to help people. Gift Cards are also available for people in dire circumstances. The Women's Guild members will make meals and deliver them to people in need. Fr. Joe is very good with keeping up with information on this topic.

Bring closer God and try to listen more their needs.

Don't know that there is a concerted outreach effort to do so. Primarily food drives, soup kitchen service and Christmas gift giving to needy

People in need must call for help from our parish staff.

I am not aware of any ongoing outreach in my parish. Several years ago, immediately after Superstorm Sandy, I and two other parishioners organized a food drive in cooperation with the Women's Guild and the Home-School Association. We filled half a small truck. Parishioners were invited to put their phone numbers or email addresses on a list we created so they could be called in the event of future dire emergencies when their help was needed. Only three people signed up, although I believe that the two organizations mentioned above would be willing to help in case of extreme circumstances such as a fire that destroys a family's home.

The church provided free firewood for families when Redding was without electricity for 9 days. When family members of the church have had family members die, the church provides assistance of meals and comfort.

We have an active pastor's fund that many donate to to help anyone in financial need. We use our prayer chains to communicate and pray for those having difficulties.

The Parish has set aside a small amount of money to aid parishioners in times of need—for food, medicine, etc.

Food distributions. Special appeals in individual cases.

Our priests and deacons offer guidance or counseling to married couples and our youth. The Community at St. Margaret Shrine plays an important role in being present and drawing near families in extreme situations.

The parish's Family Assistance Program assists particular families in the parish who are in significant need.

Tech them that God loves them, but not their actions, explaining that God created man and woman to complement each other. Faith is the key.

We have a Bereavement Ministry to assist parishioners who have lost a loved one. Two prayer groups—Divine Mercy Cenacles (3), one of which is a Praying by the Bedside of the Sick and Dying component, and an Intercessory Prayer Group, all who offer prayers at our Adoration Chapel in general and when specific difficulties arise and prayers are requested, either going into the home or hospital to pray. Our priests and deacons always available to help and also recommend more help from professionals, as needed.

I believe our parish and priests are receptive and responsive to families in need from those entrusted to prayer line, offering rosary prayers for healing, bereavement ministry, food ministry, etc.

The parish community could be much more present with and draw much nearer families - yet I realize this is difficult for people on many levels when they don't know the family. Primarily, I have experienced and have been very blessed to have many praying from my family, for my children. Very few invited us (the kids and me) to their home for a meal or for prayer/support gatherings. I have many thoughts and recommendations around all this (George Szele)

We have a very active food pantry that helps families with basic needs to help put food on the tables in homes that are financially stressed. We have also partnered with a smaller parish which is located in an area where the median income is substantially less than our own. We have collected many items that would typically not be covered by food stamps and other government-subsidized programs.

Our Pastor, Fr. Nick, provided the following helpful information: We are the only parish in our town, and because of that we have a greater connection to the town's communal identity. We offer financial support to families in need provided by a fund dedicated to the care of the poor. We also offer counseling services which are affordable for those who find themselves in need. In addition, we have the added support of Catholic Charities in our area and a strong local senior center which also provide services in the parish community.

We have multiple fund and food drives throughout the year via our Youth Group, our Ladies Guild and our school children to support the homeless and needy especially in our immediate area and at other Bridgeport Parishes

Our pastor does reach out personally, I think, to families when a family member is ill. He may reach out at other times but out of respect for the family's privacy this may be done discreetly so I would not know of it. I do not know of any family outreach in particular at the parish.

At the moment we do not have an organized structure for this; the Pastor has made specific announcements after Mass asking for our prayers for families in difficult situations.

My parish addresses the needs of the elderly and the poor through actively providing food and necessities of daily living, the Church

The community acknowledges and offers support as is evident e.g..sudden and/or sad deaths especially of young people.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 55 |

3. What can be done in your parish to support and strengthen families of believers and those faithful to the bonds of marriage?

| Text Response |
|--|
| Our St. James Ministry with Married Couples offers practical ideas for energizing your marriage, year in and year out. We do not focus on solving problems or providing counseling. We provide materials, ideas and opportunities that you can use to keep your relationship fresh, alive, and growing. Our hope is that you will be able to strengthen your marriage through the deep caring of your community of faith. |
| Conscientiously and actively proclaim, support, extol, and praise marriage of two adults. Publically hold this up as a goal of the parish, the diocese, and American society. This ISNT the issue! The issue is: how do we reach out to the non-believers. How do we support and strength all those married couples...within our church or outside of it. |
| Witness from the pulpit. |
| ?? |
| It could promote movements like Cursillo and the PreCana program. |
| There should be a family support ministry, just as there are bereavement ministries, etc. |
| I think small groups of families should be formed to share experiences, joys, frustrations, laughter and tears. |
| I would love to see, through our PEARL initiative, a small group of those who have been married for a long time and those who are newly married meeting together to provide support for the newly married and those at various stages of life share their trials, failures, and successes. |
| Celebrations/vow renewals for special anniversaries. |
| There are many couples who have children but are not married for a variety of reasons. So often they will say to me, "I know. We SHOULD get married BUT..." Many of them feel unworthy or do not understand the beauty of this Sacrament. Positive, uplifting, and meaningful catechesis would be very helpful in this area. How? I am not sure. It might even be helpful for happy married couples to reach out and lead other couples in this area. Personal invitations are a nice touch. Then programs will spread by word of mouth. |
| One powerful way parishes can support and strengthen families of believers and those faithful to the bonds of marriage is to encourage our young families living the call of husband and wife, father and mother to give personal testimony to the beauty and holiness of marriage between a man and a woman. Personal testimony by one's peers is a powerful influence. One possible outcome from personal testimony is establishing a parish forum where married couples informally share their life stories supporting marriage and family. |
| We should hold events specifically for families that promote prayer, worship and community. We should also offer marriage encounter, family pilgrimages, and family retreats or at least retreats for married couples. |
| post Baptismal and Marriage visits by other trained visitors |
| I do not have the feeling that my parish does much of anything related to families. Our last pastor was an educator and was very family oriented. After the children's mass every Sunday, we had doughnuts, juice and coffee in the parish center. At the present time, we have two priests in our parish who do not seem to relate particularly well with young children. For example, our former pastor would call all children up to the altar for the homily. It had a question and answer format. At the end of the homily, he would always tell the children to return to their seats and give their parents a hug. Now they are told to return to their seats silently. |
| Wherever possible, we offer counselling to individuals and couples struggling with their marital commitments. |
| Marriage enrichment programs that are parish based. Several years ago we had a program called "Living in Love" which was designed to help married couples in the parish grow in the grace of the sacrament they had received. It also brought married couples together in community. Finally, after participating in the program, couples could choose to continue in some way, and be trained to offer support to engaged couples. Each married couple would then meet with an engaged couple seven times and walk with them in their marriage preparation. The content of the seven meetings matched up with the Diocesan Pre-Cana program, and additionally gave the engaged couple the chance to have a more intimate conversation about marriage with an experienced married couple. |
| I believe that our Parish does a lot... they sponsor Valentine's Day Dances where couples renew their vows at Mass prior to the dance, we have a Men's ministry and Catholic Women's Council, and other ministries that help support our married parishioners. |
| Celebrate and welcome them. Invite them to get involved in the parish. |
| Solid liturgies that challenge families and evangelize them by raising the level to which they worship God. Programs for young adults such as Theology on Tap. Events for families to gather together, that bring families together for holy hours, pot luck suppers and prayer. Cultivating of parish life as a center of activity. That allows lay people to see a strong ecclesial presence and encourages the laity to live a strong lay life. Not by making them do clerical things, but showing the dignity in being holy in marriage, and in their work lives. |
| Sponsor a series of talks on how to engender a spiritual encounter within the family. Most parents are not sure how to do it. |
| We have a "Sweethearts Mass" yearly around Valentines Day for couples celebrating significant anniversaries. They receive a certificate celebrating their faithfulness to marriage and there is a reception/celebration after the Mass. |
| Our "Sweethearts Mass" which celebrates couples' significant anniversaries I think promotes couples who have made their marriages work. |
| A lot! Marriage is a big issue in the Spanish community and there are many children without a solid family unit. Many of today's couples do not marry. I haven't seen much here in the way of Marriage Encounter or Family Life groups. Marriage preparation could e done with trained couples in the Parish but I haven't seen this either. |
| 1. Emphasize how important maintaining the bond of marriage is. Even "talking up" the importance of family cohesiveness and marital fidelity to death would be a huge step forward. Second, we should educate the families as to the Church's conception of the family as a domestic church and the importance of a faith-based stability to the family especially given that the overwhelming message from the secular world is the opposite. We must re-educate our families as to the Catholic conception of the family and then encourage our families to meet that conception. |
| Celebrate special milestone anniversaries. Begin small group programs such as marriage encounter - particularly geared to those married for ten years or less |
| We need a Pastor who believes in this mission, then we need to identify those in our parish family in need. As stated above, we don't have a good handle on where the need is. I believe we can start by identifying those families who send their children to religious education but do not themselves practice the faith. There are many reasons for this. These are families that are alienated, or are too "busy" but recognize the need for their children to receive the sacraments. It is more about sacraments than about a relationship with God. But recognition of this need is a foundational basis to engage these families. Efforts to organize, train and send forth into our parish community in a coordinated and methodical way, lay leaders who see this as a vocation, needs to become a priority for our Pastor. |
| Perhaps programs, speakers, homilies dedicated to family support and marriage would help. |
| We celebrate significant anniversaries with Mass and recognize these couples. We offer many family events through the Parish. |
| Continue to offer programs to support education and worship. They are currently doing a pretty good job here. |
| There may be opportunities to gather the faithful to celebrate the richness of family life and to share our successes and failures. We can certainly learn more about family life by journeying with each other in one big parish family. |
| At St. Edward's we have: • A marriage preparation ministry facilitated by married couples. • Toddler Tea a time for mothers of babies and children up to pre-school age to be together and affirm one another and evolve in their motherhood role. • Men's Bible study on Saturday morning • RCIA Program, for those adults who want to learn more about our faith, as well as preparation for those who would like to join our Church. • Terrific two's a preschool program instilling Christian values. • Making Music Praying Twice a faith based program for children 0 to 5 years. • Choirs: Adult, Contemporary, children , cherub ages 3 to 6 • Holy Yoga • Support the Youth Group and its Director • Annual picnic for all parishioners. • Knights of Columbus hold various activities to bring families together. Find out those who attended a Marriage Encounter Weekend and ask volunteers to |

educate the congregation about the program. If couples can't afford to leave their children for a weekend have an evening program (babysitting provided) at St. Edwards. Have pot luck dinner for all parishioners. Supply entertainment or music and dancing. Possible movie night at St. Edward once a month for couples night out (babysitting provided) Pre School Faith Formation program on Sunday mornings

Every First Friday Eucharistic Adoration is held from 9:30 AM to 8PM and the Rosary is prayed after the 7:30AM Mass for anyone to join, and free rosaries are in the gathering space. There are two prayer groups, Monday eve, and Tue AM/PM during the year. The Novena of the Miraculous Medal is prayed on Saturdays in the AM. The gathering space has many books/cds on Catholic subject matters available to all. There is also coffee/donuts social time after the 9 and 11AM Masses. Perhaps having speakers on specific topics devoted to building up the family traditions of Catholics- seasonal topics- such as during Lent, or issues on the life/death laws that are changing the way Catholics look at dying, the larger Parishes could open it up to many churches to cover the costs of well known speaker(s)/retreat team.

We celebrate wedding anniversaries yearly during a Sunday Mass.

Make a special program maybe or group people who will help them keep in hope and try to find the way from their difficult situation which are they standing now.

Significantly upgrade content and delivery of faith formation programs that serve the whole family as a family, pro-actively assist parents in passing on our faith and address both need to have a relationship with Christ and Catechist.

Sponsor or coordinate with other parishes to offer Marriage encounter weekends. Look seriously at the quality of Pre Cana requirements and experiences. Invite More of the faithful to share their faith journeys at/during the Mass.

Community dinners and family-oriented functions that bring together the entire parish community and geographical neighborhood so that we can, during those events, speak candidly about our struggles and understand them with an eye toward creating effective solutions.

Classes about the traditions of the past can be helpful. There are many church members who need guidance in the church about the formations of the Sacrament of Marriage. This is very important. My husband and I have had many issues that could have ended in divorce. The strong faith we have in the marriage and the church support from our priest has allowed us to remain married for 25 years (Oct 25th, it will be 25 year anniversary). Marriage Encounter weekends have helped our marriage.

More retreats and ministering geared specifically towards couples and not to forget the singles whose family unit is still important.

Hold an annual Mass and celebration for those married 15 years and more in increments of five years.

We can support and strengthen families of believers and those faithful to the bonds of marriage through our homilies by making references, where applicable, to family values as found in the Gospels and writings found within the Catholic Church. As well, we can and do evangelize.

An on-going effort to unite older married couples in the parish with newly married couples for fellowship and counselling on the realities of married life (positive aspects as well as difficulties).

We must be witnesses to our children, in what we do and what we believe through group meetings, retreats, etc.

Offer enrichment workshops, periodically. This could be in the form of "refresher" courses to review the teachings of our faith and provide a forum in which couples could ask questions of our priests and other professionals. It also would enable these couples to share their personal experiences that have been helpful for others to hear, especially from couples who have been married for many years.

I think the best example we see occurring are those bonds and stories that are shared between and among parish families. It is an ongoing process, and we can probably do best by setting positive and loving examples for one another. Gatherings after Mass have been introduced and are fairly popular as a starting point in developing community and creating bonds, friendships, relationships among parishioners of all ages and stages of life.

Have deeper adult education regarding sacrifices needed for a successful Catholic marriage, not just at pre-Cana. In times where divorce is unavoidable, offer adult catechesis on what it means within our Catholic faith regarding receiving Holy Communion, the Sacraments, etc. and if an annulment can be justified

Support as per the following: At St. Edward's we have: • A marriage preparation ministry facilitated by married couples. • Toddler Tea a time for mothers of babies and children up to pre-school age to be together and affirm one another and evolve in their motherhood role. • Men's Bible study on Saturday morning • RCIA Program, for those adults who want to learn more about our faith, as well as preparation for those who would like to join our Church. • Terrific two's a preschool program instilling Christian values. • Making Music Praying Twice a faith based program for children 0 to 5 years. • Choirs: Adult, Contemporary, children , cherub ages 3 to 6 • Holy Yoga • Support the Youth Group and its Director • Annual picnic for all parishioners. • Knights of Columbus hold various activities to bring families together. Find out those who attended a Marriage Encounter Weekend and ask volunteers to educate the congregation about the program. If couples can't afford to leave their children for a weekend have an evening program (babysitting provided) at St. Edwards. Have pot luck dinner for all parishioners. Supply entertainment or music and dancing. Possible movie night at St. Edward once a month for couples night out (babysitting provided) Pre School Faith Formation program on Sunday mornings

Provide more programs and opportunities for young families to meet and support one another.

I personally think that church social events are helpful in bringing people together .and to foster and strengthen friendships among church members. Having friends with same values can be a great source of support in families . I would like to have a social or hospitality committee to organize a few social events annually such as pot luck supper etc..

Mature couples in our parish have expressed a willingness to offer their counsel and experience in the marriage vocation to younger married couples.

Prayer gatherings and/or small group get togethers in cordial settings-homes? Ladies and mens groups offer opportunities to get together.Perhaps more emphasis on introducing one to others and/or urging sitting with someone you don't know. Communication communication communication

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 51 |

4. How do you see the church responding to the contemporary rejection, on the part of many, of the model of family formed by a man and woman united in marriage and open to life?

Text Response

I'm assuming you're referring to the universal church - I feel strongly that the church should not judge gay couples, and in fact, should welcome them to the Lord's table. As an educator for many years, it's clear that homosexuality is not a choice - people are born with a particular sexual orientation and clearly struggle with it - I've seen it as early as second grade. When two gay adults find one another and enter into a long-term committed relationship, who are we to judge? Jesus never judged and invited all to table - so should the church. In fact, the Catholic church is the only organization I support that discriminates against gays and lesbians - I believe it is morally wrong and the church drives people away with this kind of judgment.

The historic sociological evidence is that children are best formed and supported by a family formed by a father and a mother, a married couple. However, in reality, there are many couples in contemporary American society who are not married. Additionally, there are gay couples; and, gay couples with children. Their presence is a reality. Our model is given to us by God. It is His model. However, each and every human being is a conscious creation of God, known to Him, loved by Him. Accordingly, we owe each and every human being dignity and our respect, whether or not they conform to God's model for us.

This is a difficult question for all of us. The word family is very different now than even at the adoption of Vatican II. I believe we need to be welcoming to same sex families who want to raise their children as Catholics. For that to happen, the Church would need to recognize same sex marriage.

This is the defining issue of our time and one in which I had the answer. Somehow, we must find a way to make homosexual and lesbians who want to come back to Church feel welcome. I am trying my best to follow the words of Pope Francis, "who am I to judge".

The local church can better use media to promote traditional family in ads and spots online and on air.

It just needs to continue to emphasize that a traditional family is best in that it opens children to both the male and female views and values. It should foster mutual respect of the sexes and provide the best rounded education for the children. I am aware that some families are single parent or same sex, but the church needs to provide these families with some type of foster parent of an opposite sex so as to round out the ideal family.

We have so many wonderful Catholic families. Maybe featuring one such family each month in an insert of the bulletin;

test 2

The Church has a beautiful message to proclaim about the sanctity of marriage. "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World" is a beautiful document for the entire world to read just to get a feel for the tenderness and dignity with which the Church speaks of marriage and family. Yet, the secular world/media, and even those within the Church, rely on sound bites and misquotes to form its opinion of what the Church is teaching. Clearly, then, the Church needs to do more in the way of educating the world about its teachings. The response thus far seems to be in the early stages of development and my hope is that the Church puts many of its resources to promoting and championing its teachings on marriage and the family.

Need to honor marriage as a sacrament, that is a covenant.

This is a really difficult subject. As a person who works with families and children in a school setting, the issues of homosexuality and birth control come up often. These are really important issues to many people. I have heard homilies addressing these situations. Thought they DO focus on what the Church teaches, they sometimes come across as somewhat condemning. Perhaps some preaching on the BEAUTY of marriage and openness to life would be better accepted and formative for the parishioners. I also think it would be useful to have these topics addressed in religious education and in family catechesis.

The church must respond by teaching the truth in love. Progressive ideology is dominating our society and Holy Mother Church cannot be intimidated by or silent on what is holy and healthy living. If the community of faith is to exemplify the model of family formed by a man and woman united in the sacramental bond of marriage, the miracle of children, and the sanctity of life from conception to natural death, Holy Mother Church must proclaim Christ's love of all people, while simultaneously mercifully admonishing any alternative lifestyle that opposes God's word and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. St. Paul's words to Timothy are a clarion call to us in the world today... "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths. But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry." 2 Timothy 4:2-5

I see the church becoming more like contemporary society rather than standing up for the traditional model of family. The Pope and the current Synod of Family Life is causing much confusion. The Pope's comment "Who am I to judge" although accurate is being interpreted as "anything goes."

I see the Church seemingly trying to "look the other way" not wanting to accept the fact that parents have given in to the reality of their young adult children "living together" having become a very acceptable way of life

I believe that the church in the diocese of bridgeport is totally disconnected from any of the issues that families deal with. In my parish (and I am a third generation parishoner) there is a greater concern with the appearance of the priest's vestments than anything else.

In my opinion, the Church should expand its outreach and acceptance (not endorsement) of non traditional "marriage" while promoting and celebrating traditional marriage.

I see the Church holding up all that is good, beautiful and forever true. That marriage is a sacred covenant--and I think one day the world will thank us--well maybe not thank us--they will probably be upset with us for not proclaiming the truth more vigorously to spare them of the emptiness.

I don't see much response at all. I think we struggle with, on the one hand, an appropriately critical attitude toward that contemporary rejection, and, on the other hand, speaking about that subject with charity. Our society does not receive criticism or condemnation well. As a Church, it is important that we find language that can encourage people to embrace the beauty of marriage formed by a man and a woman united in marriage and open to life. Living examples of the joy of marriage and family life ought to be held up, and the language used to discuss this needs to present beauty, joy, and encouragement.

The Church has responded with unfortunate aggression. In many ways, the harsh stereotype of religion portrayed in secular media is deserved. Practicing, faithful Catholics have family members who are divorced, have same-sex attractions, or are living in casual partnerships. These faithful Catholics are hurting and, rather than offering them solace and encouragement, the Church often merely condemns the people they love.

I think that the Church is becoming more open to people's differences and while not condoning different lifestyles, respect the people.

Not sure I see the church responding at all. I was born into the faith and love of God, knowing the person of Jesus, which has kept me here for over 70 years. If I had been scolded all the time and not felt the love of God ~ why would I stay ~ why would I come back?

Preach about the beauty and joy of family life. Teach families how healthy families act. Preach about hating the sin and loving the sinner If sexual ethics are not taught from the pulpit it will be impossible to tell people why we don't support gay marriage. Sex is for children. Marriage is for children. Sex is for marriage. If this is not stressed then of course people will think that sex is always okay, and then marriage only becomes about sex. Well, imagine the crazy conclusions that can come.

I do not perceive the Church being an active leader in this regard.

Rather than ostracizing couples who cannot live up to this what I would like to see is a celebration and encouragement for couples who can live these values. Charity and acceptance should be shown to divorced couples and gay people but again celebration and encouragement to those who are living the church's values. I don't feel the church does enough to encourage adoption and I think if some unwed mothers would be shown how desperately infertile couples wish to adopt and how loving and well those couples who do adopt care for their children more unwed mothers would be more comfortable choosing adoption over abortion.

I am encouraged that it is spoken about and that all of the different types of relationships may know that they are a person loved by God and called into fellowship in the Church. For many, all they need to know is that we love and welcome them. Correction comes later. Pope Francis is saying that we are all sinners. Some sins are more public and some sinners are definitely worse than those without conformed marriages. There are problems with those married and not living happily as well. Yes we need to come back to and respect and uphold a man and a woman in the state of a blessed marriage. But let's start to educate and encourage those who can, and stand beside those who also struggle to live and love their children in great pain for the circumstances of their lives.

Right now, I see the Church's response, especially including that of Pope Francis, as VERY WEAK and confused. The Church has not yet been able to articulate an attractive conception of the true family and true marriage in the face of the secular tidal wave of support for same-sex marriage and a "family" of any content that the "spouses" deem it to be. The same-sex marriage movement is deconstructing any remnants of objective truth that were left in the public square, and the Church, including our leadership in Rome, the U.S. bishops, and Catholic academic and university leaders have stood silently by, or, worse, collaborated with the same-sex marriage movement. The Extraordinary Synod in October 2014 caused FAR MORE CONFUSION than confidence in the Catholic conception of the family. We have one last chance this October -- do not mess it up, please.

I see it as ignored. We are being too politically correct. We can include all with love, while at the same time sharing the importance of marriage.

The Church needs to respond with love and witness to the beauty of life. It can no longer risk the ways of the past; we need to be open to the new realities of the family. This does not in any way mean we should ignore Church teaching. The Church, however needs to respond in love and embrace all those who honestly seek God. Through unconditional love we lead by example and we let the Holy Spirit do the rest. Laws and regulations, seen in the contemporary context as old fashioned at best and discriminatory (i.e.. lacking compassion or love) at worst, will not bring people back to God.

Preach about the beauty and joy of family life. Teach families how healthy families act. Preach about hating and sin and loving the sinner. If sexual ethics are not taught from the pulpit it will be impossible to tell people why we don't support gay marriage. Sex is for children. Marriage is for children. Sex is for marriage. If this is not stressed then of course people will think that sex is always ok, and then marriage only becomes about sex. Well then you can imagine the crazy conclusions that can come.

One example of contemporary rejection is purely financial. Many retired widows and widowers actually live together without being married so as not to lose their pensions. These couples continually go to mass, receive the sacraments, etc. On a practical basis, however, they deem it foolish to marry if it would change their quality of life. I haven't seen the church respond to this at all.

Perhaps more dialogue in this area to help people through their feelings and misunderstandings of the teachings of the Church.

I think St Catherine of Siena in riverside does a good job of saying that we welcome everyone. More of an effort could be made in practice among parishioners to reach out to one party every six months or year who may have been slighted or marginalized to come back to worship in a non judgemental and supportive, welcoming way.

It is a crisis of faith. As the synod article described, it comes down to essential elements of Christian beliefs. Do I believe in a loving and merciful God? Do I have 2 parents that are both practicing Catholics? Do I seek God first in my priorities? Can I see the possibility of a healthy and loving family? Is my family able to address hurts and conflicts by seeking and accepting forgiveness? Is my family open to the gift of life, and see our family as Christ sees the Church as His bridegroom? Do I understand and accept the gift of my sexuality as life giving within the covenant of the sacrament of matrimony?

Accepting each and every person as an individual, reject labels, and giving services where needed without judgment.

The Church has the responsibility to speak the truth regarding marriage, and the Sacrament of Marriage to be as God designed it, between a man and a woman and be open to life. Today there are many books/cds/DVDs that can be made available in the Diocese regarding the Sacrament of Marriage and openness to life.

Need more dialogue in this area. Church rules without an understanding of them turn people away.

The Church should strong stay by biblical model of family and support them in their faith.

We should be compassionate and welcome all. Not be judgemental... They are all God's children.

The Church responds poorly to needs of distressed families. The treatment of families and individuals in broken marriages has lost many generations to the Church. Every Priest cannot be a marriage counselor, nor should they be expected to do so. However we should recognize that everyone has the potential to harm or help people in their life's journey.

We must counter the societal view of family by engaging in one-on-one family relationships that allow those with a strong faith to share their faith with those whose faith is weaker or non-existent in ways that are loving and non-condemning. One-on-one communication strengthens families by giving them friends they can talk to and rely upon. This is much more effective than impersonal programs provided by the diocese.

The church needs more Princes of the Church like Cardinal Burke, and a few others to defend and affirm the beauty and dignity of marriage, the foundation and base from which to build a family and society. Every priest has to courageously preach from the pulpit about the Catholic moral teaching on marriage and family, indeed the principles of natural and divine law. The church has to work harder to infuse a new mentality and spiritual order in the faithful, by preaching the truth and not appealing to the heartstrings of the people by telling them what they want to hear. I also see that good faithful families need to work hand in hand with the Church to rebuild society. (Marchetti Family discussion - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist)

I believe "Love is love" and 2 men or 2 women who love each other should be allowed to be married. All of us are loved by God and we need to accept all bonds of love. The church needs to bless and welcome all forms of love. If we want more people coming into the Catholic faith, we all need to allow for same sex marriages and realize that love is love.

We need to remind them of the beauty of this sacrament and the commitment that it calls. We all want relationships to prosper and it begins with setting the proper level of commitment.

In general, Catholics seem to be more tolerant of atypical families, including couples living together prior to marriage, gay men and women in monogamous long-term relationships.

The openness of most Christians (with RCs in the lead) to previously unimagined concepts of family is a challenge to established understanding. Our awareness of the evolution of doctrine in other areas (lending at interest, democracy, slavery, etc.) should make us cautious about proclaiming as eternal what may be a human institution. Note that much of our present marriage doctrine was formulated many centuries after Christ and in an era when UNDERpopulation prevailed and women were relegated solely to the domestic sphere. Changing circumstances require new responses. At the very least we should refrain from intruding into the political process in ways that may alienate other Christians and indeed many Catholics.

The creation of The Synod on Family Life by Pope Francis is an excellent, critical, and pro-active measure in response to the contemporary rejection of Catholic teaching of the model of family formed by a man and woman and open to family life by those who wish to re-define the sacred bond of marriage. Additionally our Bishop, Frank Caggiano, has convened Synod 2014 which will give support to Catholic teachings on marriage and the family. The Church must be one strong voice, given with consistency throughout the world in support of marriage being one man and woman open to life.

The church tends to be judgmental in its approach to those who have difficulty participating fully in the Catholic church's model of family. The difficulty can arise from same sex attraction, divorce, etc., but the result tends to be the same. The questions raised by the Synod for discernment may be a step in the direction of positive outreach.

Our Church has the Gospel of Life Society once a month with guest speakers and testimonies to effectively combat the culture of death.

Continue to speak the truth of our Catholic faith via homilies, and offer workshops such as mentioned above. Continual communication between clergy and other professionals joining in these presentations to make our parishioners aware of the importance of man and woman uniting in marriage and the affect it has on children and society at large.

We are standing firmly on the belief that the bonds of marriage are between a man and a woman and this reaction has not and should not waver.

Supporting the community of faith and letting the married couples of the community speak for themselves.

We need to stake a much more public stand to explain the Church's teachings about family and the objectives and responsibilities of marriage to propagate, nurture and family life.

I think this is tough for pastors to address . I have heard some good homilies in support of traditional marriage only to leave church and hear people speak negatively about the homily and say the priest lacked compassion etc. I think we have to continue to emphasize the sacredness of marriage . Maybe we could have some pamphlets or books on this topic available in the church. I think we need to continue to speak and explain church teaching on this issue

The response that I see is priests proclaiming from the pulpit the importance of traditional marriage as the foundation of Faith, as the domestic church, as a mirror of Christ's relationship to us, as the path to holiness for the man and woman in the sacramental marriage relationship. Beyond this and similar attestations in the Catholic press, I do not see a vigorous public response on the part of the Church.

The Church can welcome all people, regardless of sexual attraction and be inclusive of all.

More information available both on biblical understandings of marriage Theology of the Body AND understandngs of hormonal changes in men and women during different times of relationship before children pregnancy breast feeding nurturing more children When these changes affect one or another partner understanding replaces anger or other negative responses

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 56 |

5. How do you see Christian families bearing witness to the Gospel value of deep love for one another?

Text Response

I think that most families, unfortunately, see themselves as products of the culture first and as Christians second. I'm not suggesting that families don't love one another, but that often love is eclipsed with expectations, competition, striving for success, etc. We see helicopter parents, children who are pushed to excel in sports, academics, etc. Families rush from one event to another, without much downtime. In this way the Gospel values of the Beatitudes are undermined. We are Americans first, and our culture does not promote Gospel values. Our love is often laced with expectations.

By how people actually act towards one another. I have seen Christian families, in my parish and members of other Christian denominations in my town, live lives of real love, affection, respect and dignity. It is how we live. It is the choices we make. It is what we do in our space time. How we treat our neighbors. How do we treat our families.

By celebrating the Eucharist on Sundays and participating in Parish life with others.

They witness to the need for fidelity, reconciliation and sacrifice which is often lacking in the secular portrayal of family.

Continue to preach that sex in marriage is God's will and not an evil act.

Praying and playing together.

A true Christian family bears with one another, abides with each other, forgives, reprimands, corrects, instructs, and ultimately loves one another come what may. As a small Christian community, they look to support each other in their individual and collective life in Christ. In the best of all situations, the father accepts the role of domestic priest to the family. Sadly to say, this role has been rejected by many men who still believe they are living a Christian life.

Families have to help their children learn about the faith.

The families give beautiful witness in their interactions with one another. It is beautiful to watch how families respond to one another in Church. In our school, the children very often pray for their parents and parents pray for their children. This is so important!

I see Christian families bearing witness to the Gospel value of deep love for one another by ignoring the progressive noise of secular society and proudly living the Catholic faith despite the sneers and ridicule the world may show them. Too often temptation is to go with the flow or to not present ourselves as different, wanting to fit in. Satan is happy seeing us following the piper or joining others in jumping off the proverbial bridge. Witnessing to the Gospel calls for living the example of Christ and there is no greater example of love for one another than the Cross. We must not be fearful in presenting ourselves as a sign of contradiction. As stated earlier, families can bear witness by spending less time texting, sitting at the computer, and watching TV and more time reading scripture, praying, and spending quality time together as family at the dinner table.

i see it every day in our school as parents sacrifice to give their children a Catholic education.

I am continually moved by the depth of love evidenced in such a huge percentage of parents and their children - with parents ready to make extreme sacrifices for their children. even to compromising their basic moral beliefs so as to not risk alienating their children.

It's hard to say. There was such a fall-off of family attendance during my late pastor's illness that I don't even know many of the families attending Mass. I personally have been attending Mass at the Church of the Resurrection in Rye, NY.

Living in a world that values and promotes individuality, Christian families could witness to the Gospel values by doing more together...e.g. attend Church, volunteer for social service, etc.

In more ways than can be counted. I wonder if many connect their love for one another with the Gospel, though?

One of the best things we do in this diocese is the Celebration of Marriage Jubilees, held twice a year. The joy on the faces of these couples, with significant anniversaries of 15 years or longer, proclaims the joy of married love in a way no preaching could ever match.

I feel that there may be a weakness in this area. Many families have different priorities due to social and economical pressures. The Gospel Values need to be strengthened. Where love is concerned, I do believe that they love one another, however many times it can be seen with material items rather than with that genuine feeling of love and respect.

I see many families teaching their children the moral Christian teachings in Matthew 5 - 7

Teach people to worship and love God first and foremost. If we don't show young couples to love God, and not in a wishy washy shallow way, but seriously, and well, then we can convince them to love each other just as deeply.

The Catholic Church needs to emphasize a loving rather than a critical God. The Church needs to represent forgiveness rather than rejection and isolation. When that happens, the concept of love will flow to the family.

I feel that more than ever in today's terrible climate of hate and martyrdom, we need to cling to the Gospel and teach what the value of the Gospel and the Church is so that they can be witnesses and share this Christ like love in their families. Many families do not bridge to that message, to put it simply. To be positive, those families that raise their children in a traditional family should be set as examples and encouragers of living a faithful life.

Hopefully, with the support of the institutional Church in all its dimensions -- Rome, dioceses, and Catholic academic and university leaders. As to the latter, the bishops should affirmatively call upon Catholic intellectual leaders to affirmatively articulate and support the Catholic conception of the family, grounded in natural law and objective truth, and fully supportive of the dignity of each person and human flourishing. Use BIG DATA to demonstrate that truth produces better empirical outcomes than does man's remaking nature to suit his own tastes and preferences.

Every day in our town and parish, as they face struggles with their children, parents and each other without much assistance.

I see Christian families as bearing witness to the Gospel by supporting one another and those in their community who have no one who loves them. Outreach to those in need is the model for living the Gospel for Christian families.

Teach people to worship and love God first and foremost. If we don't show young couples to love God and not in a wishy washy shallow way, but seriously, and well, then we can convince them to love each other just as deeply. We have never taught chastity. We have never taught chastity as also a positive virtue. Not only saying no to sin, which is true, but cultivating virtue.

I see many families bearing witness by simply not giving up when the situations are extremely difficult.

Coming to Mass together, participating in Parish family events and Liturgies and through all the outreach programs we offer.

Actively working on the tools and skills needed to resolve conflict....we all need more work here.

One can view acts of kindness and sacrifice that are directly related to their love of Christ and His Church. These are the truly joyful.

Father Nick observes these Christian families (parents and children) at Mass. I have observed parents and grandparents with their grandchildren at weekday Mass. Parents helping their grown children alleviate stress in various ways. Grown children helping their parents alleviate stress in various ways.

I see many families coming to the Sunday Mass and spending time together with the Lord as a priority- even in snow, cold, and a hunger to hear the Word in the Sunday Liturgy. This Diocese celebrates the couples on the Wedding Anniversaries every 5th year of marriage. I see husbands and wives serve at the Masses in various lay ministries. I would like to see more outreach to find and form those men who would be wonderful Deacons. I believe the advertising for the Deacons needs to be ongoing so men would see the spiritual benefits of serving the parish as a Deacon.

By the way they respond to caring for those in need. Our parish has a Social Concerns and Family Life Ministries which do a great deal of outreach along with family events and our families reach out with much generosity

So we as a parishioners will be a witness of God and tell everybody about his Love to us and to new people.

???

Celebrate marriages that stay together. Recognize that no one has an "easy" vocation. Invite married couples to offer their story at mass. "What does Marriage in faith mean to us every day"

This question is unclear. Do you mean "How do you ENVISION ...? Or do you mean "What specific things do you see that are taking place now"?

True Christian families bear witness to the Gospel value of deep love for one another by living their vows of marriage with fidelity, sacrifice day in and day out, respect, each spouse giving in one hundred percent of one self no matter what the circumstance may be. Children in the home need to see this loving exchange between the parents: the choices they make. Sunday worship and shared prayer time together on a regular basis. Welcoming grandparents around their dinner table and caring for them when they're sick or in need. Shared meals together most especially on Sundays, celebrate the day of the Resurrection with special cooked meals, Sunday is made for this. This is the way children read and learn the LIVING GOSPEL OF LIFE, and I reiterate, by the choices that parents make.

We need to be able to forgive each other and not hold a grudge against humans making mistakes. Deep love means forgive as God forgives.

In action when they do projects as a family. We have whole families that come to prepare the church for Christmas and Easter. We seen whole families attending mass together at the Teen/Family mass. We see individuals of an entire family working in age appropriate events.

It is important for a family to attend Mass together and for them to participate in faith formation activities within the parish.

The fact that couples were married in the Catholic Church gives witness to the Gospel value of deep love for one another. Witness is given by families regularly attending Mass and parish functions together.

This occurs in many ways, but is generally a private and more intimate bearing witness. Strong Christian marriages do not tend to draw attention to the fact that they are strong Christian marriages. The public witness is more discrete and is reflected in the participant's attitude and contentment with life generally.

Our pastor visits our families to transmit and share faith and the teaching of the Church. The church invites members of the community to share their experiences. For example: A Doctor came to show a group of young girls their reproductive organs and how they function, and the correct use we must make of them. As well as the consequences of use of contraceptives in their bodies.

By being involved in outreach programs, i.e., supporting good works like Sr. Theresa's in Bridgeport, volunteering in soup kitchens, taking part in family activities at church, helping -- developing a "giving" idea that expresses love for them and others.

Continued commitment to the parish, ongoing and developing friendships, ministries, and appreciation for one another, all we do and for the differences represented among us.

By getting a deeper understanding of Catholic Social teaching and demonstrating this knowledge to family members, Children and friends through their actions

Father Nick observes these Christian families (parents and children) at Mass. I have observed parents and grandparents with their grandchildren at weekday Mass. Parents helping their grown children alleviate stress in various ways. Grown children helping their parents alleviate stress in various ways.

As a living example and reflection of God's love for his people

I see this love not only within families but between neighbors . One couple comes to mind , a very mild mannered couple who sit at the back of the church every Sunday and are really not involved in any ministry but I know that they help an elderly neighbor with grocery shopping , clearing her driveway when it snows , etc etc .They help many neighbors that way . I would like to find a way to commend people like that and encourage others to reach out to neighbors in need .I teach CCD and I witness each week the caring parents sometimes rushing from work to drop the child off or pick them up. They look so tired sometimes .I think we should try to be a source of comfort to them , maybe just a smile or a compliment maybe about their child .

I see families caring for one another and for those less fortunate.

Knowledge of the gospel and our Catholic interpretation of it

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 51 |

6. How can the faithful offer friendly and trustworthy guidance towards those who have not yet arrived at a full understanding of Christ's love?

Text Response

We should not be going to mass for ourselves, but for others. We need to build relational church communities in which we engage with one another - especially at mass where the community comes together. Until we embrace the incarnation, recognizing the presence of God in others (as we do in the host) experience God's mercy and healing, and live out of that, it's pretty hard to convince someone intellectually. It has to be through the way we show compassion for others - in and through that others can begin to understand Christ's love.

By how we live....and the respect and dignity we extend (or don't extend) to all whom we meet, Catholic and non-Catholics, men, women, children, young people, gays, straights, old, young.....either we really live the understanding that all humans are made in the image and likeness of God.....or we don't!

We need to do a better job at outreach one person at a time.

Availability to their neighbor on a regular basis...

They should try to live their lives according to Christ's love. Example is the best form of guidance.

??

See the preceding question

By example on how we live our lives.

A meditation on today's reading (Feb. 14) from Genesis tells us God did not banish Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden as a form of punishment; He banished them from Eden so that they would not have to live eternally in their fallen state. Our first parents had yet to understand and know the love of our Lord Jesus Christ; however, we know Christ descended into hell freeing them from their original sin and bringing them to full reconciliation to Himself. We can offer this same grace to our brothers and sisters also not yet in complete understanding or knowledge of Christ's redeeming love. Not unlike our catechumens and candidates in RCIA, our brothers and sisters who have not yet arrived at a full understanding of Christ's love must be allowed to meet Him where they are in their journey of faith and at their own pace. Without disregard for the "evangelical ideal," Pope Francis tells us we must accompany them in their personal growth toward Christ with mercy and patience. Throughout, we must follow St. Paul's charge to encourage our brothers and sisters through all patience and teaching.

The faithful need to be understanding, welcoming, and good listeners on this subject. Street corner evangelization is not effective.

Joyful personal witness above all. Regular prayer on behalf of those who are still learning.

it's a cliché: Preach always. If necessary, use words. Our culture makes it embarrassing for many adults to admit that they are practicing Catholics. Just learning to say that in public would open the path to faith for many.

Invite them to ministry functions. Let them see your joy in your faith. Share your story.

Show others by your example.....

By feeling loved by God through His church. When you feel loved and cared about, it is easy to convey that love to others.

personal relationships and welcoming attitudes in the Church, by the Church, for the Church. I think those in ministry need to make their Parishes a place of welcome and acceptance so that people will know where to go in the need. Show them love don't talk about it!

Same.

Treat each person as a beloved child of Christ

Again, show by example. Preach the gospel....use words when necessary.

Through reaching out to those in our families that are in that situation. By being welcoming to all. We really need to have more hospitality in our Catholic parishes with ways to show people that they are welcome, getting to know their names and something about them. This can be done through Greeters at Mass, Sunday coffees after Mass and other gatherings where we really make an effort to meet these people and share with them.

Sharing their own testimonies of how God helped them through everyday life and through the bigger, harder moments of life is one of the ways to help anyone come to know the love Jesus brings.

Persons who pray before any action have the Holy Spirit within. Trusting on the Holy Spirit to speak and act as God wants us to and just being confident in the Lord - evangelizes those who need to know about Christ's love.

By gentle example of what our faith means to us

With love and delicate and with help be for the and with our good example so they will ask if they see if we live with God that we are better people so they want to be a Catholic.

opportunities for fellowship and activities for faith development. Look at the evangelicals They are growing because they are welcoming and offer activities to engage people.

"Guidance" is easily misunderstood. Guidance comes as a result of someone demonstrating God's love in realistic ways to those who need it. You can't talk about love; you have to demonstrate it. To paraphrase Jerry Maguire, "Show me the love!" And, let's be frank, we all need to rely on one another from time to time for "friendly and trustworthy guidance." Those who provide it should not be allowed to think they no longer need it.

We need to speak up about all the good that Catholics do and all the help that we provide.

By example and being less judgmental. Many don't come to church because they don't feel welcome! We must be more welcoming and meet them where they are not where we want them.

There is a very individual thing. Perhaps providing some models, information for doing so via RCIA program.

The faithful can offer friendly and trustworthy guidance to those who have not yet arrived at a full understanding of Christ's love by the faithful living a life which gives consistent, predictable and vivid witness of Christ's love in their own lives.

The approach must be genuine and comfortable and probably on a one to one basis.

We have to live the love of God and show it to our brothers and sisters.

Encourage them to invite them to join us at our various parish social functions--work on projects that are outreach to our community Welcome them to join one of our many ministries to see first hand what is happening in our parish that involves all ages. We will be presenting a Ministry Sunday in the near future in order to share what various groups are doing in the parish, then ask them to consider joining one or more.

Outreaching, welcoming, but patient that in time they will absorb more of what is going on around them within a faith community, but also recognizing that each person needs to follow their personal path in their own way and on their own timeframe.

Welcome, inclusion, support to all as Children of God - no labels

Just be open and friendly

It requires us to be the most prayerful, obedient, humble Catholics that we can be. We must each come to understand how God has called each of us out of sin in our own lives.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 37 |

7. How do you believe the formation of ordained ministers might be improved, in an effort to help Christian families better bear witness to the Gospel value of love?

Text Response

It would be really helpful if ordained ministers could include women - an entire gender has no voice, no platform to express the challenges of being mothers, daughters, sisters. I also feel that many priests are out of touch with the issues families face. Married clergy would be a blessing - the time has come.

Entice men who have experienced secular university education, professional careers, (perhaps military service) to seriously consider joining the priesthood.

I think that's one of the initiatives the Church does very well.

The answer is not to let them marry or to allow female priests. There are many reasons that these changes would work or are allowed. The most important thing to do is remove all those who do not follow the vows they took. Time will heal, but it will take a lot of time.

Perhaps in formation there should be more interaction between seminarians and married couples in a formal way during courses so the seminarians have a realistic view of stresses that affect spouses and families.

More training in family values would help.

OMG - I would think something was lacking in order for so many priests to have deviated sexual tendencies. Why are they so easily accepted? Why are they so protected? Do we need priest so badly that we ordain anyone? We have many exemplary priests who are wonderful role models. Let's hear about them.

I think we are seeing a change in how newly ordained clergy (priests especially) respond to families themselves. They have not forgotten that, in fact, they come from a family that has all the foibles/challenges of any other family and these new clergy are not afraid of saying so. That is an excellent start. All too often the laity have the idea that priests don't understand family life because they haven't been married. That is never said about any other single male. If it's not done now in the formation process, then more time should be given to those in formation to reflect upon their own families of origin and how it impacts who they are in their own ministry.

Training them for better pastoral approaches.

I think the ministers have to be careful not in their message but in HOW they are sharing the message. Sometimes homilies come across as condemning rather than inspiring. This is not all priests or deacons but some come across as a little self-righteous. This makes people leave Church just feeling terrible about themselves rather than eager to change their lives and spread the Gospel.

One improvement in the formation of ordained ministers that would help Christian families better bear witness to the Gospel value of love is presenting real relevant stories in their homilies that the worshiping community can relate to and apply. Priests who are late vocations to the priesthood often present effective homilies when they incorporate personal stories and experiences. We are blessed to be given a pastor who has lived the married life, raised a family, and unfortunately had to face sickness and loss. Not all men ordained to the priesthood will have a history to share; however, learning to prepare and present homilies people will relate to will help families better bear witness to the Gospel value of love. Ordained ministers should not be constrained to share the Church's teaching contrary to the political dialogue. The worshiping community should hear unedited candid truth from the ambo even if it completely opposes the rhetoric spewed from the political podium.

The formation curriculum could include more courses on pastoral care with an emphasis on family systems theory and internships at Catholic family counseling facilities.

through family life courses and listening to families I mean REALLY listening to all kinds of families.

I have been actively involved in the Diocese for many years. Bishop Egan started St. John Fisher to ordain more priests. I believe he thought it would reflect positively on his stewardship. Pretty much anyone that wanted to was ordained. He told me once that vocations were the province of God and it was not up to him to deny anyone ordination. I was taught in high school by Father Donovan—who went to jail. I worked with Monsignor Wallin when I was on the Board of St. Mary High School. He went to jail. I worked with Monsignor Moynihan when I was on the Board of the Council of Catholic Women. He went to jail—and we are not even talking about the pedophiles. There needs to be VERY stringent regulation of who should be ordained. I believe that they need a full psych evaluation before they can enter the seminary. I believe that they should spend their first year working with the poorest of the poor—for example, in Haiti. They need to learn humility. About 25 years ago, a priest that worked at the Catholic Center told me that it is a fallacy that men who are called to the priesthood are better than the laity. He told me that men are called to the priesthood because they need more help getting to heaven than the laity. If Bishop Caggiano cleaned out the clergy, I think most of the problems in the diocese would take care of themselves.

I don't really have any ideas on this subject but the Church might provide examples of successful families during formation in a retreat or hands on basis.

I think to be formed in prayer would be helpful.

Special attention to marriage preparation would be helpful. To equip men about to be ordained to the priesthood with appropriate vocabulary and skills to assist engaged couples prepare both for the reception of the sacrament and for their lives in the sacrament of matrimony would be a great help. Ordained ministers can also be better trained in receiving people. How do we greet people? How do we answer their questions? Do we immediately ask if they are registered parishioners, if they give to the parish, if they conform to Canon Law? Or do we first listen to them, welcome them, and then invite them to live according to the norms of the Gospel?

Priests are not social workers. That said, they should have some training in the stresses families face with everything from alcoholism to conflicts with teenagers. Sooner or later, they will have to counsel families with these problems and a host of others. More emphasis on preaching is critical. For most adults, the 10-minute homily they hear once a week is the only religious formation they will get. It needs to have solid content and be effectively preached. No reading the sermon from a book.

Although I do not believe I will see this in my time, I believe that Priests and nuns should be allowed to be married. People of alike situations and lifestyles have a tendency to have a better understanding. Priests and nuns who have never had the experience of being with another person in the sacrament of marriage may not appreciate the dynamics and complications of the relationships.

I think a stronger emphasis on God's love for us and love one another. Our responsibility to each other because of this love and not just keep telling us all the time that we are sinful people. Did Jesus keep telling people how bad they were?

Start all training and concepts from a basis of love and acceptance rather than rules and regulations. Any organization with as many rules and requirements as the Catholic Church is bound to drive away people who cannot accept or satisfy all of the requirements. Jesus us gave us a clear and simple message by his life and his preaching: do the best you can to live a good life and care for others and, if you go astray, I forgive you and start again. In the midst of the theologians and the conservative wing of the church, this message has been lost.

Unfortunately I'm afraid of celibacy puts many priests out of touch with married couples and their children. They develop lifestyles that include time with their brother priests and see families only from a distance.

I believe that a celibate priesthood makes clergy inexperienced in marriage and family life. They have no hands on experience with daily married life to guide families and their lifestyles are so different from a married couple's life. I do not think formation can change that.

The days of Vatican II seem to be over. Presently, the laity is being excluded as extraordinary ministers. Priests and Deacons have their roles identified. The way to move forward may be with ordained ministers with specific duties.

Homeletics and personal witness is important. I have seen that some priests and deacons don't take the next necessary steps in helping a person when they come looking to be a part of a Parish (or if they just "want something from" the Church!). I don't understand why they can't ASK if they would like to be married in the Church after they say that they cannot be a sponsor since they are not married in the Church. Or if they are facing a divorce, they they should counsel them in their grief. It would be so much nicer to establish the relationship with a person when they come at the time of need instead of prejudging the situation, asking why they haven't married yet and if they would have liked to be married in the Church. I also don't ever think that a secretary should inform someone of the RULES they must follow without ever spending time with the priest or ministry person first! too much damage is done and people would never want to be treated like that again.

First, you must attract more priests. We are losing the net numbers fast. You must rebuild the prestige and impact of the priests who are in the ministry. They too need to be better educated and encouraged. Not a good picture at the moment.

All should have to take psychology courses on marriage and the family. Priests newly assigned might have small group discussion with couples to learn about their challenges

I hate to generalize. There are wonderful priests in this Diocese; priests who follow Christ's calling to love and serve the whole community of faith that they are called to minister to, even those who do not participate. There are too many priests for whom their priesthood is about them, or it is a job. This is a real problem, and quite frankly I do not have a good suggestion for how you might change the attitude of the clergy in this category. Certainly in seminary formation, greater attention could be devoted to training seminarians in pastoral care, in outreach and in the interpersonal skills necessary to lead a flock.

Adherence to the magisterium is basic, the shepherd's roadmap. Ministers should be aware that, as shepherds, it is their responsibility to judge actions, to shepherd the flock, to guide, to correct where necessary, and to encourage right paths. I heard a priest say "It's fine for you to say that. You don't sit in the confessional and see the tears, hear the crying" I understand that. Who referred to "wailing and gnashing of teeth?" The ministry goes beyond sin or no sin. The priests of our parish are very different from each other; what ties them together is the beauty of the example each gives us to closeness to God. They are bearers of Christ in that the Christian model is always with them. (Nancy McKee - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist - 22 years of Catholic education) Juanita, we both recognize that we have been very blessed to have the Monsignor and the two fathers as our priests. Their knowledge of our religion is exceeded only by their dedication to its precepts and principles. Unfortunately there will be a need for replacements within the next ten years or so and we will have to leave that in the hands of the Lord. There are two concerns that must be addressed. The first is formation of ordained ministers should be maintained or improved in an effort to help Christian families better bear witness to the Gospel value of love and that the Christian families better understand the doctrines of the Church as transmitted and accepted through the Gospels and other sacred writings. (Thomas J. McKee - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist - 22+ years of Catholic education)

Ordained ministers perhaps can learn how powerful their words and actions are. One sentence or action taken the wrong way, though meant not to harm, can affect a person or family indefinitely.

They need to be better trained in how to minister to families suffering from divorce, being in a single parent family and working with minorities who may be suffering from prejudice.

Big question...maybe get women and older folks more involved. Consider letting priests marry and have their own family.

More attention to the realities of the struggles of families. Deacons must be utilized in greater ways to connect and minister to families.

Our Pastor, Fr. Nick, provided the following helpful information: Seminary training over-emphasizes theological training. And while that is essential, we must admit that most of the ministry of the parish priest requires other skills. Priests need to be experts on our Church's teaching and be able to explain it, but those who serve in parishes must also see themselves as caretakers of God's flock and local community. I would add the formation of newly ordained ministers might be improved by some of the training missionaries are required to have before going into a new culture. In this way when they are in a new situation they know how to assess the culture in which they are in. Another possibility could be an observation or internship in activities that are already in existence: Marriage Encounter, married couple retreats, family retreats, vacation Bible School, Christian counselors and other activities to bring awareness of how they can better help Christian families' to bear witness to the Gospel value of love.

More advertising and have it ongoing- not just once a year, with emphasis on the spiritual benefits the individual would receive and be able to bring to the people. I believe shortening the length of time would help, and making the cut off age to be determined according to the qualities of the individual who is applying.

Be better trained in family systems and how they work. They are out of touch with the every day life of a family. They also need management courses to help them run parishes.

Some program which help them to better evangelize.

Our priests must be educated in two areas: 1. Educate the priests in the role of pastoral minister. Give them as much experience in their formation as possible. Their pastoral presence must be made available to all peoples; before and after Masses and at other celebrations or events in the parishes 2. Train in offering homilies that are 5-7 minutes in length and not repetitious. People will appreciate a goof thought so that it will not get lost after the total homily is given.

There should be a distinct career path for woman and men lay ministers that want to serve the Church. Women should be able to be Deacons (and many would be more highly qualified than many of the men currently serving)

I would like to suggest a training system where our ministers are exposed to working with families and individuals alongside specialists in the field of marriage and family counseling. Having a dedicated ministry for marriage and family life may be a better direction than expecting every minister to be able to adequately help a struggling family or individual.

The laity desperately needs priests and deacons whose training includes involvement with families in crisis. The laity needs priests and deacons who really understand the dynamics of what the modern-day American family deals with. These intelligent men frequently come from upper-middle-class families where they have been sheltered from experiencing the difficulties common to other American families. These men, while in training, must confront the degrading realities presented by a world where there is precious little material reward or creature comfort for many families. Allow me to elaborate on one example. In the absence of those other rewards, sometimes the only thing that binds husbands and wives (or even unmarried cohabiting couples) together is the ready availability of sexual pleasure. But since that one reward can lead to even greater material challenges and deprivation in the event that children are created, couples use contraception to prevent imposing even greater burdens upon themselves and the children they already have. It's not necessarily that they don't want children; they simply don't have the resources to provide for them adequately. Ministers in training must understand that when parents are unable to protect, and provide for, those who are closest to them (their children) they feel like abject, unredeemable failures. If obeying the church's teaching regarding openness to life means they must give up their only readily available pleasure in life, they will reject it. Unless the Church's ministers teach its doctrines with full awareness, through their own observed experience, of the plight of such couples they will wind up sounding preachy and disconnected from reality. As a result they will be ignored and the teachings of the Church will be disregarded as an unrealistic, onerous burden on the poor. The Church's teachings sinfully imply that sexual pleasure should only be for those couples who have the financial and emotional resources to support and nurture children. The Church should teach that real fulfillment comes not from sex but in a closer relationship with Jesus, and then teach men and women how to pray and otherwise enter into that relationship.

I can not answer this question.

They must be educated on the sanctity of the family and reminded that the biological family must be supported so that they come to the larger spiritual family prepared and ready to engage and share their gifts.

I'm not familiar enough with the formation of ordained ministers to address this issue other than to say that it is rare for any ministers I have heard in my 50+ years of listening to homilies to comment on love in the family beyond the superficial. It would be refreshing to hear consecrated men and women deliver talks on their vocations in lieu of a homily at some appropriate point during the weekend Mass. Also, married couples should be encouraged to meet periodically for discussion and socialization around topics important to married life. This should be supported by multiple parishes in an area, e.g., Stamford, Greenwich, etc. There is an international organization called Teams of Our Lady which has chapters in the U.S. (several in the tri-state area) that are models for this last suggestion.

A married clergy would improve mutual understanding of family situations. Almost all Christian denominations have arrived at this conclusion.

The formation of ordained ministers can be improved by being taught the latest family counseling methods with an opportunity to apply them while serving as an intern in a local parish, with the presence of a mentor. Additionally while in formation the candidates should be required and willing to spend time within diverse families with ethnic, racial or age backgrounds.

It is sometimes difficult for married laity to take seriously the opinions of someone who has never been a marriage participant just as it is difficult for a married laity to understand the difficulties of celibacy.

To teach the seminars how to be witness to the faith.

Seminarians and young priests, especially should be sensitized to the global needs of families, not just their spiritual needs. Meeting human needs is half of the Gospel's command plus the other half being their spiritual. Education, outside the seminary would help in these global areas and give them that exposure.

I know so many wonderful priests who are faithful, loving and outreaching to their parishes and to the surrounding communities. It seems like the more we "interact" with each other, the more life-giving and loving are the faith communities that develop and the many relationships that grow between and among laity and the clergy. The efforts and opportunities to connect must be ongoing and sincere, as we can end up living in separate silos of our own with the many distractions and obligations that can quickly absorb our attention.

Our Pastor, Fr. Nick, provided the following helpful information: Seminary training over-emphasizes theological training. And while that is essential, we must admit that most of the ministry of the parish priest requires other skills. Priests need to be experts on our Church's teaching and be able to explain it, but those who serve in parishes must also see themselves as caretakers of God's flock and local community. I would add the formation of newly ordained ministers might be improved by some of the training missionaries are required to have before going into a new culture. In this way when they are in a new situation they know how to assess the culture in which they are in. Another possibility could be an observation or internship in activities that are already in existence: Marriage Encounter, married couple retreats, family retreats, vacation Bible School, Christian counselors and other activities to bring awareness of how they can better help Christian families' to bear witness to the Gospel value of love.

More training in Pastoral counseling, the blessings and difficulties of family life. Get more involved with families. Clergy are often too remote from the families in the parish.

I think I might want to emphasize what Mother Teresa said something to the effect that each person she is speaking with is Jesus Christ to her .While all of us pay lip service to the fact that the clergy are human beings , at the same time we tend to have high expectations of them at all times .It is so important , in my opinion , that the priest or deacon be really "present " to the parishioner they are speaking with . I have seen priests make no apparent effort to hide their annoyance at some minor infraction which gives fodder for gossip.

The formation of ordained ministers is outside of my purview. However, there needs to be, across the board, consistency of belief and especially consistency of message, which there currently is not.

Special attention given to parts of the ministry that deal with people as individuals or in groups homilies come to mind they should include some suggestions on how the gospel could be applied 3 or 4 would do This time gives the biggest audience for the longest time.-----most bang for the buck

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 55 |

8. How can the church better help people understand the truth that no individual or family, especially those which are wounded and fragile, is beyond the mercy of God?

| Text Response |
|---|
| They can start inviting the divorced and remarried, gay and straight, all people to God's table. Otherwise it's just lip service. |
| By constantly proclaiming it...which we never do! |
| It needs to be demonstrated publicly and often. |
| Keep preaching this truth and sending this message to local media. More social media communications to our youth. |
| The Church can help people have a loving mindset and preach 'not casting the first stone'... |
| There needs to be a way to counsel or dissolve the marriage with out stigmatizing the couple or children and offer hope of staying in the church if remarriage is possible. |
| Pastors have to be available |
| Through homilies, small group discussions, and by creating a welcoming, supportive environment (re: PEARL) |
| As Church, we can only help people understand the truth that no one is beyond God's mercy by showing mercy. The Lineamenta reminds us the Church has the responsibility of helping people understand the divine pedagogy of grace and assisting them to reach the fullness of God's plan for them. In doing so, it also urges us to look with love to our brothers and sisters who participate in the Church's life in an incomplete manner and recognize the grace of God working in their lives, encouraging them to do good, to care for one another, and to be of service to the community. Teaching the truth in love. We must lead everyone to true reconciliation with love and mercy. The Lord does not condemn, but asks we sin no more. |
| Many of the people I know that have gone through divorce and other family issues have been denied absolution in confession. I don't think that most of them would believe a word you said. |
| If this message can be delivered by peers in a heartfelt and believable fashion, it stands a chance of making the case. It has to be more than just words or a homily. |
| Offer confession for longer than 1/2 an hour a week. |
| Divine Mercy devotion, emphasis on the feast of Divine Mercy, abundant opportunities for the sacrament of confession, and regular preaching about the healing power of that sacrament. The Church should not be afraid to name sin, and in the same breath to invite people to receive the mercy of God. |
| Ask them to come to you. Reach out to them and tell them they are wanted and loved. |
| Be open and invite them in to discuss and affirm the love and mercy of God. Never turn anyone away - When we show mercy, God's mercy is revealed. |
| Begin to preach the message that God's mercy extends to everyone and follow that with actions of mercy and forgiveness rather than rejection and exclusion. If a priest can be forgiven for abusing a child (and I believe that he should be) and can receive the sacraments, how can we exclude those who are divorced and remarried? Which sin is worse? It really doesn't matter. Both are forgivable and neither the priest of the divorced and remarried should be excluded. |
| The Church must be more accepting of people in broken Marriages and gay Catholics. That does NOT mean that it should condone Homosexuality and non traditional families but if we as a Church accept the fact that we are ALL sinners perhaps a way can be found that they are not denied the Eucharist- the core of our faith |
| A more personal relationship with our Parishioners that allows them to seek help and to witness God's love in their woundedness. |
| See above. |
| Through scripture, homilies, examples of charity and adult education |
| Continually speaking to that and continually showing by example. |
| By constantly telling them that through Rel.Ed., homilies, in Reconciliation and our day to day contact with these people. Our biggest challenge is to get families committed to coming to Mass on Sundays where they can actually see and hear those words. |
| There is a wonderful new Feast of Divine Mercy which all Catholic Churches should be teaching the parishioners. Offering the Sacrament before weekly Masses, can inspire more frequent Reconciliation, and the truth of God's Promises need to be spoken to the children and parents who are making their First Reconciliation, that it is not a one time experience, but each time one goes, the Grace of God is really guiding, strengthening, cleansing, forming the soul to be able to live more with the joy of the Lord. |
| Welcome, inclusion, support to all as Children of God - no labels |
| By the way we treat them and reach out to help them and accepting them where they are and encourageing them to grow. |
| Make some group who will help that kind of people. |
| Retrain your clergy not to tell children that their parents are "adulterers" when they are divorced and remarried. I am not saying change Church teaching on marriage. I saw that incident happen to an 9 year old. We lost generations of that family from the church because of the mean spirited behavior of a cleric. |
| That depends on how you define "the church." The institutional church can't help. "The Church," as in Christ's body, can help when people reach out to one another, with proper training, to prove that no one is beyond God's mercy by demonstrating that mercy via an ongoing relationship. Spiritually "richer" families who adopt "poor" families for the long haul is one possibility, but this requires that "richer" families respond because they hear God's call on their lives. This gets back to what I said earlier about the need to teach husbands, wives and children how to pray conversationally and meditatively, so they can hear God calling them to be effective witnesses by reaching out to "just" one family for the long term. |
| We need to welcome all to the church. Invite people back by mail, social media etc. This is our time to shine. We have a wonderful bishop and the staff has been amazing to assist with all the Synod information. This is our year. |
| By example: Public apologies and healing masses not of the body but of the spirit. |
| Through homilies about it to start with. Through discussion groups, guest speakers. |
| Good preaching always conveys this message, along with the sacrament of reconciliation. At higher levels, the church needs to avoid unnecessary public condemnations that seem unduly harsh and exclusionary. |
| The church can better help people understand the truth that no individual or family, especially those which are wounded and fragile, is beyond the mercy of God by embracing in a consistent manner, everyone who walks through the church doors, just as Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ would. |
| This will be a challenge due to the perceived (rightly or wrongly) judgmental nature of the Church community. This judgment persists typically until it directly effects your own family or yourself. It is easier to be merciful and welcoming when it is your child who is living in a way not in agreement with the Church. It is harder to be so when it is a neighbor, friend, or stranger. Here, actions will speak louder than words. |
| The Pastor is the one leading the ships through talks and being a witness himself in believing the faith. |
| Continue to speak to this from the altar, encouraging time in the Adoration Chapel, reminding parishioners that we have Divine Mercy prayer Cenacles, the newest one facilitated by Maureen Ciardello and welcomes one and all. Inviting the men of our parish to join our K of C which supports both prayer--they prayed the Rosary each night during May and October--and community service. In general reaching out to all in a caring manner. |

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Welcome, inclusion, support to all as Children of God - no labels

Preach more on this

Catechesis. Witness of those who have come to understand God's mercy through hardship. Face-to-face service and outreach to people who really are on the margins of society (addicts or ex-addicts, prisoners or ex-prisoners, all kinds of people who feel they have "ruined" their lives.) These people are also within our parishes, need to not feel judged. Returning to God's mercy after abortion is another important message, and applies to building the domestic church, since so many women including Catholics, are living with this secret, creating a chasm in their relationship with God, and hence their ability to create a Faith-filled family life.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 40 |

9. What are the efforts of your church to offer pastoral care of families to those on the margins and how do these families typically respond to the Church's efforts to minister to them?

| Text Response |
|---|
| One initiative is P.A.T.H. - Parents Actively Transforming and Healing - gathering parents who understand the challenges of caring for young and adult children with special needs. Parents support one another through focused gatherings, which include: Scripture readings, and the development of faith-building habits and rituals. Their mission is: to open our hearts to the power of God's endless love and support, as our children and their challenges raise us to be transformed through Christ. In year 2 of DW we are forming small church communities to address a wide variety of family and community concerns through active listening, prayer, and action. Those who take advantage become energized and encouraged, and their faith is deepened. |
| I have no idea. I have never witnessed this occurring in my parish....but why would I know of it, or witness it? It is a very private, personal matter. I think that families "on the margins" would feel intimidated by our upper-middle class parish, ("you people have no idea of what we are experiencing/suffering"), that they would never seek support from our parish. They would probably go elsewhere. We have no Spanish masses. We have no Creole masses. Our parish does not offer immigration assistance and support. The folks in need are probable not going to come to us....sadly! |
| We have a Network of Care that does family outreach. The challenge of the network is that people are reluctant to ask for help. |
| We give gift certificates for food and utility bills to those in need. Families are appreciative. |
| The parish helps with requests for rent, heat and electric bills...pays companies directly ...uses gift cards also for groceries, etc. to allow recipients a sense of dignity and choices. |
| I am aware that some families are single parent or same sex, but the church needs to provide these families with some type of foster parent of an opposite sex so as to round out the ideal family. |
| We are not doing enough. |
| test 5 |
| Again, I refer to the PEARL initiative as an example of what St Joseph in Shelton is doing. Small groups that function within the larger parish community. |
| We've had minimal need for this but when the need arises it's been on a one to one basis. |
| I am not sure about this area in our parish. |
| Efforts of my parish in offering pastoral care of families to those on the margins are primarily in the form of self-giving. We collect food for the poor and conduct various drives throughout the year that collect items organizations will share with our less fortunate brothers and sisters. Response is typically a note of thanks from the organizations. |
| There are no programs in my parish that I am aware of. |
| It seems to me that there is not very much of that kind of thing happening. other than with other families or professional counsellors |
| There are none that I know of. |
| Catholic Charities and most Parishes seem to do a very good job of assisting those on the margins. Based on my personal experience, families respond very positively to this outreach. |
| We have a ministry for divorced people that meets monthly at the parish and is well received. Families that are in difficult situations - on the margins - are always welcome. There is no formal outreach or ministry to them. But by the same token, there is no formal rejection of them. People generally find that they have a home at the parish and are grateful for the care they receive. |
| I am not that familiar, but I know that there are different ministries that reach out. |
| I am not aware of church pastoral care to those on the margins. Perhaps if the pastoral approach was used regarding church doctrine, not a s many families would be on the margin. |
| When people and families are treated with compassion and are helped with their difficulties they often become more active and stronger members of the church. |
| I don't know if there is a place for those who are faced with a divorce or a single mother raising a family alone. There is judgment though. we rely on the Social Services to direct these people to get what they need. I have also worked in a Parish which had a St Vincent DePaul services and they became very focused on whether they already had food and money from the state. while some people may cheat, where is the concern? |
| See above. Repetitive question. |
| None |
| My parish is in an affluent community. We make efforts through the youth ministry and through a Catholic Action ministry to reach out to those in our Parish with physical needs. In fact, we do this very well. We are a generous parish to those in need of material goods. It is on the spiritual front where we do not do such a good job, as I stated above. |
| Invite them and listen to them. Hang a sign over the doors: Prodigal sons, lost sheep, welcome." (Nancy McKee - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist) Juanita, reference is made to "pastoral care for families of those on the Margins" and the response of such families. I am reluctant to comment on this phrase because it appears that it may have a specific meaning arising from its usage in various synod sessions. (Thomas McKee - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist) |
| I am not sure of all the efforts of our church to families on the margins. I do know of some parish members who minister and I am guessing our new clergy does as well. I am not sure of the response received. |
| We are in a parish where we do not have a large number of families who are on the margins. However we do have a Food Closet to administer Food and a Crisis Fund to help those in grave financial needs. |
| Our parish provides food, shelter, toys, clothing, and other basic needs. However, a greater effort could be made to include the poor into the life of the parish. |
| Our Pastor, Fr. Nick, provided the following helpful information: Through our Faith Formation (FF) program we reach out regularly to invite people back into the fold. We have had very little response. Recently teachers hold a prayer service prior to the start of the FF program. Holding an intercessory prayer I find the children are bringing their concerns to this prayer. For example a loving cousin who died in Afghanistan and a grandparent who had died. I hope in time they can also see this prayer relevant to their own life - sad and happy. Retreats for parents and children of different age levels in the faith formation program have recently been instituted. |
| We are fortunate to have a licensed counselor and a Pastor and Associate Pastor who are trained to guide families in need. Some families in distress do not consider going to the Church for help and may fall away from the Church. |
| We minister to the homeless, the working poor and those who come to soup kitchens for help. We do this on a continual basis through the Knights of Columbus and the Social Concerns Ministry purchasing, shopping and preparing food twice a month for a soup kitchen that feeds 150 people twice a day. We feed 25 people twice monthly at our local soup kitchen. We support the Soup Landy's ministry to those who would not get a meal if not for her making soup every Sunday and serving it rain or shine. Our parish families contribute food, good cards and their time to help. Our Parish Food Pantry Our Parish Crisis Fund Our Family Life Ministry All of which provide sheets, blankets, towels, coats, hats, gloves, scarves, socks, toiletries, and whatever the need is, We collect Alms during Lent and for the Souper Bowl of Caring project for groups that minister to the families on the margins |
| Not sure there are any specific efforts other than our Parish has a reputation for being non-judgemental. |
| I have seen far to many people leave the church over how they were treated when they sought help for dealing with their broken marriage. I have also seen a good friend find |

good spiritual guidance through a divorce and reconciliation. It appears to be a hit or miss phenomena in our Church depending upon who one encounters when seeking help.

I am not aware of any such outreach at our parish.

When my husband was out of work, the church allowed my 2 children to continue CCD classes without payment. This was a blessing because we were then able to buy food.

We find it best to reach out to them by a call from the pastor and to meet them one on one. Our community is very good at communicating the needs and then we reach out directly.

Our parish holds food collections at Thanksgiving and Christmas and contributes this food to the local food pantry. We collected 1000 grocery bags of food for Thanksgiving 2014. At Christmas we also sponsor a giving tree through which our parishioners purchase toys and clothes for disadvantaged local children through Project Head Start. We generally serve over 100 children.

Outreach is subtle and individual. We might hope that, without sacrificing privacy, a greater awareness might be created.

We offer a new kind of pastoral support through holding a Catechesis in Seaside Park which was open to members of all men, women and children of all races, creeds, ethnicities and ages. The Catechesis received a very warm reception from all who attended. More will be held.

Not aware of any general efforts at outreach which may be an issue in and of itself.

Our Pastor visits the home bound, nursing homes and all those parishioners who can not attend Mass and receive the Blessed Sacrament.

Our clergy offers one on one counseling when it is within their capability, then outside professional help is sought. The reaction overall is positive because those in need feel someone cares and is trying to help.

I believe we have a welcoming environment to those who present with an obvious need, whether an emotional, physical, financial, spiritual hardship...the efforts can sometimes present in a formalized program such as RCIA, or more informally, an email chain offering to help with meals, transportation, visits from priests or parishioners. I'm certain there are many unknown hardships that do not get addressed, but my sense is that no one would be consciously turned down or sent away.

Our Pastor, Fr. Nick, provided the following helpful information: Through our Faith Formation (FF) program we reach out regularly to invite people back into the fold. We have had very little response. Recently teachers hold a prayer service prior to the start of the FF program. Holding an intercessory prayer I find the children are bringing their concerns to this prayer. For example a loving cousin who died in Afghanistan and a grandparent who had died. I hope in time they can also see this prayer relevant to their own life – sad and happy. Retreats for parents and children of different age levels in the faith formation program have recently been instituted.

Very little is being done today

Here again I do not know of any particular outreach program in our particular parish but I know our pastor to be a kind and caring person .Something I saw in another parish bulletin recently comes to mind , which , in my opinion , might be the opposite of this In the section which gave information to those planning on getting married , it clearly indicated that the couples should attend mass regularly and currently live in separate residences . While I totally agree that that is the ideal , I thought that that announcement in the bulletin was saying basically we only want "good practicing catholics " I wondered how many missed opportunities for evangelization might be caused by the wording .

We do not have an organized plan or specific ministry for this. Any efforts made are those done on a one-to-one basis.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 47 |

10. To what extent is Sacred Scripture used in your parish as a foundation for pastoral care for families?

| Text Response |
|---|
| Sacred scripture is the basis for all parish activities and initiatives. Lectio Divina is taught and practiced on a regular basis. |
| Sacred Scripture is clearly, visably the foundation of all that is undertaken in our parish. However, I do not know of anything in our parish that is specifically "pastoral care for families." |
| I believe it is the foundation for all we do through the Parish. |
| ?? |
| There is bible study available. |
| Unknown other than at mass. |
| Sometimes the sermons hit on it..... |
| PEARL is based in Matthew 13:45-46. (see the ST Joseph we page, www.sjcshelton.org. The clergy are also preaching on themes central to evangelization and therefore, pastoral care, so that every Sunday everyone hears the Gospel proclaimed and taught in the same way. Each week's homily is part of a continuing story with a string theme. |
| Family Formation have used Scripture in some situations. |
| I am not sure about this one either. |
| Sacred Scripture is not only proclaimed at Mass, it is available online 24/7 by audio from our Website. Sacred Scripture is also shared when the Eucharist is taken to our brothers and sisters unable to join us at Mass and when Father celebrates Mass at senior housing facilities. We are reminded by Sacred Scripture that each person we meet is the face of Christ. |
| I seem to sense Very LOittle. |
| In my opinion, our pastor is clueless about providing pastoral care for families. Maybe he just does it silently. |
| I'm not sure how to answer this. I believe that Sacred Scripture when embraced by Parishioners through programs like Bible study builds a positive and useful foundation. |
| Scripture studies are held at the parish. A woman in the parish also volunteers to host a weekly scripture study in her home. |
| N/A |
| Homilies certainly revolve around Sacred Scripture. The missing element is the connection between Sacred Scripture and relevant family issues. |
| I really don't know! Do we exercise the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in the Parish? Are ministries centered on Scriptural foundations of why they do what they do? or do they just fill the needs as they go? Are some Parishes just faced with so much need that they scramble to do what they can while other Parishes put it in the collection box? |
| Sacred scripture should be part of the educational and counseling effort, which is not now existent but hopefully will be. |
| None that I know of |
| None comes to mind. We offer some Scripture Study but I would hardly call that a foundation for pastoral care. I wish that our Parish priests would use their homilies more effectively for this purpose but, quite frankly most do not. Again, I am trying not to generalize. |
| Discussion groups should come prepared to discuss the topic, not, as is often the case, whatever they fancy. Participants sometimes come in equipped with opinion and desire to show their own brilliance, nothing more. There should be a moderator to guide and develop the topic. People respond better if they are involved in the discussion, rather than lectured at, and that calls for preparation. (Nancy McKee - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist) During the ten years that we have been members of the parish, we have had the opportunity to attend Bible Studies series, readings and writings of and about the Fathers of the Church, meetings of Theology on Tap, Holy Hour on Monday evenings, RCIA on Tuesday, Wednesday is on temporary reserve for Legion of Mary until our pastor return from Rome where he is on special assignment. We also have societies for various groups such as St. Maria Goretti and St. Dominic Savio formation of grade 6 to grade 8 spiritual formation of girls and boys separately, Francis and Clare for co-ed high school youth. In addition there are numerous other meetings of various groups. Sacred Scripture is the centerpiece of all of these meetings. I cannot fail to mention the crown jewel in our spiritual life which is that our Monsignor has restored frequent confession in our parish. It is a joy to come into the Basilica on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning and to find souls lined up awaiting their turn for confession. (Thomas J. McKee - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist) |
| Sacred Scripture is present in our services and I believe by those who care for others. |
| Right now we do not have Scripture Study for families or children outside of Rel. Ed. We do offer speakers who come during Lent and Advent, monthly speakers for parents of Rel. Ed. families. Scriptural study is a big part of RCIA when we do "Breaking Open the Word". |
| There is a great need in our parish to conduct Bible study groups for all ages. |
| • Every First Friday we have a Eucharistic Adoration between 7:00 and 8:00 p.m. incorporating prayer and music for all. • Catechism program every season • The Glory and Praise program utilizes Scripture and has been used effectively. • The Intercessory Prayer group utilizes Scripture and has been used effectively. |
| RCIA, and the Baptismal programs, those seeking Marriage, Funeral preparations for the Mass for the deceased, the children are taught the Bible in CCD and in the summer there is a one week program based on Bible stories for the younger children. There are also some Bible Study DVD's offered throughout the year, currently the Book of Revelation. The Glory Gatherings Prayer Group is using the Bible during their time of gatherings which is open to men and women. |
| We offer a monthly speaker for parents and parishioners on Sunday mornings when the students are in formation classes We have an Advent and Lenten Speaker/prayer service every year, along with family reconciliation services. |
| Sacred Scripture is constantly referred to in homilies. It is also referred to in the Pastor's letter located in the weekly bulletin |
| Not sure. Recently a number of Family oriented faith formation programs have been introduced which have been well received. People are seeking to be fulfilled, but there is a significant gap not being adequately addressed by Parish leadership. |
| How would I know this? |
| I am not aware of any such outreach at our parish. Scripture is the focus of a weekly parish men's study group, but the positive benefits are indirect and not really measurable. Hopefully the men bring what they have learned back into their family life. But there is no program involving Scripture that I know of in my parish that is directly aimed at pastoral care of families. |
| There is a weekly pamphlet for the younger children to be able to follow the mass called Manif Kid. This is useful to keep children involved in mass and follow along. |
| We try to encourage prayer at home, before meals and all meeting begin with prayer. We have had success in encouraging the children to be the leaders at requesting and initiating this as the parents rarely fail to meet the request. |
| Not sure. |
| A good question. Because the Scriptures date from an era of vastly different social structures, it is difficult to draw specific instruction regarding the modern family. Scripture is proclaimed and glossed for the entire community. It does not provide a patch for specific problems. |
| Sacred Scripture is used as the very foundation for the pastoral care given to families. Catholic writings and videos are also used in this regard. |

Bible studies Lectures Catholic Movies Contest

Our priests incorporate the teachings of the gospel with what is being heard and seen in the outside world, to which we are exposed. This is done during our weekday and Sunday Masses. In fact, our deacon took the teaching of today's gospel and relayed how it was relative to our day to day experiences. What was good, was that we had school children at morning Mass and he was able to speak to them on a level they could understand--how we must leave our anger/hurt at the door and be merciful to others, if we wish to receive God's mercy in coming to the Eucharist

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• Every First Friday we have a Eucharistic Adoration between 7:00 and 8:00 p.m. incorporating prayer and music for all. • Catechism program every season • The Glory and Praise program utilizes Scripture and has been used effectively. • The Intercessory Prayer group utilizes Scripture and has been used effectively

????

WE have an excellent bible study at this time , mostly attended by older people unfortunately .I understand the busyness of young parents and I am not sure how we could encourage greater participation among the younger people. I recall that when I was a young mother our pastor had adult education classes on various topics usually ran for an hour and a half one evening a week for three consecutive weeks . He made it mandatory for parents who had children in the CCD program . I remember I was annoyed at first but soon realized what a great idea it was .

Beyond the Liturgy of the Word, and the emphasis placed on Mass, and the availability of other devotions such as Evening Prayer, we do not have a specific plan for pastoral care for families.

I feel the plea from the pulpit shows the connection especially at weekday masses which are lower in attendance and have shorter to the point sermons

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 45 |

11. How can marriage and family values be realized in the life of young people and married couples? For example, are there values which can be highlighted? What challenges must be overcome?

Text Response

These values are caught rather than taught. The dynamics in the home that we experience as children affect, consciously and unconsciously, the way we relate to our spouses in adulthood - we enter into relationships with the ghosts of our parents' relationships. Raising the awareness of the power of our past stories is critical, and an effort toward forgiveness and healing is the way to freedom. Encouraging Christian counseling for couples who need it is extremely important, and couples should be encouraged to participate without any stigma attached.

Only by and in the lives of the people who claim to be Roman Catholics. The necessity of "the presence of God," as a partner/participant, in all human relationships must be taught and stressed.

The challenge that we need to overcome is to somehow demonstrate the beauty of marriage as a covenant and as a sacrament. Young people are postponing marriage by cohabitation. Many times it's based on the experiences of their parents and members of their family. We have not been good role models for the most part.

There should be programs for marriage prep that emphasize fidelity, reconciliation and sacrifice. Establish a Young Marriage Mentorship program in the Parish...

My daughter thought that what was discussed at the Pre-Cana class was what every young married couple should be made aware of. There should be sessions to re-emphasize those teaching again.

It is a challenge now. Look at the TV programs and movies. That's what they are facing. They need to be told that marriage is a give and take..... good times and bad times..... my favorite saying is "You may be right." How can an argument persist if you tell your spouse "You're probably right."

test

I think again, the idea of small groups in each parish gathering where young families, newly married, and those with years of experience can meet to learn about the Catholic teachings on issues affecting the family is the way to go. Young people need to know they are not alone and that there is no reason to lose hope or vision of how to be Catholic in this world.

Our biggest challenges are societal issues.

Using JPPI's Theology of the Body would be extremely helpful in working with young people and married couples. The whole idea of our sexuality as the deepest form of self-giving is so misunderstood. There is also a value in the Sacrament of Reconciliation for those who want to "start afresh." ALL PEOPLE need to understand the sacredness of their life and of their life as a gift from God and to others. It would help them to make freer decisions.

Today's Gospel (Feb. 13) tells the story of Jesus healing the man who was deaf and possessing a speech impediment. "The man's ears were opened... and he spoke plainly." We, the Church, must be ready to listen to what young people and married couples today are dealing with and be prepared to help them build a real and lasting relationship with Jesus. The challenge is overcoming the world's message of self-reliance and showing our young people how to surrender to God. In listening to what people are saying, we, the Church, must be prepared to speak plainly and speak often on the values of chastity, respect for one's body, sex after marriage, living apart until married, and marriage as a sacramental bond between a man and a woman. Young people and married couples must continually hear and witness these values. These values may be realized more in their lives if they hear and witness them in the lives of other young people and married couples.

We can approach young people and married couples through the heart of Christ by showing them how to lead a virtuous life rather than preaching dogmatic theology. In all begins though with helping people encounter Jesus on a very real, deep and individual level. Once they have a relationship with Christ, we can help them with their relationships with their family of origin and then ultimately with their relationship with their spouse and their children.

I believe that the greatest challenge to marriage in this time is the lack of willingness on the part of husbands and wives to value their commitment enough to seek "outside help" (professional and familial) to help them to work through their struggles with their relationship with each other. Parish healthy married Couples groups should be formed. to support each other as couples and reach out to those who are struggling to stay together.

The challenges are more evident to me than the highlights. Families and couples are pulled in many directions in the world today that do not emphasize these values. Keeping the message of togetherness and support in the forefront is essential.

Seeing oneself as a gift to be given and treasured by another. Our culture is so sex-saturated and the truth and meaning of human sexuality has been swept aside.

Highlight the value of marriage itself. Highlight the sacramental grace received in the sacrament, as well as the practical benefits of marriage. Encourage young couples never to be afraid of commitment. Highlight the gift of children. Young people/young married couples are challenged by a society that is afraid of the commitment of marriage. Many of them have witnessed the breakdown of marriage in their own families and are afraid of the same thing happening in their lives. Cohabitation is now a social norm, but also a proven harm to successful marriage. Make the challenges posed by cohabitation more public, more well-known. Young people/young married couples are pressured by economic concerns, and so are afraid of having children. Help them to understand the meaning of sacrifice, the value of human life and love over the value of material goods or comfort.

The pre-Cana preparation courses seem to be helpful. Young couples I have talked to had never discussed issues like how to handle money, or how to reconcile after a fight, or even whether they should baptize their babies. The cultural focus is on the wedding, not the marriage. The preparation courses, done well, help couples prepare themselves for a lifetime together.

There has to be a mutual respect and willingness to work at marriage. Life is full of challenges and working with a spouse can help make these challenges more manageable. People have to stop and re-evaluate the important things in life, like the Gospel Values.

Values which can be highlighted are what I know as the CODE OF CHRISTIAN LIVING ~ Matthew 5 - 6 - and 7!!! Challenges are lack of knowledge of their faith.

My children view the Catholic Church as insensitive and demanding. Love and compassion are not values that they would associate with Catholicism, yet that was the essence of Jesus' teaching. The disconnect occurs in the Church's diligence to theology rather than humanity.

One thing I think the Church has to overcome is the emphasis on rules rather than focusing on the value and joys of married life and children. I also feel if young people could count on more support they would be more open to marriage and family life. Unfortunately fearing the Church's attitudes on failed marriages and the parties involved is one challenge. The biggest challenge to having children is secular and involves cost and the economy. If the Church could work for a more family friendly society couples would be more inclined to have children.

Theology of the Body is not used in this Parish. While I see the incredible value in having it, I can't find the time in an already full curriculum plan. Sorry! It is very important to have this type of teaching but so is all the rest of what needs to be taught. AND a good amount of this type of teaching needs the presence of a Parent and that doesn't easily happen. The focus of what we give to our young men and women needs to be changed and we need to look at how we deliver the information more effectively. wouldn't they be better served by something they can actually live out in their lives than by the history of the Church? We need to rehaul and look at the number of teaching hours and how we can be more effective in the lives of our children and their Parents.

See answers provided above. We are SO FAR behind that we need to start with the very basics at all levels, including in Rome and with Pope Francis. Back complementary, exclusive, and permanent marriage unambiguously and do not pay lip-service to the same-sex marriage movement. Have the courage of your convictions and use BIG DATA to demonstrate that truth produces not only happiness but better outcomes on the ground.

The lure of the present culture is incredibly difficult to overcome. The Katy Perry Super Bowl half-time show, to my mind says it all. How do you convince young people, that there is more to life and love than the lifestyle that was portrayed in that show? I have no idea how we show people that Christian love is more attractive than "love of me", love of sex for sex's sake, love of material things love of physical pleasure in all its forms; that sacrifice makes us stronger. I have no idea. All I can suggest is that as a community of faith, we need to do our very best to live the Gospel and to be present to young people and married couples. We need to show them in tangible ways that the Church is always present; our stance should be a constant invitation to "come and see".

The love shown by the Holy Family can be a wonderful example to young people. In their day, the Holy Family was a "modern family" so to speak, which young people today can certainly relate to.

Perhaps through Support groups formulated in the parish. Small groups meeting preferably in someone's home to discuss issues & problems that people may be facing and the family as domestic Church. Challenges to be overcome are time; since so many couples are working long hours. There are too many secular activities drawing people from faith values. There are many young couples living together and not ready to enter marriage.

One point must be made: sacrifice. The reality of married life is that the individual must put the spouse first. This is not natural for many, and is counter-cultural.

The younger a child learns and understands relationships and what contributes to a healthy relationship gives a child the resources for forming good friendships and in turn aware of persons worthy of a closer relationship. There are not many families that sit down for at least one meal a day. Just this simple action of sitting down at a dinner table as a family, saying grace, communicating the day's activities at a meal allows children and parents to get to know each other and appreciate each other. Time to be together! Communication skills: Speaking, listening, to be assertive and not to judge. The family that prays together conveys mindfulness to family dynamics. Young people value their home life when they can share age level responsibilities. Young people need the emotional support of their parents. When a family values each member of the family, including grandparents and other extended family, each member of the family feels secure. Education of the importance of all of the above is needed. The programs and activities I have listed can be helpful to demonstrate these values.

Only through prayer in a family and with the children learning to pray and see the marriage be fulfilling to both husband and wife, will the children view marriage to be of value to their life. The culture in America on the whole does not support or reflect good holy marriages. The divorce rate is equal compared to those of the Catholic faith and those who are not. As I learned in the Synod in our Diocese, the largest religious affiliate, is the non-going- those who do not attend any Church. I believe that the Bl. Mother and how she lived along with St. Joseph and how he supported the family, need to be taught to the younger children. We need to stress prayer, and praying is what children are able to do and also and their prayers are needed for their own family, and their friends, peers, reaching out into the world with their prayers. Teaching about the lives of the Saints would also be of help to the young people and also to the married couples to come to know about the way the lives of the Saints can be their mentors/role models.

I think small groups of young people gathering to discuss values such as why marry vs living together, raising children in the faith with couples that have been married for a long period of time and talking about how their faith held them together during rough times, etc.. time, secular activities, sports are challenges to overcome

Better program before marriage to show the more aspects about marriage so they can ask each other more questions before got married. To show how important religion and God is in marriage.

The key is to get them to have a relationship with Christ through their family life and in their community before they reach this age.

this appears to be a redundant question

This is of particular importance to me, as one who is divorced and could have used these outreach efforts while younger and married. The Church must begin to teach young people, from the earliest age (possibly starting in 3rd or 4th grade) about what marriage is in God's eyes so that, as children become more and more exposed to sexual messages of modern society, they will be able to recognize the underlying evil of such messages and reject them. My daughter, who is now Southern Baptist, has homeschooled her family in significant part because of her felt need to overcome society's misleading messages. Couples also must have easy access to Christ-based counseling services at the earliest stages of marital discord. Counseling that doesn't encourage couples to turn to Jesus, who will guide and strengthen them, implies that couples must make all the changes on their own, which is impossible. The church should make regular mention of where these services are available, and should provide them at no cost when couples cannot afford it or lack sufficient health insurance coverage. The Church must also be extremely forthright in dealing with sex education, so that children at the earliest possible time – along with their parents!!! - are taught what constitutes healthy sexuality, and how that desire is meant to be shared with only one other person, the spouse, via a marriage that God Himself has created, rather than being created in society through a legal process. Post-marriage marital education must be offered, but not in any ponderous, obligatory way that turns people off. It should be offered as a program that provides great blessing to its participants. Because of the confusion between sacred Christian marriage and merely civil marriage, I also believe that the Church must get out of the "marriage business" and stop acting on behalf of the state in creating civil marriage. The Church must insist that a couple already be married by a civil authority (within 24 hours of a church wedding) before the Church itself provides the opportunity for the bride and groom to exchange the sacrament with each other. This will clearly demonstrate to young people how radically the Church's view of marriage differs from that of society.

We need to accept all marriages, same sex and male/female. Young people do not have good role models due to social media and living together without marriage is pushed upon young individuals. Marriage needs to be put on peoples Bucket List.

The covenant needs to be stressed. On the show "19 Kids and Counting" one of the girls had a covenant marriage which is harder to break. We walk with the families who want to recommit their vows and ask that the children be involved in the ceremony.

Family life is about loving and serving each other, putting one's needs aside when the needs of a family member must be addressed. The emphasis in today's families, from what I have seen and experienced myself, is on the children. The term, helicopter parents, was, in the past, used to refer to parents who are consumed with hovering over their children, monitoring their experiences, so as to provide whatever is needed to make those experiences work out. A new moniker, snowplow parents, refers to those who not only hover like helicopter parents but also plow ahead to preemptively eliminate any obstacles from their child's path. These are the folks who would like to hand-select their young child's classmates, or who bribe coaches for more playing time, or who encourage teachers to pay extra attention to their child at the expense of other students. The attention and focus of the family should be on God and the family's obligation to help each other become the loving human being He intends us to be. Parents must learn that their purpose in life is not to SERVE their children but to guide them and helping them to be "real" by showing them that the world does not revolve around them but God.

Sharing and honesty are universal values -- not just for the young marrieds. Spiritual formation of the whole person is the first step.

Marriage and family values in the life of young people and married couples can best be realized by encouragement to make Jesus Christ the center of their marriage. Without Christ as the center of the family a terrible void is created. The challenges families face are found in the increasing secularization of society. Families often live in a society where the culture of death and suffering is at the centerpiece of their society. Our folkways, mores, and laws within our society are becoming more and more atavistic.

While the faith journey is unique for every individual, in my experience, for most, there is a period of time in which faith questioning occurs. This questioning in some instances causes one to separate from the faith of one's youth/family. The separation can be short or extended. It is necessary to recognize that this does occur. Judgment of such actions has to be tempered. You cannot force one to share your faith. You can and should be an example, but understand that each journey is different.

- Love of God - Faith - obedience to parents - Love of our Church

The values/teachings of our faith must always be highlighted in our homilies, or other forms of teaching, but sadly we often are not perceived as being in sync with current values of the world. Thus, our priests, deacons and those who teach in our schools or presenting various programs, must constantly emphasize Christ's values and stress that the world of materialism and power can only lead to our downfall eventually.

Of course there are challenges within all or most families and marriage contexts, as most things worth striving for are not necessarily always easy. I think the key is to present the challenges and rewards in a balanced setting with the beauty of our faith to help direct and guide us when so often our "human" understanding is incomplete or lacking in some way.

The younger a child learns and understands relationships and what contributes to a healthy relationship gives a child the resources for forming good friendships and in turn aware of persons worthy of a closer relationship. There are not many families that sit down for at least one meal a day. Just this simple action of sitting down at a dinner table as a family, saying grace, communicating the day's activities at a meal allows children and parents to get to know each other and appreciate each other. Time to be together! Communication skills: Speaking, listening, to be assertive and not to judge. The family that prays together conveys mindfulness to family dynamics. Young people value their home life when they can share age level responsibilities. Young people need the emotional support of their parents. When a family values each member of the family, including grandparents and other extended family, each member of the family feels secure. Education of the importance of all of the above is needed. The programs and activities I have listed can be helpful to demonstrate these values.

We need to bring families together to respond and learn from one another with guidance from the Church

If we could only get it across to our young couples getting married that they need God to be first in their lives . We need to convince them that what they are about to commit to when they take those vows , is possible only with God's grace . WE need to convince them that love is a choice and that God is love and that anger resentment and "tit for tat " is not of God .They need to make a daily decision to be on God's team .We need to tell them that it is quite simple but not easy . Choose love particularly when you feel most unloving .Get in the habit early on to part together every day no matter what

Most importantly , need to overcome the societal emphasis on "self-actualization" and the self-centered approach to relationships.

Knowledge before marriage of our Catholic beliefs and what they are based on should be a must Continued support eg.Groups where people share women' mens' mixed Identifying with others who may be in similar situations may help.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 48 |

12. In keeping with the love and will of God, what specific aspects of human life today must be better understood to help the Church provide pastoral care to couples that leads them to marriage?

| Text Response |
|---|
| I think having pastors trained in psychology and counseling would be helpful - and those who don't possess these skills should refer couples to someone who has the proper training. The pre-Cana program in most places is tired and largely seen as an obligation to fulfill rather than as an insightful guide to the discernment necessary prior to marriage. |
| What children need. What are the circumstances under which children best live, develop, and thrive? If couples come to understand this, marriage can and will become more "attractive," because optimum circumstances are what every human wants for her/his children; and, if people can come to see that this is best accomplished in and through marriage, more people might more seriously consider marriage. |
| I think the fundamental issue is that sex is now part of dating and not held out of respect for the sanctity of marriage. |
| People are getting married later on average and reproductive issues are more a factor. |
| It just needs to continue to emphasize that a traditional family is best in that it opens children to both the male and female views and values. It should foster mutual respect of the sexes and provide the best rounded education for the children. |
| No one is perfect. We all need to be forgiven at one point or another. With God, all things are possible. |
| Human sexuality, respect for life, dignity of the human body and human spirit. |
| The need to demonstrate the intrinsic dignity of all our lives & that love is not about the self. |
| It would be helpful to focus on what to do in difficult times. So often marriages crumble because the couples have no support for when the difficulties arise. Another aspect would be Natural Family Planning. |
| One aspect of human life today that must be understood is the prevalence of cohabitation. Many couples today begin a life together before marriage and oftentimes continue living together outside of marriage. Is it really a matter of economics? Is it a trial period? Or is it just simply what everyone else is doing and less complicated? Again, couples must hear and witness the love and will of God. If they are not sitting in the pews to hear or witness them, the Church must use other means. The Church may want to consider using social media or reality TV to share God's love and lead couples to marriage. |
| The pressure and stress of this post modern world and its effects on the development of the authentic self of each individual. |
| to help them to be better able to communicate both their discontent, their needs and their love to each other - to reveal their true selves to each other so they can better serve each other better. |
| Commitment and sacrifice are essential to the long term health of individuals whose vocation might be marriage. |
| The dignity of human life and love are the key issues of our day and age. If we would realize the dignity of the person created in the image and likeness of God--then we would realize the dignity of human love and then again human life that flows from human love. We are not random chances, but intentionally created, willed and loved. |
| Couples approaching marriage have seen too much of the breakdown of marriage and they carry that weight with them. A casual attitude toward sex and lack of proper formation in the Church's teaching about sex and marriage has led to many young couples living in ways that are objectively sinful, but the couple is sincerely unaware of the sin. Finances are a genuine challenge for many - some couples cohabit to save money, some postpone marriage or children until sufficient savings are accrued. Many young couples do not understand the sacrament of marriage as opposed to civil marriage, and are more concerned with the location of the wedding ceremony than the form of marriage they enter. |
| According to pastors I have talked to, an estimated 95 percent of couples have had sex on a regular basis before marriage, and many have had sex with other partners at an earlier time. As many as a third of these young women have had abortions, with an equal number of men consenting to or encouraging a girlfriend to get an abortion. Those statistics come up again and again. They are not an anomaly. The Church cannot provide pastoral care to couples without acknowledging this situation. |
| I think that we have to go back to the Bible and look at stories like Noah where each animal had a partner. God made man and woman to be together as one so that we can procreate and keep God's love alive. |
| This must be by early education and good examples of married life and the benefits of marriage and family. Perhaps by the time they are a "couple" it is too late to educate. No guarantees in life no matter how good an example on is given.....we need the Holy Spirit!!! |
| We have never taught chastity. We have never taught chastity as also a positive virtue. Not only saying no to sin, which is true, but also cultivating virtue. |
| Love never fails. Preach divine love rather than theologian created doctrine. |
| Leaders of the Church need to find out the things that keep couples in a loving marriage. This can be found from happily married couples. Unfortunately the Church has a history of giving the attitude that miserable marriages are fine as long as the couple stays married and that to have sex one must get married in the church. Those attitudes do not work with modern educated people. If the true positives of a happy marriage and how to attain that marriage were taught and celebrated, marriages would be stronger and more would enter into marriage. |
| The economic hardships of the times and the instant gratification of the times are big challenges as are the media and the work and career expectations of the times. |
| helping young men and women to understand that their is a big difference in what they have come to believe in social man made laws and what God would have for us. that is not a punishment but a gift to be treasured. |
| The Church needs to "get real" and address the pervasive co-habitation culture that is indicative of a relativistic view of morality. Local parishes have been so "chicken" of addressing "family" issues that the secular worldview has stepped right in and established a very anti-Catholic orthodoxy. Local parishes and Rome need to step up and speak the truth about family life. |
| We need to understand that there is a secular culture that sees anything related to God as anachronistic and totally useless. People are lured by this culture until this culture fails to satisfy their basic human need to be loved. The Church must always be ready to receive our brothers and sisters caught up in this struggle. We need to put aside the emphasis on dogma and doctrine and be open. This does not mean we compromise our teachings. We bring people back, and then by our example, the beauty of our teachings will become self evident. |
| The challenges of today's world need to be understood. People today are time constrained, overworked, have many more issues, problems, challenges today than in the past. The world is changing at lightening speed, and sometimes it seems the Church is playing "catch up". |
| Economic situations where a couple sees Co-habitation as more economical than each having their own living quarters, especially if they are in a serious relationship. Their need to feel more secure financially in order to enter marriage (want a house,etc.)Understanding couples with different faith beliefs. |
| The secular world message is very powerful and must be seen as the great threat that it is to family life. |
| Loneliness is the number one cause of young girls from dysfunctional families to want to have a baby. Cynicism is the root of not believing for some in dysfunctional families. It starts at a young age. Kate DiCamillo, addresses this topic in her novel Flora and Ulysses intended for around 11 or 12 year olds. Skills needed for belief and hope are incorporated into the story. The John Newberry Medal was bestowed on this book. |
| The Church needs to teach more on the spiritual aspects, the long term effects, of what couples are benefiting from a marriage vs. living together. |
| Religious life, difference emotionally physically in men and woman but this is complete beautifully in marriage if two people will find how to take the best from their differences . Family natural planning. Financial course who guide them how to manage money on the biblical way. For example course crown. www.crown.org |

this appears to be a redundant question

Pre-Cana training frequently fails to adequately prepare couples because it is based on the presumption that couples are not only ready to hear the truth of Church teaching but that they desire to do so. They don't; it's viewed as a mandatory course they must take and pass in order to qualify for marriage in the Church. I know of marriages that failed within years or even months, despite extensive Pre-Cana training, because the hearts and minds of the man and woman weren't really focused on what was being taught. They were emotionally and psychologically disconnected from the training because they were disconnected from God. Marriage should be described as a calling from God, not a "right" that a couple can claim and exercise. Exercise of this so-called right is the root reason why so many Church marriages fail. The Church must require that couples undergo much more extensive preparation for marriage than is presently demanded so that the Church (through the pastor) is sufficiently satisfied that both bride and groom understand the radical difference between marriage in God's eyes and marriage in society's eyes. Every couple should complete a questionnaire even before being admitted to Pre-Cana training to determine how well they understand fundamental realities of married life – e.g., that marriage demands sacrifice, that it is not primarily about sex, that it is essentially other-oriented, that it is meant to be the means through which God maintains the species, etc. Most important, both the man and woman must be able to express in satisfactory terms that they have a functioning, firm faith in God. In the event that the results of such a test reveal grave immaturity on the part of one or both partners, the Church must demand that such couples first engage in individual Christ-centered counseling to foster the emotional and psychological growth that must precede official marriage prep. The Church cannot be required to provide a sacrament if the couple is clearly unable to verbalize its faith and its trust in a personally known loving God. If the Church refuses to demand this from couples who wed in a parish, it has no right to claim that the marriage is indissoluble because the Church didn't make every effort to guarantee that the couple was ready for the "burden" of indissolubility. This will, of necessity, lead to even fewer Church marriages, but that is a blessing because marriages subsequently consecrated in a church are much more likely to stand the test of time and circumstances.

I believe something the church would benefit from, that in turn would tremendously help couples and families grow in their love for each other, and their faith is a better understanding and teaching of NFP. NFP has many benefits for married couples as well as all future couples and families. It teaches "marriage building", trust, prudence, faithfulness, and more satisfaction. NFP is also good for those who are practicing chastity in their lives, and struggling with worldly temptations. "Chaste behavior is about a relationship, and a relationship is about love. Yes, sometimes love requires sacrifices. But sacrifices are for something." (Simicha Fisher) If only our parishes would bring more of this and Humanae Vitae and church teachings on this matter couples would be better educated and more reassured in the way they are living their Catholic lives. Maybe this would bring forth more couples open to learning and to marrying in the church. Priests shouldn't be afraid to be approached with the subject and people, and classes should be established within parishes or towns making it more accessible. (Rosa Federici - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist)

The church needs to show that marriage is a support and is a good thing. Marriage is not just about pro creation, it is about love.

That the unity is really inviting Christ into the marriage as an equal partner that either individual can lean on. The priest should be intimately involved with marriage preparations to establish a relationship of comfort that either or both parties can seek assistance from in times of trouble. We often respond when it is to late rather than walking with the couple through the problem.

Low self-worth, peer pressure, preoccupation with the appearance of the body, the portrayal of sex in the media, the objectification of women in the media and in society, to name a few. "Starter" marriages. The proclivity of couples to live together for years before making a commitment to marriage.

The pressures of a highly sexualized culture are today coupled with an economic structure that forces postponement of marriage. The nexus of these two developments calls for deeper understanding of youth and young's people's sexual behavior.

The dignity of life itself is a key component which must be included in helping the Church provide pastoral care to couples.

The reality of new financial concerns must be recognized and how young people will deal with this greater stress point. The 24/7 nature of artificial connectedness through social media must be understood. There has never been a time when individuals have more methods of communication and yet are vry isolated and alone. We need to help reverse this trend.

Spiritual Love (the unconditional Love, like God love for us)

Being aware of importance of life, from beginning to end--importance of family unity. In the past, Fr. deMayo taught classes on Theology of the Body to our parishioners. These teachings are still being incorporated into our religious education programs for teens and those preparing for Confirmation.

I suppose there should be an understanding of our imperfections and that God loves us, and we are called to love each other in spite of these imperfections. It is there and then we begin to see the beauty of connections between and among us that can foster a much more significant whole being greater than the sum of its parts.

Loneliness is the number one cause of young girls from dysfunctional families to want to have a baby. Cynicism is the root of not believing for some in dysfunctional families. It starts at a young age. Kate DiCamillo, addresses this topic in her novel Flora and Ulysses intended for around 11 or 12 year olds. Skills needed for belief and hope are incorporated into the story. The John Newberry Medal was bestowed on this book.

Dealing with the busy schedules and pressures imposed on families today by society and how to evaluate what is really important and what helps families to go in love

the exposure to so much "stuff " that leads to selfishness . The advice for young people in the media is all "about me " what is in it for me . If we can convince them that it is only in self giving we are happy .Here again so simple but not easy

The atomization of society, and lack of tangible community.

Sacrifice is union with Christ and is to be expected. Marriage unites two individuals with Christ as one. God does not will or cause our problems and while He hears our pleas ,His solution may not be what we are asking. The church needs to know where the resources are to help people even tho they may not be within the parish or church for that matter.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 48 |

13. How can the church improve its pastoral care to and reengage members of wounded families with the community of faith?

| Text Response | |
|---|-------|
| By not judging them. By not making them feel like second class citizens. As a divorced Catholic I can't tell you how many associate priests through the years would preach about divorced Catholics as though we were huge failures. That doesn't do much for reengagement. If it wasn't for our pastor I might have left. | |
| By earnestly seeking them out | |
| Invite them in and make them feel welcome. | |
| Provide more pastoral support. We recently had out parish reduced from 2 to 1 priest. As a result, masses and other spiritual and outreach efforts have been scaled back. | |
| By being non judgmental and welcoming. | |
| Have inclusive activities emphasizing that they are welcome. | |
| Go to them...don't wait for them to come to you! | |
| The "wounded families", because of circumstances that may be at odds with official Church teaching, have been marginalized by the Church. To improve, it will require the Church to welcome them back with open arms, as Jesus would do. It will take a very special kind of pastoral care, hopefully the kind being taught to our seminarians, to heal these wounds. If, however, the next generation of priests are "throw-backs" to a pre-Vatican II rigidity, these families will be lost to us. | |
| Through parish wide evangelization programs. | |
| Again, focus on listening. | |
| The church can improve her pastoral care to and reengage members of wounded families by simply welcoming them in love and mercy. The welcome must be offered in love while showing our brothers and sisters Jesus' path to holiness. The wounded may hold differing views towards this path, but the church in her infinite mercy must show Christ's compassion and love while sharing the truth. Meeting the wounded where they are will require all of us to patiently join them in their journey and provide guidance along the way. Our example is in Jesus Christ; "Neither do I condemn you..." | |
| Suggestion of how to seek out those people. Many of those families are already away from the church. How do we go find them? | |
| Stop judging and be open. Invite them back and show them love and understanding. | |
| Again, welcome them - DO NOT JUDGE. When they feel part of the community of faith all things can happen.....show the love of God. Help heal wounds if possible - death in a family, financial problems, seperation from family unit, etc | |
| It is so simple. Begin by changing the attitude and image to one of forgiveness and openness and inclusion. Establish groups for wounded families in each parish and, most of all, do as Jesus did for the Woman at the Well, and forgive divorced and remarried Catholics and allow them to be active members of the Church, including receiving the Sacraments. | |
| people who know what to do and how to help and are there to do the work for them in a caring and real way would be nice. | |
| See above. Tell them the truth about marriage, family, and the love of Jesus Christ. Not a bad place to start. I have not heard it from the pulpit. | |
| The parish and diocese must find a way to reach out to them. Those people who are committed to their parish can help to engage others - first through social events, and slowly help them to observe the love of Christ within the parish | |
| Be loving and accepting. | |
| It has to begin with the priests preaching from the pulpit and inviting these people back to the church with open arms. Again, perhaps small group sessions with families so they can share and get support . | |
| The church must continue to reach out to all members of the community, especially those at the fringes of the parish community. We must be bold and confident in our efforts to invite and follow up with them. | |
| Offer Healing Services, and special hours to minister to the wounded families. | |
| Have programs for the community of faith recognizing how individuals help in this matter. | |
| Actually engage them either one on one or through small groups. | |
| As I said with regard to civilly married couples, a parish's outreach must be aimed at any family in need. A parish must create the attend dinners, concerts, movies, game nights, etc., that foster deeper friendship and emotional growth, and then invite wounded couples/families to attend, regardless of whether they are parishioners. It is only by becoming involved in events that are free of any evangelistic pressure that wounded families will begin to feel comfortable, understand that they are welcome without condemnation, and then begin to ask questions that will open the door to healing. | |
| We need to invite them back. People who leave the parish do not feel welcome. We all need to extend hands and provide love and understanding. | |
| First welcome them. Second hear them. Third plot a course of re-engagement. | |
| Define wounded families. This should be done on a case by case basis. | |
| In order for the Church to reengage members of wounded families with the community of faith is for the Church along with the Community of faith to embrace members of wounded families with love, the Love of Jesus Christ. The path to reforming the lives of those wounded by divorce must be free of obstacles. | |
| - Support Groups - Teach truth with love | |
| Offering spiritual and if necessary financial help, along with counseling. Develop a welcoming spirit--meet and greet gatherings, so they may feel connected. Have "intact" families reach out to get them involved in parish life, especially where single parent families are involved. | |
| Welcome them and do not ignore them | |
| WE need to reach out to them . We need to invite them back . We ned to listen to them . We need to break out of our little groups and cliques and be more inclusive . We need to ask "how can we help " I wish I had an answer as to how to do that maybe each one of us has to come to see our responsibility in that area . We need to ask ourselves as Jesus challenged in the gospel Who is my neighbor | |
| Outreach by those who have pastoral skills (perhaps more Catholics need to learn that), and shedding the veneer that each of us and each of our families has to be perfect to be in the Church. | |
| Statistic | Value |
| Total Responses | 34 |

14. What is being done in your parish community to demonstrate the greatness and beauty of the gift of marriage in an attempt to strengthen marriage and inspire it to be lived?

| Text Response |
|--|
| As mentioned earlier, our Ministry with Married Couples offers practical ideas for energizing your marriage, year in and year out. We do not focus on solving problems or providing counseling. We provide materials, ideas and opportunities that you can use to keep your relationship fresh, alive, and growing. Our hope is that you will be able to strengthen your marriage through the deep caring of your community of faith. Their purpose includes: Consistently reaching out to all married couples of our faith community in a caring way. Gathering married couples periodically for a Fellowship Gathering. Inviting married couples to participate in the life of our community of faith. Promoting, affirming and supporting married couples effort to live and grow in the way and the teachings of Jesus Christ. |
| Nothing that I personally know of. |
| Nothing as far as I can tell. |
| What could be done is have the parish celebrate the wedding and first yr. anniversaries of couple so there is follow up. The Marriage is a parish thing not only and family thing. |
| Unknown |
| Nothing I know of |
| Aside from the young adult club and anything arising from PEARL small groups. There has not been much. There is an annual dinner/dance in Valentine's day to celebrate marriage, but not much on a continuing basis. |
| I am not sure. |
| The prominent practice in my parish that demonstrates the greatness and beauty of marriage and an inspiration to live it is the entire family coming to Mass. The commonality of just one spouse, oftentimes the mother, attending the Eucharistic celebration with her child or children appears to me to becoming a less common practice in my parish. I am seeing husbands (fathers) attending Mass, which is not only a strong message on marriage; it is a beautiful example to all in our worshiping community on the gift of family. Maybe a subtle recognition by priests, stating how beautiful it is to see whole families sitting in the pews and sharing and participating at Mass will further strengthen and inspire marriage. |
| Nothing. |
| Nothing. |
| A quality pre-cana experience is a good starting point with significant support from couples who have had successful but not always easy marital experiences would be very useful. The application of this process is done to varying degrees at the Parish level but, in my opinion, not consistently. |
| We need to resurrect our marriage enrichment efforts. Annually, we have a blessing for engaged couples and for newly married couples, as well as special blessing for all children baptized in a given calendar year. |
| test, test, test |
| We have many families in our Parish and ministries that support married couples. |
| Not enough - we must continually celebrate those that have the gift of marriage. A quiet announcement in each parish of parishioners celebrating 5, 10, 15, etc years. Lets not only celebrate 25 and 50. |
| There is Pre Cana which helps engaged couples confront issues that they may not have thought of. |
| The example and sharing of long and happily married couples can promote marriage |
| I don't know that this is done |
| See above. Big language is used in the question. We are so far from the position that you should tone the language and shoot for the very basics -- one father, one mother, children, in a unit that loves for life. |
| Nothing |
| I've heard a couple of homilies on the topic, however, not much else. I've been a member of my church for over 20 years, fairly active, yet I don't see many demonstrations of this. |
| Right now there are no formal programs but the Pastor talks much about the greatness of the gift of marriage in his homilies. |
| This is an area of need in our parish. |
| Marriage Anniversaries are celebrated in the year by the Bishop of the Diocese holding a special Mass of recognition of every 5th year and additional married years. These couples and the length of their marriages are posted in the Diocesan newspaper. |
| Encourage marriage partners to attend diocesan programs for families. Attend diocesan celebrations of wedding anniversaries - increments of 5 years. |
| We celebrate wedding anniversaries to help others see that marriage is a gift from God and can be carried out through unconditional love that Jesus example teaches us. |
| We are doing every december the couple retreats to show them how beautiful can marriage be together with their spuse and with God. We also trying to make some topic about communication and how to raise children. I hope that soon we will try to do something more often for them. |
| Nothing |
| Occasional recognition of marriage milestones, such as 50th anniversary at mass. |
| There has been, on occasion, a course offered by a clinical psychotherapist who teaches married couples how to communicate effectively. But this program isn't offered very often, and the teacher is, herself, divorced! I know both her and her ex-husband, who claims his wife never did what she now teaches. So teachers or group leaders in any such programs must be vetted first. |
| We need to work on this. |
| Try to involve couples and highlight them in joint ministry. |
| Not much that I'm aware of. |
| We honor couples who have been married a specific number of years at religious and social celebrations. |
| The marriage is our first Church, we give the Sacrament the dignity it deserves by showing our couples our joy to see them with their children and the good example they're giving them. |
| Our Deacon Andy Dzujna serves as the homilist for our children's monthly Mass and presents the gospel teaching to them at their level of understanding--the parents are faithful about bringing them to this liturgy, and the children are eager in responding when he asks questions. This is one way the beauty of marriage is demonstrated. We have older couples who attend just because they feel enriched when they see this. we also advertise, and get a good response to our Anniversary Diocesan Mass. Another consideration would be to have a workshop for couples to listen to, and share ideas for ways to strengthen their marriages. |
| ?? |

Encourage marriage partners to attend diocesan programs for families. Attend diocesan celebrations of wedding anniversaries - increments of 5 years.

Very little

we are a small parish and I do not know of any programs along those lines

This is not occurring at the level of the parish community.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 42 |

15. What types of formation or resources can be offered to help people understand that a relationship with God is an invaluable assistance in overcoming challenges and weaknesses within the bond of marriage?

| Text Response |
|--|
| I'm not sure - in my own life (divorced) I actively pursued my faith life through study, prayer, counseling, but my ex-husband would not participate. Unless both spouses are willing to work together, it's pretty hard to overcome challenges and weaknesses. |
| Personal witness and testimony. |
| That discussion needs to be held during religious education formation. Teenagers need to have the opportunity to hear why the bonds of marriage are sacred. Any time after that is too late. |
| Having a lending library of DVD's in a parish or group of parishes might be helpful. |
| There needs to be a marriage support ministry. |
| Maybe meetings with a couple who have been married a long time and talking about the challenges and rewards of a happy marriage. |
| I haven't seen the most recent pre-Cana program, but this would be the ideal place/way to do this. 20 years ago when my wife and I were involved with pre-Cana in the diocese the program was pretty weak in this regard. |
| Parenting classes & young couples gatherings/Masses & liturgical celebrations. |
| Theology of the Body would be great. I also think to offer a Scriptural support system for married couples would be great. |
| Again, I see personal testimony by married couples as the strongest and most effective resource to influencing others on how a relationship with God is an invaluable assistance to the challenges and weaknesses within marriage. A couple sharing their life story will resonate in the hearts and minds of people living the married life. Couples struggling in their marriage may learn from or associate with a story and find new ways to address their challenges and welcome God's help to strengthen their love for each other. Forming a parish couples forum mediated by a priest or ordained minister is one example of offering help to understand this relationship. |
| None. |
| Nothing that I know of. |
| Faith sharing on the part of successfully married couples would be a plus. All marriages have challenges and weaknesses that would be powerful examples of how these couples use a relationship with God as support. |
| Marriage enrichment programs such as Living in Love or Worldwide Marriage Encounter that offer both practical and spiritual tools for living the sacrament of matrimony. Also, it is important to form the whole Church to understand that a relationship with God is an invaluable assistance in life, regardless of what your state in life is. To fully embrace the Universal Call to Holiness of Lumen Gentium would change our parish. |
| I think that you have to have a deep faith and understanding that God is love. Love means compassion, empathy, kindness, and caring. It is not jealousy or individual. |
| Formation - GOD'S FAMILY ~ THE CHURCH: Begin with each and every visible family in the building. All must be welcomed and celebrated (even the noisy Toddler). We don't have to tell people, we have to SHOW them the gift of family. Seeing may well be believing. Love of God cannot help but spread the Good News. |
| Again, it is the emphasis on love. If we start from that basis, then it is easy to follow that God's love flows through us to our husband or wife. Include some sections of Pre Cana that deal with the individuals encounter with God's love and how that has helped them in their married life. |
| I think the relationship needs to be established before marriage. perhaps preparation for marriage should foster this. as well as the Parish after marriage, reaching out and supporting them in their new lives together. |
| We need to have professional Catholic marriage counseling available, so that, when one spouse says that "we are growing apart" and "we have nothing in common anymore," the spouse who wants to preserve the marriage has someone to consult. No priest in my memory has ever offered from the pulpit his time and effort to repair strained marriage. The dioceses should have professional psychologists who are willing to try to repair marriages not destroy them. |
| Scripture classes using the above as a linking point Lectures Small group discussions within communities, linking parishes |
| Teaching by example. Many people are told one thing, however are shown something quite different. Respect, not being self righteous, showing God's love in action....these can be invaluable. |
| Seminars or small group discussions would be invaluable if offered by someone who is trained to do this; a lay couple, deacon or priest. |
| We have retreat programs at our parish that help individuals in their faith formation, which assists them in their marriages. However, there is a need for a valued program such as Marriage Encounter. |
| Before one enters into a marriage, one should be knowing the Lord and knowing the expectations that He has for marriage. To know the Lord and His benefits, His Promises help one to live the marriage with forgiveness for their partner when the need occurs. To look to the humility of Jesus, and the humility of the Bl. Mother helps one put everything in proper perspective and one can learn in imitation of them how to handle misunderstandings, and conflicts that happen in a marriage. |
| What is a Retrouvaille Program? The word Retrouvaille™ (pronounced re-tro-vi with a long i.) is a French word meaning rediscovery. The program offers tools needed to rediscover a loving marriage relationship. Thousands of couples headed for cold, unloving relationships or divorce have successfully overcome their marriage problems by attending the program. The Retrouvaille Program consists of a weekend experience combined with a series of 6-12 post-weekend sessions over 3 months. It provides the tools to help put your marriage in order again. The main emphasis of the program is on communication in marriage between husband and wife. It will give you the opportunity to rediscover each other and examine your lives together in a new and positive way. What the Program is not. It is not a retreat, marriage counseling, or a sensitivity group. There are neither group dynamics nor group discussions on the weekend. It is not a time for hurting; it is a time for healing. Who is it for? It is for couples with marital problems including those who are considering marriage separation and those who are already separated or divorced that want marriage help. Marriage Encounter Weekend for those with a more solid marriage and wanting to have a deeper relationship Marriage Retreats |
| I think a Bible study is a valuable tool to understanding the teaching of God. Through that the little difficulties of marriage can be overcome by turning to God for help. They need to come to hear God's word in the scriptures. We all hear everyone else's words in all the media until we hear God speaking to us through the scriptures can we deserve the way to go |
| Marriage in counter. Some spiritual retreat maybe once a month. |
| I don't know if anyone ever told me that God Could help my marriage or how. There is a good place to start. |
| The first part of the answer may seem incongruous: Evangelization. But if the Church waits until a couple is considering marriage before beginning to evangelize, then it already has failed. The Church must evangelize pre-teens by introducing them to Jesus so they have a genuine, real, truthful, joyful relationship with Him that will be well-established by the time these young people consider marriage. I am particularly impressed by the Fan the Fire program at St. Rose of Lima Church in Newtown, which is having a profound effect on some teens at my parish. These kids are on fire for God, and that fire will sustain them throughout their lives, whether they are married, single, or ordained/consecrated. But that training can only come from adults who have such an on-fire relationship and, at least in my parish, I don't see a many people who are like that. The second, related part of the answer is that young people, and their parents!!!, must be taught how to pray. I am NOT talking about praying the rosary or other written prayers. I am talking about how to engage in both conversational and meditative prayer with God – that is, how to talk to God about one's life and hear God's loving reply, but also how to be silent and simply enjoying being in His presence. Most Catholics don't know how to pray this way and it's killing the Church, not just marriages. |
| There is a message in our weekly flyer about therapy. I believe confession sessions would help a stronger relationship with God and our partner. |
| We always tell people they need to have a relationship with God but don't clearly show them how to develop this relationship. Our couples need to be given tools that will |

enhance this relationship.

Young people, in general, have not had much catechesis beyond Confirmation classes. They don't know how to pray. They aren't invited to participate in the life of the Church before or after marriage until they have children who are preparing to receive the Sacraments. Young couples are very busy working and beginning their lives together. Many go to school at night to earn advanced degrees. Exercising at a local health club probably has more appeal than going to a church service or event. Parishes must join together to leverage their resources in terms of individuals, facilities, and money to explore ways to bring young couples into the life of the Church. Individual pastors must let go of their need to go it alone and relinquish control.

In their homilies, priests and deacons can use examples, where appropriate, from the Gospels to develop and strengthen understandings. Likewise The Community and evangelization are excellent resources to strengthen the understanding that a relationship with God is an invaluable resource in dealing with the challenges within the bond of marriage.

We must teach people that the Sacrament of Marriage is between God and the couple (man and woman) this is being taught by our Pastor during the six months wedding preparation.

Our priests and deacons try to help couples with marital problems, but not being trained therapists, they are referred to proper professionals. Catholic Family Services and private psychotherapists would be recommended. We do have a parishioner who is a professional counselor and we often make referrals to him, since he understands the Catholic vision of marriage and family life.

Perhaps a group of Moms, or Dads, or families to meet on an ongoing or even "on request" basis, when sharing and support is needed? There are also some fabulous online resources that can help take on out of our own small world, and see things from a bigger picture, emphasizing giving and patience that is most needed in marriage, family, and really any /all relationships.

Retrouvaille Program The word Retrouvaille™ (pronounced re-tro-vi with a long i.) is a French word meaning rediscovery. The program offers tools needed to rediscover a loving marriage relationship. Thousands of couples headed for cold, unloving relationships or divorce have successfully overcome their marriage problems by attending the program. The Retrouvaille Program consists of a weekend experience combined with a series of 6-12 post-weekend sessions over 3 months. It provides the tools to help put your marriage in order again. The main emphasis of the program is on communication in marriage between husband and wife. It will give you the opportunity to rediscover each other and examine your lives together in a new and positive way. What the Program is not. It is not a retreat, marriage counseling, or a sensitivity group. There are neither group dynamics nor group discussions on the weekend. It is not a time for hurting; it is a time for healing. Who is it for? It is for couples with marital problems including those who are considering marriage separation and those who are already separated or divorced that want marriage help. Marriage Encounter Weekend for those with a more solid marriage and wanting to have a deeper relationship Marriage Retreats

Better pre-marriage programs and some post-wedding programs and support groups.

I think this should be stressed in the Pre Cana . My husband and I have been married almost 53 years and while we always went to mass and received the sacraments and sent our children to CCD we really did not have that personal relationship with Jesus . God did not become our first "go to " when we hit a rough spot . (we had several rough spots)I do not remember anyone ever telling us that . I sort of "stumbled" on to it from reading etc and of course it was God's grace that led us to the sources that brought us to that awareness. We went to marriage counseling through Catholic charities many years ago and not once was prayer or Jesus mentioned in any of the sessions. Could we arrange for some evening sessions where we could have speakers or even some married couples share their testimony . We need to "get the word " that it takes 3 to make and sustain a marriage husband , wife and God

Faith formation so that Catholics see marriage for the Sacrament that it is and not as a secular arrangement, needs to start early, not just during Pre-Cana. Is it talked about in CCD to counter the message that youth are getting in public schools? Experienced married couples, especially those who have leaned on their faith to weather marital difficulties, can be a source of witness and mentoring. Continuing faith formation for married couples, with focus on scripture passages that pertain to the true meaning of love/charity, to sacrifice, and the joy of obedience to God. Retreats, prayer groups. People need to know that they can bring their difficulties to the Church for help, pastoral care should be available whether from priests or from a network of pastoral counselors, with the understanding the divorce is never the Catholic solution.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 40 |

16. How can people be made more aware of the role of the family as the domestic church, so that there is an understanding of the fulfilling nature of marriage and a fostering of the missionary task of the family?

| Text Response |
|--|
| The church needs to empower people rather than imposing obligations on them. Many adults have not grown beyond a naive, grade-school faith, and have been made to feel that only the church can provide this instruction. Churches should focus much more attention on encouraging adults to deepen their faith, to develop a mature, seasoned faith that they are confident in - a faith that informs their day to day lives. Parishes need to challenge adults to understand and embrace the radical demands of the gospel. Without a deeper more mature faith, it is difficult to expect that homes will become domestic churches. |
| The church has to start talking about it! |
| Until we are considered a welcoming and understanding faith, that will not happen. |
| Parish celebrates weddings and has a program of support to newly weds since the first 5 years are critical in survival of the bonds of marriage. |
| Keep preaching that the ideal family consists of parents of both sex and that those families without benefit of parents of different sexes should be offered a foster parent of the other sex. |
| >?? |
| Strengthen and honor the role of the father as the domestic priest. More encouragement of men's ministry and not in the sense of a men's social group or cigar smoking club, but rather in the way of faith formation for men. Too many men's groups become macho-societies and bull sessions. We need men formed in faith not in false ideas of what makes a man a man. Strong fathers=strong families. |
| Provide activities specifically for families. |
| We live in a world where news and information are presented by the media in real-time. We also, unfortunately, take them and unsubstantiated information from the Internet and publications as fact. There are studies that prove that children raised in a traditional family fare better in life. People need to hear this fact and be shown the proven truth of these studies. Holy Mother Church may want to, if She hasn't already, conduct an independent study. Presenting empirical data on the role of family may open people's eyes to how the family is the domestic church and how it is an integral part of God's kingdom on earth. Children growing up in a home with God as center and foremost and mother and father living God's love in one another are definitely more inclined to want to emulate the same domestic church and its missionary work as they mature into adults. |
| Frankly, I don't know what would work but I'd suggest educational experiences led by married couples but not clergy. |
| Preach about it. Involve married couples in parish-based Pre-Cana programs, creating a bond between married couples and engaged couples. Bring families together as often as possible, both for worship and for other community events. Teach families how to reach out to their neighbors, to be witnesses in the world. |
| Religious education programs that involve parents, in any way from making Advent Wreaths with their children to attending sacramental preparation with them, will help parents understand their role as the domestic church. |
| First we have to accept all families, whether traditional or 21st century where there is same sex marriage. If people feel supported and loved they will fill the churches. You have to ask families to join us. People want to be asked, they want to be wanted. |
| Unsure as to clarity of question. Leading a good and loving life is the best missionary practice that I can think of. |
| Start with Rome -- POPE FRANCIS -- and make that the main message of the Synod of the Family and do not let the Synod be HYJACKED by those in concert with the same-sex marriage movement. |
| Adult education and scripture |
| People today have such a different view of "family" than from years ago. Perhaps on a global level there may be a more traditional view, however, in the West, soon it will be very difficult to see the "family" except in its new form. With regard to the role of the family as the domestic church? Love. |
| I think that needs to come through education, either through Rel. Ed. classes, homilies, adult formation and working with youth groups. |
| There needs to be an integrated effort on incorporating teachings of family life into all forms of religious education. |
| One looks at a family and sees the family as the domestic church if one has a relationship with Jesus, the Bl. Mother and St. Joseph as a perfect example of a family living for one another. Growth through prayer and the Sacraments and mentors who may be other Catholic lay people/ or priests/ or their family members who practice the Catholic faith. |
| Our 9:00 am children's Mass educates the children to the importance of the rules of family and the parents to recognize the support the church is giving to them. |
| We need to tell them that their families are important. That we want them in our churches and that we need them. If we have family centered welcoming events, liturgies and educational activities we will begin to realize church is an important component of their lives. |
| When they will have special formation for a couples and parents to raise deeply the domestic church. |
| Offer assistance and programs for young families that assists parents in learning how to do this. Many believe that this is their responsibility but don't know how to go about it. There is nothing offered for Birth to first communion and only one program for families in elementary school. |
| Entrusting the survival of your marriage/family to God every day is the one thing that will underpin the growth of the domestic church. The family, as the domestic church, is the place where parents communicate the reality of God to their children and to each other. This is evangelization, which is the absolutely essential basis upon which to undertake catechesis. But parents can't give what they don't have. Even before marriage, couples who have not been evangelized must be given that opportunity, because catechesis isn't effective unless it's based on the existence of a loving relationship with Jesus. But the only ones who should teach this are couples who are actively entrusting their lives to God and who can speak about how He has honored that trust through His intervention and protection. Such teaching, in other words, must be based on real-life experience. There also is a need to develop bonds between healthy long-term families and new ones that are either just starting out or are in the midst of crisis. But this is only possible when families who do trust God realize that He is calling them to give to others what they have received for themselves - encouragement, hope, the ability to forgive oneself for mistakes, etc. |
| I can not remember the last wedding at our church. Maybe 5 year anniversaries of marriage need to be applauded. Like 5 year increments, if someone is married for 30 years, that would get a lot of applause. |
| Reminding them of their baptismal promise and involving them in all stages of formation. Forming them to do their roles. |
| First, define "missionary" in contemporary terms. Where are they? Who are they? Then, teach people to be missionaries. Work with another parish to identify a mission that can be served with the combined resources of both organizations. In the course of these actions, identify the roles of family members in the mission fields—whether it's a matter of praying, visiting, fund raising, evangelizing. Providing some form of assistance, etc. Then publicize the efforts and results in the parishes and the diocese. |
| The monumental task posed in this question can most effectively be accomplished through evangelization. |
| By evangelizing the members and making them aware of God's real presence in their lives. |
| If we stay close to our faith and practice it on a regular basis, the teachings are always there. In addition, outside speakers, with proper credentials, could be brought in from time to time to share the wider view of the Catholic family today, and its need to reach out to other couples who share the same values—perhaps with other parishes. Once again, the more communication and information presented by our clergy, the better it is for our families. Also, use of the Diocese program--Faith and Your Family |
| Discussion, reading, homilies, personal friendship and sharing?? |
| Our 9:00 am children's Mass educates the children to the importance of the rules of family and the parents to recognize the support the church is giving to them. |

How about fostering more support groups within the parishes for couple and families

Pre baptism classes , I think might be a good opportunity to speak to this . Here again I think that the parents of grown children can share the positive experiences they had in raising their children in the church and how the church community was a valuable resource for them. Younger parents with brand new babies are so anxious to do all the right things for their children and are open to suggestion at that point . Later on sports etc compete for time and attention

This goes back to catechesis. To know the true fulfilling nature of marriage and family, we must understand and be convinced of the fulfilling nature of living the Catholic Faith.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 36 |

17. What formation or resources can be offered to help develop a familial spirituality that helps the family grow as a true community of life and love?

| Text Response |
|--|
| Jesus blessed the children and taught the adults. He challenged them. We need to do the same thing. Our DW program at St. James was designed for this purpose. |
| There are a lot of programs and courses out there to buy and then present to the people of the parish - when and if there is an interest or a commitment to do so. I have not yet seen or experienced it. |
| Not sure. I know some parishes have family formation classes which seem to be successful. |
| Have a Red Box for Catholic dvds. |
| There needs to be an emphasis of family mass and family faith formation and family activities. |
| ?? |
| Anything supporting the development of the domestic church. |
| Organizing parish events involving every member of the family will develop spirituality. Reminding families to take time at home to do things together as a family will develop spiritual community. The simple practice of spending less time on the computer and cell phone and more time doing things with the family is developing and growing familial spirituality. Simple suggestions like sitting at the table as a family and saying grace before meals will help families grow as a true community of life and love. |
| I think you need to train your priests. |
| I believe family retreats would be very useful. Some of our Parish communities use weekend Emmaus retreats to reinforce and demonstrate a strong family commitment. |
| Family prayer books. Family retreat programs. |
| I believe that our Catholic Schools and Religious Education Communities are a great starting point to attract families into the Catholic Faith. This is an opportunity to have families with the same mission, beliefs, and goals to form a true Catholic Community where friendships and bonds with each other are formed. |
| Example and Education of the Gospels and Christian living from birth..... |
| Seems like we are asking the same question over again. If the Catholic Church changes its emphasis from rules and regulations to the power of God's love and what a positive impact that has on us all, I believe that family life will be enhanced. |
| Family prayer opportunities and resources that help to bring the experiences into their home |
| See above. |
| Same as above |
| Our experience in this regard is limited. Our last child was married before we moved into our present parish. They did have three baptisms which may be meaningful because my son's wife belonged to a different Christian faith. Our curate met with the new parents and apparently everything went very well. After the baptisms the priest came to the receptions, which was another success and she generally attends the Sunday Mass with our son. There is no basis for finding fault with our priests. As a matter of fact our priests are responsible for the positive influence that our children and their spouses have on our religion. Our priests are fine, it is just that we need a few more hours in each day. (Thomas J. McKee - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist) |
| Again, teach by example. |
| Offering small group discussions led by a priest, deacon or Lay couple would be helpful. Also sharing this with our children in our Rel. Ed. classes and our Youth groups. Offering ways for families to do activities together that are sponsored by the parish. Having families working together on helping the needy - working at a soup kitchen or on a food or clothing drive. |
| My only experience has been with Pre-Cana and Marriage Encounter. Both programs, especially Marriage Encounter, teach how to communicate with your spouse in a positive and non-judgmental way. |
| The Bl. Mother asks for prayer of the Rosary as a family. This can bond the family members to each other, but also to sacrificial prayer for others offered to the Bl. Mother to have her bring those prayers to those who are in need. |
| family retreats. Parish pot luck suppers where children and parents sit together and have activities for different age groups and then all come together - Start with prayer and end with prayer. Adoration hour with music and reflection where parents and children come together for God's blessing |
| I would like to see family centered catechesis where families come together to experience good liturgies, events and learning experiences. |
| First they need to discover the power of Love our God and from that they will be able to love another. |
| Religious education programs for children strive to include |
| See my answer to the preceding question. Promoting a "familial spirituality" CANNOT be done through resources or programs. It is done in the ongoing relationship of one family to another. We MUST stop thinking about programs and resources and start thinking about fostering inter-family relationships through which God reveals Himself. |
| weekly gatherings of fun things, like movies, game night etc. It can even be monthly since people are busy and may only be able to attend a few times per year. |
| Family masses and programs such as bible study for the family. |
| Educate the parents. Help them recognize their roles in leading the family's spiritual life. Unless they commit by walking the talk, the children won't take the idea seriously. |
| Evangelization and counseling are excellent resources to meet this challenge |
| - spiritual Retreats - Bible Studies offered by the Pastor - Learn about the lives of the Saints |
| Once again, communication and outreach programs coming into the parish--workshops for both adults and the family--then offer a time to bring various age groups together to share their ideas. Hear all sides, then people do not feel so single-minded in their thinking. We live in a very fragmented/busy world--we need to have a place where we feel connected. What better place than our parish community? |
| Perhaps the need and resource will vary from person to person and family to family, so possibly a menu of possible approaches some of which are already in place, but with a more concerted/decided emphasis on this topic, would be most helpful? |
| family retreats. Parish pot luck suppers where children and parents sit together and have activities for different age groups and then all come together - Start with prayer and end with prayer. |
| Don't know |
| If we could somehow make our parish church a friendly welcoming community where young parents not only get together for worship but also have an opportunity to share stories of their struggles, what works for them and what does not. I think that even the families who go to mass and receive the sacraments regularly see that part of their lives as separate. They take their children to CCD where we have a lot of rules and regulations and it is not always the friendliest environment for children. The children come after school when they are tired and hungry. They may have had a bad day at school and we expect them to be "seen and not heard." I understand that we need discipline and we need to have certain requirements and standards in order to prepare for the sacraments but I sometimes wonder if we forget that they are children and that they will behave accordingly. I heard a young parent of several school age children refer to a DRE as a "gestapo agent." I am not saying that that was an accurate description but why was that |

her perception ? We need to be kinder and friendlier especially around youngsters. Some adults seem to think it is OK to talk down to kids .I have taught CCD for many years and not once have I been instructed in any way to show love to the children . I was however at catechists meetings where discipline etc was stressed . I have never had a discipline problem with any student but I tell them at the beginning of every class that they are a unique expression of God's love on the planet.

Catechism as a family, perhaps? There can be family faith formation and prayer sessions interspersed into the CCD programs, since many learn or relearn about Catholicism as their children are learning, this could be built into the curriculum. Also communities of life and love do not exist in isolation, they need to be part of community as a whole, so sense of parish community is important for this, in encouraging families to come to Mass and to participate in the life of the church. Involvement of priest is also key in reaching out to families so that they are encouraged in their endeavors to grow in faith. There is a wealth of written information on this subject, could be turned into brief presentations by parish or Diocese.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 38 |

18. How does your local church foster an effective culture of life, combating abortion and encouraging adoption and foster-parenting as powerful signs of generosity?

| Text Response | |
|--|--|
| It's preached about from the pulpit, youth join the Life March in Washington each year. | |
| My parish is very active in this. | |
| It has those resources listed in the bulletin, but doesn't witness to the beauty of adoption and foster care. | |
| we have volunteer leaders who promote this with various visual aides that are displayed in our hall and around Church property. | |
| Very limited. We do have a Respect Life Group and related activities but small... | |
| We actively participate in protest of abortion. | |
| ?? | |
| My parish has not addressed the abortion issue, other than to announce the annual March for Life in Washington, DC. I am unaware of any program that encourages adoption or foster-parenting, yet I do know families in the parish with adopted children. | |
| Very strong Pro-life committee | |
| We need to get the Respect Life Committee running again. We do promote & encourage support for Malta House & Sisters of Life. | |
| My church fosters a culture of life through God's word and the priest's homily. There are always columns in the parish bulletin on places and events people can contact, visit, participate in or join supporting life. Occasionally, an article encouraging adoption and foster-parenting is published. The church should consider speaking at Mass on combating abortion and encouraging adoption and invite others to speak who dedicate themselves to fostering an effective culture of life, like Priests for Life and Rachel's Vineyard. | |
| Well. We could do more. | |
| Parish bulletins can, and should, frequently mention resources such as CT4Women for young women in an unexpected pregnancy, Birthright, and healing for post-abortion parents through Project Rachel and similar support programs. This is not done often enough. | |
| There is information available. Parish sponsored trips to Right for Life Marches, etc. | |
| Consistent reminders of the need to combat abortion. | |
| I think one thing that can be done is that there should be more done to let people know the stories of couples desperate to adopt and how well cared for and loved adopted children are. These stories should be more visible. | |
| Participates in saying the rosary at an abortion clinic. | |
| same answer | |
| We have an excellent Life Committee, which has gone dormant for a while, but it is really good. | |
| Not at all | |
| My church is very outspoken in combating abortion. Adoption and foster parenting can be encouraged more. | |
| There is no formal program but our parish is very supportive of Birthright and other organizations that promote life. Birthright encourages adoption when appropriate and helps in directing young women to agencies. | |
| We have an active and strong Pro-Life group, as well as an active and involved Culture of Life Committee within the Knights of Columbus Council 185. | |
| Every year there is a Baby Shower, for the local Birthright office in Danbury. There are articles in the bulletin that touch on life issues, and articles in the Monthly Diocesan Newspaper. There are groups from every church in the area that go to the March for Life in January in Washington, DC. There are prayers for life and evenings celebrating and Respecting life with Eucharistic Adoration. | |
| We are have prayer for life and every year going to pray for stoppet this act in usa. | |
| Not sure....If they do its not well known. | |
| Anti abortion is emphasized. Have not seen anything on adoption or foster family. While Catholic Family services is a significant agency for the adoption process, it is not publicized well. I have not seen anything promoting Foster family participation. | |
| We have an active Right-to-Life group in our parish, but its activities are not yet front and center for all parishioners. | |
| Our church does do the March for Life, Pro life things. Helping un wed mothers have their babies. | |
| Very active Respect Life committee and preaching from the pulpit. | |
| Not aware of anything in particular. | |
| There is ongoing quiet support for pro-life campaigns and for Malta House, which supports unwed mothers and their children. | |
| This challenge is met in our homilies, political action by our priests and the laity protesting in front of the local abortion clinic, and by literature prepared by our pastor, Father Giandomenico, educating the faithful against abortion and where the faithful can take political action. | |
| Our church has the Gospel,of Life Society once a month with guess speakers and testimonies to effectively combat the cultures of death. | |
| We have a Pro-Life Ministry in our parish, and visit the Abortion Clinic to pray the Rosary . Our K of C also gathers in church each night in May and October to pray the Rosary in defense of Pro-Life. | |
| we always pray for respect for life in our intercesations on Sunday | |
| We had a priest who now and again spoke out on abortion He was criticized even by some "pro life " people who believed that maybe he should not speak on that subject because maybe he was insensitive to someone in the congregation who may have had an abortion !!? When he suggested that we had an obligation to know where our political candidates stood on abortion he was verbally challenged by a someone in the congregation . Here again I think we need to be educated as to what the role of the priest is . My personal opinion is that the priest gave his life in order to help the rest of us get to heaven. Maybe we need to hear that a little more so that we might be more attentive and respectful of our priests as they try to show us the way. Sometimes I wonder if the priests are intimidated and reluctant to speak on those issues that are not considered PC | |
| Importance of opposition to abortion is mentioned during the run-up to the 40 Days for Life Campaign, and prior to March for Life. No ongoing awareness otherwise. We do not have a platform for encouraging adoption and foster parenting any more than we have a specific platform for helping families in general. | |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------|-------|
|-----------|-------|

19. To what extent does your parish support the value of marriage and family life as the path to personal fulfillment and joy?

| Text Response |
|---|
| I think our ministry of Marriage works very hard at this. |
| I am sure that it does, I just haven't seen or witnessed anything specific. |
| I believe our parish supports those values, but it is not obvious to anyone. |
| Somewhat... |
| OK |
| Nothing I know of. |
| Christ is the path to personal fulfillment and joy. |
| These are mostly supported through the Family Formation program. |
| Our parish activities are all family-centered. What may be advantageous to supporting the value of marriage and family is simply recognizing the fact these activities are supporting them. Sometimes we take for granted that simple things in life are moments of joy. The Church may want to consider frequently speaking on the beauty, joy, and personal fulfillment of marriage, encouraging especially young couples to discern this sacramental bond of God's love. |
| None. |
| To no extent that I know of. |
| It certainly exists but needs more enthusiastic and overt focus. |
| As said, our Parish has many ministries who sponsor a variety of activities for families, youth, couples, men, women, moms, dads, etc. |
| Nothing specific that I am aware of. |
| ? |
| See above. With respect, this survey is way too long ,repetitive, and symptomatic of the Church's bureaucratic approach to family issues. In our time of extremis, the questions are not complex or numerous. We need to articulate and support the true conception of the family and defend it against the virulent attack that is underway throughout the West. |
| It doesn't do anything special |
| I believe something the church would benefit from, that in turn would tremendously help couples and families grow in their love for each other, and their faith is a better understanding and teaching of NFP. NFP has many benefits for married couples as well as all future couples and families. It teaches "marriage building," trust, prudence, faithfulness, and more satisfaction. NFP is also good for those who are practicing chastity in their lives and struggling with worldly temptations. "Chaste behavior is about a relationship, and a relationship is about love. Yes, sometimes love requires sacrifices. But sacrifices are for something." (Simicha Fisher) If only our parishes would bring more of this and Humanae Vitae and church teachings on this matter couples would be better educated and more reassured in the way they are living their Catholic lives. Maybe this would bring forth more couples open to learning and to marrying in the church. Priests shouldn't be afraid to be approached with the subject and people, and classes should be established within parishes or towns making it more accessible. (Rosa Federici - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist) |
| I am not sure. Perhaps there is some type of marriage preparation which does this. |
| Through all the outreach activities that are sponsored by the parish and through the family social gatherings offered through out the year. We also have a Children's Mass on Sunday before Rel. Ed. classes that is very well attended by families with young children. We have a Youth or teen Mass that involves teen as lectors and musicians. |
| It is encouraged, by our pastor Monsignor Weiss is actively seeking how to strengthen family life. |
| My parish is very supportive of marriage and family life and guides them with the Sacraments and events sponsored throughout the year for the families. The Sacrament of Baptism, RCIA programs for anyone coming into the family "Church" of God, Bible classes, programs for summer Bible stories, youth retreats, Men & Women separate retreats, yearly picnic, boy scouts/ girl scouts, many other events for the young people to connect with responsibility of caring for others with hours they donate in the Confirmation program. |
| Our parish supports the value of marriage and family as noted in earlier comments |
| We need to work more on that we do have celebration of wedding anniversaries and pre baptismal classes but more is needed. |
| Our priest started to do a special spiritual retreat every month for parish to concentrate and to learn how to listen God's word. |
| Limited support. Only comes from DRE. No clergy participate. |
| We exclude divorced people. We don't do a very good job of promoting marriage. |
| I am unaware of any such outreach or program in my parish. |
| there is not visible support that I can see, but Father Joe has been wonderful to my husband and I to guide us in our path of remaining together. |
| Not as good as we should but again but acknowledging the work of our couples. |
| Not enough |
| We give witness to married couples with children who demonstrate the joy of family life. Bishop Frank Caggiano wants Catholic education available to all children including those families without the financial resources to pay the tuition. |
| Marriage is the Pilar of the Famiu. |
| We do this in two ways: through sermons/teachings on the dignity of marriage and family life as taught via church teachings. In private meetings with engaged couples, addressing these teachings in premarital sessions. Theology of the Body also used in premarital preparation. |
| Probably by those families who lead by example provides the greatest witness and promotion of these values, fulfillment and joy. |
| Our parish supports the value of marriage and family as noted in earlier comments |
| very little |
| I do not know of any way that we do that . This is not a criticism of our parish . I love the parish but it is small and we do not have a great deal going on along those lines as far as I can see . I would suggest term limits for parish council members maybe 2 or 3 years . I would not replace the whole council at once . We need new people with new ideas along with the wisdom of the older members |
| Not in any specific way other than what is said in homilies. |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 39 |

20. How well is formation offered in your local church in an effort to provide parents the structures and tools to live out the vocation of family life so that the care and respect of children can be promoted?

| Text Response |
|--|
| Not sure - I mentioned P.A.T.H. earlier. I know there are sessions for parents prior to children receiving sacraments, but besides that I'm uncertain. |
| I know of nothing formal. |
| Not well at all. |
| Provide more pastoral support. We recently had out parish reduced from 2 to 1 priest. As a result, masses and other spiritual and outreach efforts have been scaled back. |
| Can be improved... |
| See first answer. |
| ?? |
| The only formation program in my parish that promotes the care and respect of children is Virtus Training that is geared to those who serve the parish and come into contact with children. To my knowledge there is no education program directed at parenting issues for families. |
| There may be something happening on the school level, but not so in the church as a whole. |
| Our strongest program for this is Family Formation. |
| Other than the inspiration received through the homily and the example set by parents attending and participating at Mass and Religious Education events, the one formation program I know of is our parish's pre-baptism class, which is mandatory for all parents to attend prior to baptizing their first child. Parishes can do more in offering parents the structures and tools to live out the vocation of family life and promoting care and respect of children by providing adult education programs. |
| Not exceedingly well. Pre-baptismal classes are required, but I doubt that formation is sufficient. |
| Our school and RE program of course emphasize formation and support families in this endeavor. |
| Through the homily ~ religious education, parent meetings ~programs to educate, family mass, example |
| Nothing that I am aware of. |
| same answer |
| Not all all. See above. |
| It is done at a minimum and about to get worse |
| More family programs would be welcome. |
| Only though Rel. Ed. programs, homilies at Mass and our outreach programs. |
| The sacramental programs, in particular, are well formed and invite the family to come together in Christian family love. |
| Parents have special meeting before each Sacrament for their child. Parents need to spend time praying with their child/children on weekend Mass and during the week at times to meet the age of the child/ children. |
| We do have a large Faith formation population and encourage families to take an active part |
| Minimal. Nothing from Birth to 1st Communion |
| We have a crying room at church. This is very good for families with little children. |
| I am not well-enough informed about the specific efforts in our parish directed at parents to comment on them. |
| this is not done. |
| Most of the parents claim to be to busy and we need to show them the error in this thinking. They need to be involved in every step as a means to recathechize themselves so they know what their children know. |
| We have a very active Faith Formation process which engages all members of the family. For example, the Confirmation class and their parents serve at our local soup kitchen as a lesson in living the Christian life through outreach to the disadvantaged. Communion classes hold a baby shower for Jesus during Advent. The items donated are given to Birthrite. We also, as a parish, participate in Home Front, in which repair and painting and landscaping is done on the home of an elderly parishioner by parish families. |
| We at St. Margaret Shrine can do more in this area. It is true that we offer family friendly activities, but these are not family specific activities or events. Our priests and deacons do, however, refer to the importance of the family unit in some of their homilies.. |
| We must be witness to our children, in what we do and in what're believe.through group meetings, retreats, etc. |
| Our school community is very strong in encouraging parental involvement via activities and programs during the year. As mentioned in another area, our Religious Ed. Director and School Principal are working together to bring public and Catholic school children together with their families in a joint program next Advent and Lent. Perhaps other parishes could come together to share their ideas. |
| poorly |
| I do not know of any outreach . Could we have some sort of follow up with parents of the newly baptized infants . Maybe a phone call to see how the family is doing and if there is any particular need etc |
| Nothing specific. |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 36 |

21. How can the church be pastorally involved in an effort to sustain those united in civil marriage on a path of growth and conversion towards entering into the Sacrament of Marriage?

| Text Response |
|--|
| By making couples see that the church and the teachings of Jesus are alive, vital, invigorating, and fulfilling. The best way to do this is through the Sunday liturgies and to invite and welcome all to the Lord's table. |
| By ublically inviting them IN.....this seems to be a real issue in Western Europe today, more so than in America |
| I don't know. |
| A Catholic marriage mentorship program in parishes or in a town, or diocesan level once a month.It ould be run by a Catholic psychologist perhaps... |
| Continue to encourage that the marriage is strengthen by having it bless and open to the graces of God. |
| Reach out to them. Don't wait for them to come to you.Nothin |
| The Church can welcome those united by civil marriage. The Church can ease the way to sacramental marriage, The Church can show loving acceptance for these couples, so that they want to officially become part of the community. Many who are civilly wed currently attend Mass and the sacraments because it is meaningful spiritually... they fear disclosing their status because, in some parishes, it may mean ostracism. An official diocesan path that is merciful and accepting would do wonders for this group of people. |
| Reach out to them in supportive catechetical mission work. |
| That would all depend on how willing those in a civil marriage are interested in the Sacrament of Marriage. |
| The church can be pastorally involved in an effort to sustain those united in civil marriage on a path of growth and conversion towards entering into the Sacrament of Marriage by frequently speaking to the beauty, joy, and personal fulfillment of entering into the Sacrament and providing opportunities at the parish level for other couples who have celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage to speak publically on their life together. We as church must continually pray couples in civil marriage will see the love shown by couples joined in the Holy Sacrament of Marriage as a reflection of the love Christ has for His bride, the Church. |
| First people need to be made aware of the difference between a civil marriage and a sacramental marriage. Until people recognize the difference, it's not easy. |
| Be welcoming--and say so frequently in the parish bulletin. |
| Not sure. |
| Educate on the Sacrament of Marriage through homily and celebrate older married couples in the parish.....kind of a Who's Who and how long they are married... |
| By projecting an image of openness and acceptance. |
| I think there is fear among the young when the Church stresses the "no divorce and difficult annulment process" of the church to enter into sacramental Marriage. For couples who have been previously married they cannot be Married in the church. |
| We must be able to let couples who are married civilly that the Church is open to blessing their marriages and that it is not difficult to do! Let them know that there is a way to help them no matter what the circumstances. I went into the diocesan office to get a form for an annulment for a friend. The person there opened up her "empty" desk drawer, pulled out the from, and said "three years and #350.00" nothing more. she did not know me and did not know if it was for me. I could not imagine a colder reception. NOW put that into a Parish environment! Why would they want to come to us for fix their marital situation? EVERYONE needs to learn how to be open and welcoming! |
| You must tell them the truth about marriage and family. |
| I don't have a.clue |
| We do not have enough information to give anything more definitive than a general suggestion that if it checks out that they are free to have a sacramental marriage and their present relationship indicates some hope for a future, they should go for it. I am reluctant to even answer this question without more information. (Thomas J. McKee - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist) |
| Again, instead of being judgmental, show love and concern. |
| It would be necessary to have priests or deacons getting involved in support groups or individual meeting to help those couples in seeking an annulment and guiding them through that process. Many times couples do not know where to start or that they even have a chance to get an annulment so they can receive the Sacrament of Marriage. |
| Special emphasis needs to be made on communication to such couples that is inviting to them not negative or threatening. |
| The Pastor needs to be aware of who these couples are that need the instruction/mentoring and having prayer and Masses said for the intentions of these people. |
| A strong social concern Director is required |
| by not making their civil marriage a sin if we say they are living in sin why would they want to come to the church for a Sacramental Marriage. They need to be encouraged and supported until they realize the benefits of the sacrament. |
| The same as its now they. Can be in a some group to help them raise in the catholic faith but we cannot change the way how God tell to us about marriage. |
| Fix the annulment process |
| look for ways to male civil marriages more easily welcomed. Annulment may need to be more available |
| Any parish-based, family-focused activity such as dinners, concerts, movies, game nights, etc., must be open to the general public. If that means going house-to-house to invite couples/families to attend then that's what should be done. As these "outside" families become involved in events that are free of any evangelistic pressure, they will hopefully begin to feel comfortable, understand that they are welcome without condemnation, and then begin to ask questions that will open the door to evangelization, catechesis and full entry into the Church and the sacraments. |
| Discuss the many benefits in the Sacrament of Marriage. It is a Bucket List item. |
| Explain to them first that their marriage is still valid and show them the beauty and simplicity of convalidation as a gift to each other or a higher commitment. |
| The difficult part is identifying these folks. Perhaps the pastor knows and addresses this individually but I'm not aware of anything specific. |
| The Church must lead by the example taught and shown by Jesus Christ which is love. The Church must never turn away or discourage anyone who seeks His love and forgiveness. Afterall, Jesus is Love. Jesus is the Truth. The Church is responsible to carry His Love and His Truth forward. |
| This would need to be a specific outreach program and would entail identifying those members in such an arrangement. |
| Our children in the Religious Education Program bring their Parents to obtain the Sacarament, because they learn from their teachers the grace of the Sacrament. |
| Present programs that bring these couples together in order to share with them the teachings of our faith and the sacramental gifts that come from it. |
| ?? |
| Acceptance, inclusion no labels |
| Be welcoming and supportive |

here again I think by education . I think that all of us have an obligation to reach out in love to all our neighbors. Maybe we could encourage parishioners to invite pour non church going neighbors to church activities such as bible study or if a parish has social events . I think this is another benefit of having get to gathers in the parish hall , pot luck suppers etc . these events can be an opportunity for evangelizing

Welcoming of children, whether in or out of wedlock. (some unmarried people are more "open to life" than some married people). Helping the couple understand what their love means, how it is a reflection of God's love. Priests particularly need to reach out to these couples, pray with them, help them to understand how the vocation of marriage enables them to grow in their relationship with God, their ultimate salvation, in their love for each other, and as individuals.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 42 |

22. Recognizing the various descriptions of family life today, do you see your parish giving support to these different types of families? If so, please describe. If not, please describe what could be done better to support these families.

| Text Response | |
|---|--|
| I am pleased to say that all types of families are welcomed at St. James without judgment - two parent families, single parent families, inter-racial families, blended families - our multicultural parish embraces all of them. | |
| Our upper-middle class parish does not attract or welcome non-conventional couples or families....on a personal level, priest to congregant, my parish might be very personally welcoming but I never see non-conventional people or couple at my parish. | |
| Yes, we should be able to offer support. We can have a special Mass for families and invite them individually to attend and have a reception afterward with the Pastor being very vocal and enthusiastic for these families to return. | |
| We have only 1 priest and he is over 70 yrs old. he can't do it alone. Local parishes should work collaboratively on something like this. | |
| Because same sex marriage is a reality in parish locales and Catholic school communities the need for delicacy is needed esp. in regard to children in those families. Especially in the school this is done. | |
| See my previous answers regarding single parent or same sex families. | |
| ?? | |
| This question troubles me. Are you speaking of the secular description of family life? Two mommies, two daddies? Of course our parish does not give credence to these, nor should it. Clearly, loving the individuals, instructing and admonishing as necessary, and treating all with dignity, but not supporting the choices/actions of the individuals. | |
| We try to be very accommodating when divorce/custody issues make it difficult for religious education of children. | |
| I do not have firsthand knowledge of different types of families within my parish outside divorce and children born out of wedlock. I, of course, do not see the offering of personal pastoral care; however, the very fact these individuals are participating in the Eucharistic celebration and baptizing their children are proof the parish is extending a merciful and loving welcome. I pray there can be parish programs offering open and candid discussion on these different types and Christ's boundless love and grace in the Sacrament of Matrimony, encouraging all of these different types to a full understanding and participation in the holy bond of marriage. | |
| No. I cannot see it happening with the current pastor. | |
| Minimally but I simply don't know. | |
| We support families of all types in numerous ways, many described above. A challenge here is seeking out families that are in difficulty or in a pastorally challenging circumstance. How do we seek them out, and what can the Church provide to parishes as a resource for doing so? | |
| Yes, we have a welcoming Parish. From what I have seen, our Pastor and Priests are accepting of those with 21st Century family structures and dynamics. | |
| I think ALL people are welcomed in my parish. Our Family Mass is a living example to all parishioners of the joy and value of family. | |
| No support today. An attitude of forgiveness and acceptance would give these families some hope. | |
| The way the Roman Synod has phrased their challenges appears to be more permissive than I would have thought. The news and the press have identified the fact that there may be radical changes coming from Rome. | |
| ? | |
| What does "different types of families" mean??? If you mean single-parent and divorced families, say so. They should be firmly supported to lead sound Catholic lives given their current situation and to correct a situation that is sinful. | |
| I'm not certain what could be done. Our pastor isn't comfortable talking with people and the only other priest has recently arrived from a foreign culture. There is no connection at all with families. | |
| I do not see much support given. Love and tenderness as Pope Francis stated would be invaluable. | |
| Yes, by reaching out and inviting all to participate in Parish programs throughout the year. | |
| Yes, there is attention paid to divorced and separated families, and there are programs in place to offer assistance to families that struggle. | |
| Single parents due to death of a spouse, or divorce probably need more mentoring groups which could be held throughout the various local Catholic Churches. | |
| We have a parish counselor on board who is attuned to the description in this question | |
| We welcome everyone | |
| No We should welcome all God's Children to his Table. Rethink how we talk to and about fellow sinners. | |
| Before my fellow parishioners can even begin to think about helping other families they themselves must be thoroughly evangelized and catechized. The problems outside a parish cannot be resolved until the problems within the parish are resolved. I have heard and read many comments, most often by former Catholics, who say they have left the Church precisely because of the lack of relationship among worshipers. We are all strangers to one another. That's a huge problem we must address before reaching out to others. | |
| We need to do better. | |
| We need to start a support group or forum for families of divorce, single parents and work with families that don't fit the traditional model. | |
| not sure | |
| I'm not sure what is meant by "different types of families" within my parish. However, the parishioners of St. Margaret Shrine consist of a variety of ethnicities in family life. Thus the folkways and mores of their different ethnicities are openly demonstrated in our parish festivals and celebrations. | |
| Yes, our Parish gives spiritual support to those families in need with personal prayers and giving comfort. | |
| This is similar to a previous answer--There are programs in our parish, as well in our town with social helps. The community soup kitchen which our Deacon Paul organizes each month -- financial subsidies for families in need -- special needs children in religious ed. are carefully monitored with help of their parents in order to meet their spiritual needs. We also have a Bereavement Ministry led by a parishioner, Sue Monk, Francesca Hayes and Angie McKelvey. | |
| ?? | |
| We have a parish counselor on board who is attuned to the description in this question | |
| No. We need to be more welcoming to all | |
| Does this question refer perhaps to unmarried people with children? Certainly they need support and guidance and encouragement to enter more deeply into their relationship with God, and to help their children grow up in the Faith in spite of circumstances. At present we have no support system for any kind of family. | |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------|-------|
|-----------|-------|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Total Responses | 38 |
|-----------------|----|

23. Do you have supports in your parish to help raise your children to become mature in their faith? If so, please describe them. If not, what types of support do you need in this regard?

| Text Response |
|---|
| We have religious education and youth programs - since my children are grown I'm not as involved with these programs. But I do feel that the best way to have children develop a deeper faith is to feed their parents and nurture the home church. |
| Superficial....the best outsiders (outside of the family) can do: pre-school; CCD; youth group - all very active (the youth group is, however, small 16-18 teen aged high school students). |
| Our Youth Ministry is not very effective. |
| Our CCD program does this as best we can with volunteer parents. |
| School and School of Rel. are very helpful. |
| NO, see previous answers. |
| We do have a wonderful Faith Formation leader |
| We have a Catholic school, youth groups, CCD so their are ample opportunities for raising children in the faith. The parish is a tremendously welcoming parish. |
| My parish's religious education program and youth group are providing our young people opportunities to full and active participation in the community. Our young people are reaching out to the elderly and poor. Our youth group is not only active in serving the community; they are eager to provide specific aid, like raising money to present dolls to individuals suffering with Alzheimer's. They learned of the practice of doll therapy and how it brings comfort to patients with dementia. Our parish is urging young people who have been confirmed to be Proclaimers and Eucharistic Ministers and those having celebrated First Holy Communion to be Altar Servers. I hope to see other service project opportunities, such as high-school students aiding needy families with tasks like small home repairs and other home projects. "Faith without works is dead;" allowing young people to complete corporal works of mercy is a path to maturity in faith. |
| There is "faith formation." Most of the people teaching don't know much about it. For the most part, they are post-Vatican II babies--all you needed to know is that God loves you. |
| Clearly, religious education, whether in our Parish school or in CCD, is very important especially when it is joyful and inclusive. Teen retreats and teen programs are very effective when done right but their inconsistent. Today's youth are certainly enthusiastic and engage in faith formation delivered in the right way. |
| Our religious education programs and youth ministry. Both can use work and improvement. Hopefully the Diocesan Synod will be a source of renewal in those efforts. |
| We have a prek - 8 school, a large Religious Education Program, youth groups and ministries. |
| Again through family Mass, Religious Education classes and programs. Living Stations of the Cross Easter and Christmas celebrations.....and Ash Wednesday - BIG teachable moment!!! |
| CCD. |
| I think family activities are helpful. We don't have in our parish as many as we could but one good thing we have is that once a month there is a family Mass where families of Religious Ed students are obligated to attend. The children are the lectors and ushers and I suspect after a while the families will more and more enjoy attending that Mass. |
| Not at the moment -- far from it. See above. |
| No |
| There is very little support. Besides the excellent efforts of Religious Ed and certain small groups at the parish level, there should be more children gatherings, prayer gatherings, supportive family gatherings - in private settings and public settings. My children have experienced some of the happiest times when, for example, with large families and their children at certain events, either Rosary prayer gatherings or at places like the Convent of St. Birgitta. Again, I have many thoughts and recommendations in regards to topics like this. (George Szele - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist) |
| We have a religious education program and a Catholic school attached to our church. Many people just go through the motions, however, with religious upbringing. Every once in a while a dynamic speaker will come in and will spark a renewed interest. I'm sure many parishes can use supports, however, resources are tight. |
| We try to do that through Rel. ed. and through the various family Liturgies and events. Teens are invited to participate as lectors and musicians at the Youth Masses. Children are lectors at the Children's Mass. We have many children come forward to be altar servers. Our youth group sends packages to our college students away from home to remind them that we are thinking of them at the parish, reminding them that they are loved and cared about. |
| I mentioned earlier about the strong religious education program and the thriving youth ministries. In addition, the St Rose Columbian Squires are the largest group in North America, and teach young men about the value of Catholic charity. |
| There are classes for Religious instruction for all children through Confirmation. If the children/ and young adults who make their Confirmation do not still have a relationship with Jesus, or the BI. Mother there is a strong possibility that they will leave the Church after the Sacrament of Confirmation. Learning prayer and coming to know Jesus enough to feel comfortable to see Him as their personal friend and Savior who loves them is going to remain with them throughout their life and bring them help to stay on the road of life, eternal life they will see as a goal. |
| Not applicable. We have an empty nest. |
| We offer a continuous faith formation for any child in the parish from age 4 to grade 8, a middle school and highschool youth group. We have student lectors who read the Word at Sunday Masses along with altar servers who serve until they graduate from high school |
| Yes i do the homily very strong support me and also Holy Spirit group. |
| We have a Catholic School prek-8. We have a religious education program. both are healthy and well attended. We have a good youth/teen group. |
| My parish has an active youth group, and many young people have a solid faith in Jesus. They should be the ones who teach the adults in our parish about what real faith is. We have a parochial school on our campus, but from my very painful experience as the parent of three children who attended that school from pre-K through eighth grade and who have all subsequently left the Church, I am very concerned that this school is focused on catechesis without understanding that it must be preceded by evangelization. Parochial schools see themselves as places of catechesis but not evangelization, which is backwards. They must first be places of evangelization so that students develop a relationship with Jesus, which fosters a real desire to learn more about Him via catechesis. |
| My children do not always join us at mass. My 19 and 15 year old state they "feel judged" at church and do not want to go to church. As they walk up to receive communion they have stated that "people always look to see if I am wearing new or designer clothes". We do have many, many wealthy people in our parish, I do not feel this way, but then again, I am an adult, past that point of teen age years. |
| We are changing our middle school religious ed curriculum to be more life like. We are having more group discussions and have started a blog to answer questions. |
| Our parish conducts weekly catechetical sessions for children preparing for the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation. However, families receive little support from the time their children are baptized until the time they are ready for First Communion preparation. Part of the reason is that our Parish is small; we don't have large numbers of families with small children nor do we have the financial and human resources to spare. Joining with another parish or parishes would be necessary to provide this type of support. |
| As cited above, parish youth groups have been a remarkable success. |
| Families are primarily responsible for the formation of their children's gift of faith. The Community also provides support in this critical area. Our priests and deacons encourage the active participation of our youth in the Holy sacrifice of the Mass. Our parish has a society, named the St. Theresa Guild, which offers a variety of activities that |

help children mature in their faith and socialization.

Religious education stops after Confirmation in 8th grade. Perhaps extending Confirmation to 12th grade may provide the additional time to assist in the development of the youth's understanding of Catholicism and its teachings including on marriage.

- youth groups to grow in faith - various outdoors activities - charging times with the Pastor

We have a very active religious ed. program that involves the children in projects that reach out to the needy and thus supports the teachings of our faith--learning and doing for others. Next year our religious ed. director, Patricia Nettleton and our school principal Donna Wuhrer are planning a program to combine children/families from both public and our Catholic schools to work on an Advent and Lent project together.

We were participants and proponents of the Religious Education program at our parish when my two sons were young and throughout their confirmation. However, I am not certain the early efforts will bear fruit as my teenage sons are encountering a period of doubt and questioning which I don't believe is unusual or even unnecessary at this time of their lives. I pray and hope they come back to their Catholic Faith and the foundation we have tried to establish for them, but I'm not sure we have the "say" over this, any more than we have a "say" in their chosen career, marriage partner, and so many of life's important personal choice.

Not applicable. We have an empty nest.

Catholic School, Youth Group and Family Mass

There is a general consensus that religious education needs improvement, needs to be more serious and meaningful, children need to learn at early age to participate in the life of the Church, and that religious education needs to be offered beyond confirmation in a way that would keep teens engaged and attracted to the Faith (community outreach/charity, charitable work trips, March for Life , scripture study and discussion for teens)

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 40 |

24. How can the church best facilitate relations between families, society, and civil life for the benefit of the family?

| Text Response |
|---|
| <p>By building warm, relational, engaged communities of faith committed to living the radical demands of the gospel - and part of that is ensuring that their communities know Catholic Social teaching. We need to understand that being a disciple involves becoming an activist.</p> |
| <p>Through our love, support, and teaching</p> |
| <p>Offer opportunities for worship together.</p> |
| <p>The church has to be real...</p> |
| <p>Showing each has its place and can be accommodated without compromising church values.</p> |
| <p>More family socials</p> |
| <p>Through better catechesis at the parish and diocesan level.</p> |
| <p>United families are society's strongest link.</p> |
| <p>The Church must not be reticent in proclaiming Christ and His Cross. She must continually work to promote holy and healthy relations between families, society, and civil life, sharing publically and at all liturgical gatherings the full teachings of the Gospel and the Catechism of the Catholic Church no matter how they contradict with society's stand or beliefs. If family is to remain the domestic church, we must honestly and mercifully bring to light any and all secular ideals or interests that challenge Christ's teachings on family and holy and healthy living. Working for the benefit of the family demands speaking the truth in love and protecting the values and truths God set as its foundation.</p> |
| <p>Cooperating with other faiths and denominations on this challenging and important subject would be a good start.</p> |
| <p>Proclaim the Gospel with love. Emphasize by work, example, attitude, and prayer, that the Gospel transforms humanity and society in good, beautiful, positive ways. Make the parish a center for community life so that those who are seeking a more just, humane, fraternal society always have a visible, physical location where that vision is, at least partially, realized.</p> |
| <p>Be open and accepting. Welcome all to our table.</p> |
| <p>Show others and MEAN it that we are here to support them. We must be available for all who are in need, no matter what. WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?</p> |
| <p>Do not understand the question.</p> |
| <p>I think the church needs to take a bigger role in working toward family friendly workplace practices and should be more careful on supporting political candidates who pass the test as far as 6th commandment values but do not want to work for fair wages and family support systems</p> |
| <p>Make every Parish a place of warmth, acceptance and resource so that people will find that there is a place for them that is so very different from the real world.</p> |
| <p>Same.</p> |
| <p>Instead of being judgmental and controlling, be loving and accepting.</p> |
| <p>We have to encourage family activities and offering ways to keep families together in our schools and our communities. Partaking in Ecumenical events in the Community is also a good way to do this. I also think more need to be done on teaching Civility to our children and families.</p> |
| <p>Prayer must not be overlooked as a solution to one's own family, that of the local society/ civil life and the world situations that can only be changed by the prayers and the Grace that God gives.</p> |
| <p>Joy of the Gospel - mindfulness -</p> |
| <p>by dialogue</p> |
| <p>DO not become spoke people for the Culture wars. This has not worked.</p> |
| <p>The church must become a focal point of family life. My daughter, who is now Southern Baptist, attends a congregation where families are in constant contact. They all know one another and are committed to developing deeper bonds of trust, even though acknowledging that every family and every individual within every family has weaknesses, predilections and annoying behaviors. The Catholic Church, at the parish level, faces the daunting task of bringing families together in a way similar to the example of my daughter's church. It won't happen easily or overnight because the focus of most families is on soccer practices, dance recitals, AP college-prep courses, etc. We must re-imagine the parish as our second home and our second family. The institutional Church, represented by the bishop, must candidly call families to begin to surrender to God so that their lives and priorities can be reordered. I suggest that the Church seek the advice of Protestant congregations that display a vibrant Christ-centered, family-focused life, in an attempt to emulate it.</p> |
| <p>Family game night at the church, Fun things to interact with and each other. Religion can be fun.</p> |
| <p>We fight a consumer mentality of "What's in it for me" and we must show them in a tangible way what they are missing.</p> |
| <p>not sure</p> |
| <p>I feel very strongly that the Church can best facilitate relations between families, society, and civil life for the benefit of the family by the Church being a consistently strong voice throughout every form of communication in our society in matters dealing with families, society and civil life. In my opinion, the Church has been too quiet too long in matters of importance to our Church. Thus the Church and the laity have made themselves irrelevant. I'm tired of my God, my Church, my priests and religious and the laity being the doormat for the media to wipe their feet. Enough!</p> |
| <p>The church should focus less on society and civil life and more on the Church's members and new believers. There are some who will never accept the Church and by engaging in civil and societal change, the church risks alienating others, perhaps future believers. For example, the Church should stay true to its principals and beliefs, but it should not force non-believers to legally be bound.</p> |
| <p>To gather families around the many Church activities like Our Lady of Guadalupe, our Lady of Good Health, Celebrating Family Parish Festivals, Dinners, Religion Education Teachers and Family Prayers Groups that instill in the Children the faith.</p> |
| <p>In addition to the above --take part in community service projects that our parish already has in place--as we said, soup kitchens, helping people like Sr. Theresa who is constantly helping her community in Bridgeport. By offering to help others, we gain so much more than we give. There is always someone in need. By doing these things, we teach our children the importance of giving for the good of others.</p> |
| <p>??</p> |
| <p>Joy of the Gospel - mindfulness -</p> |
| <p>See above answers</p> |
| <p>While always being ready and willing to share the light of Christ, the Church (ie, the Church hierarchy) must take an uncompromising position against those aspects of "civil" society which are at odds with what we as Catholics know to be true. People appreciate and benefit from clear messages, and families today are very confused. People know that things are wrong in society, and are looking for answers; the Church has those answers, and needs to be courageous about proclaiming them .</p> |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------|-------|
|-----------|-------|

25. How well do catechesis and marriage preparation programs in your church highlight the vocation and mission of marriage and the family according to faith in Jesus Christ? For example, do they present an openness to the vocation of the family? To what extent is the community involved in this preparation?

| Text Response |
|--|
| I know that the pastor spends a lot of time with engaged couples in preparation for marriage , but I'm not sure of the content, etc. |
| I have no idea.....I never saw any 20 years ago |
| I think the programs do a good job. I believe they are misunderstood by the congregation. Witnessing from the pulpit will help to alleviate those misconceptions. |
| We use the curriculum approved by the diocese. The key to success is the volunteers who teach these programs. |
| ot too well...Marriage prep should be taught to teens actually, to keep it real... |
| Unknown or not at all. |
| Not familiar with the programs |
| Because none of my children was married in the diocese, I have no personal experience of the marriage preparation programs in my parish. However, a close friend shared with me the experience that her son and future daughter-in-law had with my parish priest (not pastor) a few years ago. The family were long-time members of the parish. Her son, a cradle Catholic, and his future wife, an Episcopalian, made an appointment to discuss their desire to marry in the parish. When informed that this would be a "mixed marriage", the priest asked if they both would promise to raise their future children in the Church. The couple, not willing to prevaricate as some couples may, told the priest that they were not prepared to make that decision at that time. When told that this was a non-negotiable requirement for marriage in the Church, the couple left and later married in the Episcopal Church. My point in recounting this event is to highlight one of the reasons why the Church in Bridgeport has suffered so many losses among young adults raised in the Church. Mixed marriages are very common in our society, and no longer are disparaged or denounced by Catholics at large. And because of this, we must find a way to attract and keep these young people as they start their families. Parishes that provide merciful venues that proclaim welcome to all will keep and grow these families. It will become a spiritual home to them and their children. As far as I know, the program in my parish that is specifically for families is the Children's Mass at 10 am on Sunday. It is very popular among families with young children and draws people from across the whole town. Recently the parish has begun having members of the teen Youth Group lector at the 5:15 pm Sunday Mass, just prior to their weekly meeting. This mass also draws a number of families. I am not aware that the community is involved in the "preparation programs" for catechesis or marriage preparation. Authority is held close by our pastor. |
| I do not know enough about the marriage prep program to answer this. I've been married for 40 years and have not been involved in marriage prep for the karst 20 years. |
| This topic was just dealt with in our Family Formation program. |
| I cannot effectively answer this question. My parish rarely celebrates the Sacrament of Marriage. However, I do know couples preparing for marriage are asked to make arrangements with the pastor at least one year in advance and must attend a diocesan marriage preparation class. A recent posting of bands for a couple did ask the community to come forward if anyone knew of a reason the couple should not be married. I would consider such an inquiry active participation of the community in the preparation. |
| Our catechesis should offer more in the realm of vocational preparation/education. It would be good for our children to understand marriage as vocation, as they should also learn about priesthood and religious life. The community is little involved in marriage preparation. Because the majority of engaged couples participate in diocesan pre-cans programming, there is, at present, no parish-based marriage preparation program that would involve members of the parish community. A parish-based method of helping engaged couples prepare for marriage with the help of married couples from the parish would be invaluable. |
| The wider community is not involved, but many couples report being pleased during the pre-Cana presentations. |
| I am not familiar with the details and don't feel qualified to answer. |
| Not sure but the community is not involved that I know of.... |
| I have no knowledge of the content of marriage preparation programs in our parish. |
| We do what the Diocese dictates. |
| I would like to see couples doing the pre-Cana trainings. I was married in 2009 and the male deacon had a male's eye view on most issues. AND I am male. |
| Marriage preparation needs to be reexamined. there is too much large group prep that leaves people in the margins and forces them to do and say what they can to "GET" that sacrament and the wedding they want. Marriage prep has not witnessed or formed a bond with the couples that need the sound guidance and how tos personally delivered. |
| No catechesis programs at all. No education. Pathetic state of affairs. See above. |
| There isn't any |
| I'm sure they are highlighted, however, I'm not sure to what extent. |
| We do not have a marriage preparation program at our parish , it is done through the Diocese. In the past we did have a program that was run by the Deacon which involved married couple in the parish meeting with engaged couples for feedback sessions after they had taken a Pre-marital inventory which was checked and compiled through an outside agency. My husband and I worked with the Deacon on this and it was actually quite successful because it covered many different topics related to marriage |
| St Rose of Lima does have a strong marriage preparation program that is led primarily by the guidance and witness of lay leaders. |
| The Pastor has these answers for our own parish. |
| Marriage preparation is facilitated by married couples who keep in contact with those preparing for marriage. Advertise diocesan programs relating to marriage. |
| This preparation is done on a diocesan level |
| Yes, but this program should be longer to be able for them have mire time to make sure that this is the wright person. |
| There is no community involvement in preparation nor is there any Parish level programs. Our oldest son who was recently married went to an excellent marriage prep program offered by an outside order. |
| I have not seen Pre Cana offered in our church. It may be done by individual appointments. or not at all. |
| As someone in his 70s I am not directly involved in these efforts and thus do not feel qualified to answer. |
| We have not done much with this at our church. |
| Individually they are good but group wise they need to broaden. We lack the man power to fully accomplish this. |
| Many of the candidates who go through RCIA process do so because they are getting married. RCIA lends itself well to discussions of issues relative to the faith and married life. However, we don't have much in the way of resources that specifically address such issues. Most times we rely on our own experiences as married people in the Church. |
| The community is not sufficiently involved. The disappearance of the banns has meant that the larger community is almost completely unaware of any marriages in the family. More public celebration of this social covenant is needed. |
| This challenge is dealt with through prayer groups and in RCIA. |

Our Teen Catechism and Youth Group programs have as parts of their teachings, the different vocations, Marriage and Consecrated life.

Our priests and deacons work to implement Diocesan programs, as well as being willing to meet one on one with any who have questions or concerns.

??

Marriage preparation is facilitated by married couples who keep in contact with those preparing for marriage.

Very poor. Most couples find them too religious for where they are

i do not know of community involvement in the pre cana program .We are a small parish and I am not sure if we have many weddings Would be nice to see the marriage bans announced in the bulletin It would give people an opportunity to maybe extend good wishes to the couple . I strongly support reaching out to young families but do not know how best to accomplish this

Community is not involved at all. I cannot say exactly how well the pre Cana programs highlight the mission and vocation of marriage. but have learned from parishioners that they could use continued support beyond the PreCana stage. the early years of marriage , when a couple is learning how to live as a married couple, are the ideal time to reinforce the mission and vocation of marriage, with continuing "preparation" or formation sessions.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 43 |

26. How well does your parish prepare, accompany, and support couples in the initial years of family life? What improvements can be made to this support?

| Text Response |
|---|
| Not sure that we specifically reach out to married couples in the initial years of marriage. |
| I have no idea....I never saw any 20 years ago |
| Not sure. |
| Unfortunately, our 70 year old Pastor has little time for this. Those that "ask" get all the support he can muster when he is available, but there really is no outreach. |
| PreCana program exists... Post Cana program (even on a drop in basis) perhaps should accompany couples in the first 5 years. |
| Nothing is done, see previous answers for possible solution--Marriage ministry. |
| I am unaware of any support programs for young couples in my parish (and I have been a member for over 30 years). It is unusual for a parish priest to visit parishioners or even be aware of illnesses or family problems unless brought to his attention.. even then a visit is unlikely. |
| There is no formal parish wide program, but the young couples group provides a place for support. As mentioned previously, it would be nice to see an inter generational marriage group on the parish level. |
| Direct follow-up with "thinking of you" cards, offering support when needed. |
| I stated earlier my parish is family-centered and activities involve all members of the family. Although settings of this type are not focusing on support of "newly-wed" couples in the initial years of family life, they do foster an environment where family life is fully and actively present. Again, parish couples coming together in a forum where support and encouragement accompany candid discussion would be a very effective and positive improvement. |
| We can improve. Perhaps annual events for married couples, especially those married that year - a retreat, or dinner, or some other event that brings them together. |
| Help for couples with young children--something as simple as babysitting during Mass, would help. Moms and Tots mornings, in place in a number of parishes, give young mothers a place to form friendships. Many of their neighbors of the same age are working; it can be lonely to be at home with your young children. |
| Not sure. |
| There is a great need between Baptism and the Child's first outside the home - formal education (K or 1st grade) An "anniversary" greeting of their Baptism. Developmental and spiritual development information should be given to new parents every few months the first 5 years. There was such a program in the 50's in New York - mother to mother. Gather them for a PLAY AND PRAY morning out....Invite and welcome to the church. They are going other places!!! |
| No programs that I am aware of beyond marriage preparation. Ongoing pastoral counseling would be helpful. A series of talks by married couples at six months and a year could be helpful for newly weds. |
| We don't do much in my estimation and I wonder if young families will go to the Church for support. |
| Not much as far as I can tell. |
| Not at all |
| I have assumed that use of the word improvements is seeking support for the bond of marriage and overcoming the problems and I honestly have no idea what is intended by parish preparation (? parish accompaniment (?) or parish support (?) in the initial years.. If this question relates primarily to contraception or birth control, the rules are the same as they were when I got married 56 years ago except that we now have Humanae Vitae which provides very positive additional support for young couples in the initial years of family life. (Thomas J. McKee - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist) |
| I don't see much support for couples in the initial years of family life. |
| Outside of Baptismal preparation classes for first time parents and Family Mass we do not have any formal program. It would be good to have a support group started by young married couples who could share and support each other in these initial years. |
| There is a need for improvement in this area. |
| There is a breakfast for the first Birthday for the child and the parents who also then meet other parents and their children. There are several programs for parents and toddlers that meet during the week, and a music program for the very young children with their parents. |
| The marriage preparation team would know about the current situation related to this question. Raising my family it was an announcement of a diocesan ecumenical program my husband and I attended. It was a program consisting of 6 Saturdays. which resulted in our being more confident and supported in helping our children grow to be men of faith. |
| We do not have many newly married couples in our parish. |
| We do some family parish events like harvest , Christmas party, etc...it should be some program for youth and children or together for family. |
| No known support |
| I am unaware of any such outreach efforts or programs in my parish. |
| I do not know. |
| it is all done through personal contact and we must assign other couples to follow through. |
| Our parish offers pre-Baptismal preparation sessions. More can be done in the early formation years until the child enrolls in faith formation program. |
| Sadly, little formal support is given to couples after they are married. |
| Our pastor personally attends to the couples needs on a one to one basis, visiting and blessing their homes, their pregnancies and the children when they are born explaining the gift of faith and parenthood. |
| We have very few marriages a year in our parish--they may be children of the older couples, and once they marry they do not stay in the area. What we do have for our engaged couples is the message from the book "Couple to Couple League, Marriage is for Keeps" which explains the Church's teachings on marriage and family. |
| I'm not certain that couples in the "initial" years of family life have any idea of the support and love and faith they will need to travel many phases of this journey. From the inside looking out and/or the outside looking in it all probably seems a bit more simple and uniform than it becomes in the day to day of living as a family with so many needs and desires and challenges, sometimes united and sometimes conflicting! Perhaps simply an awareness that you are entering into an "unknown" territory, as no two have ever and will ever live the path on which you are right now embarking. |
| The marriage preparation team would know about the current situation related to this question. |
| not at all. Diocesan wide Young Marrieds support groups. |
| much improvement , I think ,but not sure how to accomplish this . We might look for representation of that age group to be part of parish council who might be in a position to make suggestions . A story my daughter tells me is that she and her husband and five young children were going in to mass one Sunday . She was carrying her infant daughter while her husband was holding the hand of the two year old toddler .our daughter was holding a small bag of cheerios in anticipation of the need to keep the toddler , a very lively little boy , quiet during mass . As they went in they were challenged by the priest (not the pastor)who told them they could not bring in the cheerios .She said that he |

embarrassed them when he implied that they would "leave a mess " although she assured him that she would not do that .

see above--ongoing formation for young married couples. More personal approach in the PreCana sessions, where couples might remain in touch and "accompany" each other , using what they learn in the marriage preparation and ongoing formation . Older (but not too much older!) couples as mentors.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 39 |

27. What improvements can be made to the preparation and support couples receive through pastoral care in the initial years of family life?

| Text Response |
|---|
| Not sure. |
| Pair up young couples with couples who have been married for 30 or 40 years - experienced couples, not part of either family |
| Offer a "mentor couple" for the first years to help them through. |
| A Post Cana program... |
| see above |
| Maybe a meeting with the couple after 6 months to see how they are doing. |
| Because no pastoral care is directed on behalf of these couples currently, I would say any attention paid to this issue would be an improvement. The only ways in which families with children become acquainted are through CCD and the Women's Group. This organization runs fundraisers for the parish pre-school and couples social events for parishioners. |
| See the previous question. |
| Need to keep in touch with them. |
| One improvement to the preparation and support couples receive through pastoral care in the initial years of family life is assigning a married couple as mentors or coaches from within the same parish. Not only would this be more convenient in scheduling, it will encourage community involvement and parish fellowship. The role of mentors or coaches may follow a catechetical format similar to an RCIA Coordinator's role in welcoming people into the Catholic Church. Of course, a priest or the pastor of the parish could conduct or facilitate preparation and support sessions involving married couples from the parish wanting to provide pastoral care to couples just beginning their initial years of family life. |
| Natural family planning |
| See above. |
| Maybe start a newly married ministry or support group. |
| Introduce and welcome newly married couples to the parish family. Invite newly married to a "coffee" every few months so they get to know each other. Inform them of upcoming parish events (Social Concens Committee) Available service..... |
| Please see comments above. This is a repetitive question. |
| See above. |
| Partner with other parishes or hire a family minister who has been trained to donthis |
| Church programs, family programs,.....a help center would be wonderful. |
| Since we currently do not have this support in place we would be starting with the basics |
| The pastoral staff can communicated clearly that they are available to couples at any time. |
| Perhaps holding more get-togethers with other young families with a meal/ to have sharing time with each other. Time of day/night and space needs for all that share in the events held in the church also need to be met. Too many programs for just one type/one age can hinder the other programs getting their time to meet/ greet each other. Some churches are limited in the space and need to meet perhaps in a larger church in the area- |
| There were a group of young mother's who held a contemplative prayer meeting once a week. I attended as an older person and it was good to see them grow in faith and therefore fortify their families. Speaking with our pastor today I found out one of the mother's sons, just graduated from college, will be a youth group director for the middle school children. In the past I recognized a strong social concern Director is required. When money was an issue, it was the first area to be considered obsolete. |
| Lots! Just helping with the basics about how to be good temporal parents with a little spirituality and some tools/tricke of the trade to introduce their spouse and their children to Christ. |
| be aware of the pain of infertility. |
| I believe I have already addressed this question in answer to other questions. |
| The church needs to speak about the fragile aspect of marriage. 2 people coming together are going to have trouble. Stand strong and listen to each other. Maybe, we can have some sessions teaching people how to listen with intent. |
| More opportunities to come together. |
| Same as above response. |
| Pastors can provide on an ongoing basis materials in print and media format that deal with issues and concerns of family life. Likewise, programs where guest speakers on family life are made available to families. Pastors and religious can provide a comprehensive list of resources where families can find support and help. |
| The most important aspect to teach young parents how to raise their children in the faith. |
| Communication via bringing professionals in to assist our clergy--present workshops where these couples can share their concerns |
| Encouragement and understanding of whatever challenges may occur or present among this group? Sharing with others at similar life-stages and crossroads can only help. |
| There were a group of young mother's who held a contemplative prayer meeting once a week. I attended as an older person and it was good to see them grow in faith and therefore fortify their families. Speaking with our pastor today I found out one of the mother's sons, just graduated from college, will be a youth group director for the middle school children. In the past a strong social concern Director part of the staff.. When money was an issue, it was the first area to be considered obsolete. |
| See above |
| Even getting a friendly greeting from the priest after Sunday mass would be helpful . A few years back , a young family of a mom and dad and two little girls would be in the pew in front of us that 8AM mass . WE saw this couple very Sunday from when they first got married and then through the pregnancies and it was just nice to see them there faithfully every Sunday As little kids go these were mild mannered well behaved little girls . The little one was a little fidgety and the mom would have little books etc for her . I found their presence to be uplifting rather than a distraction . They were not at mass for a few consecutive Sundays and when I ran into the dad at a local store I mentioned that I had missed him and asked if they were Ok because they had not been at mass in recent weeks . He listened as I said how precious his little girls were . He thanked me and said that the reason they had not been to church was because of "dirty looks " they got from an older couple one of whom was a lector . I told him how sorry I was to hear that and assured him that while we sat much closer to them than the other couple , we did not find them a distraction but rather gave us hope for the church . I told him that no one had the right to make him or his family unwelcome and that we certainly hoped to see him and his beautiful family at church . Thye came back the following Sunday . Thye now have three children , an energetic little brother for the beautiful little girls |
| I do not know what the current pastoral care situation is. |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 36 |

28. How does your local church community engage in removing the social and economic factors which can lead to wounded families, such as divorced, remarried, and single-parent families?

| Text Response |
|--|
| Our parish offered Financial Peace University to help families better handle their money along Christian values. This was met with great success and was offered a second time. |
| Nothing that I have seen or witnessed |
| We support food drives and clothing drives throughout the year, but I don't think we do enough to invite them in. |
| Unfortunately, our 70 year old Pastor, who is the only priest at our Church, has little time for this. Those that "ask" get all the support he can muster when he is available, but there is no outreach. |
| By trying to not contribute to the stigma related to these. |
| We provide food for food pantries. we do not do non-economic activities for divorced, remarried, and single-parent families? |
| Nothing I know off |
| If the question is, "is there an officially sanctioned program that helps families who are stressed by marital problems, job loss, financial issues, etc.", the answer is no. At one point, probably in the 90's, there was a parish men's group that helped those laid off to find new jobs. This is an issue that has been incredibly well addressed by Protestant mega churches... there are committees to feed the poor, the sick, the new mothers, others to find gainful employment, more to fight addiction... the list is endless. They are a community unto themselves, and yet reach out in love to all that arrive at their doorsteps. We could learn a lot from their example. |
| There is no formal program tag I am aware of. Thus would fit in with the purview of a PEARL however. |
| Be willing to listen, no pre-judgement. |
| I wish I could list a myriad of examples on how my local church community is engaging in removing factors which can lead to wounded families. I cannot say we are ardently engaged in removing them; however, I can say we are not ignoring them. Individuals of divorced families are finding consoling compassion from members of the parish family. Single-parent families are welcome and attending Mass and thankfully bringing their children to religious education and the Sacraments of Initiation. Our pastor continually inspires the community to reach out to wounded families in any manner we can offer, doing so mercifully and without judgment. I am certain any member of the parish in economic distress is receiving confidential assistance if means allow; our parish has always provided for those in need. Our pastor always makes himself available to anyone requiring pastoral care. |
| From what I have seen, our Parish, school and RE community are accepting and welcoming to all. |
| ALL PEOPLE MUST BE WELCOMED AND THEY ARE WELCOMED IN MY PARISH |
| Nothing that I am aware of. |
| . |
| I don't believe that they do |
| Social and economic factors? Are you speaking of wealth redistribution as an obligation of the local parish?? |
| It doesnt |
| It seems to me that the instant question may be restated as follows: How does your local church community engage in removing social or economic factors that led or lead to the impairment of the marriage? I knew that we would eventually get to this question. As of today, the answer is clear. If there is a valid prior marriage, any attempted second marriage is DOA (unless the Pauline Privilege comes into play. I only know of two occasions where that happened - Bill Veeck the new owner of the Cleveland Indians in 1946 and Senator Joe McCarthy in the early 1950s. The Synod of the Bishops in Rome last year brought to light a common interest/goal shared by Cardinals Kasper, Lehman, Marx and Danneels and they were dedicated to the election of Francis to be our Holy Father even before the beginning of the Conclave. If the three Germans and the Dutchman prevail at the second session of the Synod of Rome, it could well be that under certain circumstances a catholic person who has been married, then divorced and remarried will be permitted to receive the Blessed Sacrament. (Thomas J. McKee - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist) |
| Our church has food, clothing and gift drives. I am hoping much more can be done. |
| We have many outreach programs to help economically. Socially they are fully accepted into parish life. |
| There are many programs that provide assistance in food, housing, job search, mental health, and many other areas of need. |
| There is a group of divorced people that meet on a given night. The Pastor and Associate Pastor and the Licensed Counselor are available for consultations and spiritual help for the wounded, divided families. |
| in the beginning of the survey I have answered this question |
| Is not judgemental but does not specifically address any of these needs to my knowledge |
| I don understand this question |
| As I said, the members of our parish community are very insular. There is no outreach to such couples/families that I know of, although our bulletin does occasionally mention support-group programs available off campus. |
| We do not do this so well. |
| Welcome them with open arms and walk with them through the pain. |
| Not sure |
| I don't know. These things tend to be private. I am not sure that publicity is warranted for such situations. Quiet, informal acceptance may be just the right thing. |
| The Church, including all parishes, must be a powerful and predictable voice for Charity and Justice. At the parish level priests and religious speak out in their homilies and private conversations with the faithful about the dangers of greed and instead they urge the faithful to practice charity and to seek social justice where and when it is needed. |
| We have a close Community. We are family and we help each other Socially and economically. |
| Help is given through counseling and many generous parishioners who offer financial assistance. |
| ?? |
| none |
| I think we can just be welcoming without compromising on the teaching of the church . I have met several divorced women with children who will not consider getting an annulment because they believe it would impact the legitimacy of the children . They do not believe me when I tell them otherwise . We need to be educated on the annulment process . There is also the myth that the church charges "thousands of dollars " While we do not want to encourage the dissolution of marriage I think we should be educated in the truth about annulment |
| We do not have a process for this. |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 38 |

29. While avoiding any unjust discrimination, how can the Christian community give pastoral attention to families with persons with homosexual tendencies, in light of the Gospel?

Text Response

By treating them like everybody else. By welcoming them. By not judging them.

Respect them as creations of God; accord them their rightful dignity. Love them. Support them as individuals, not endorsing homosexual lifestyles, but accepting them as people worthy of respect, love, and dignity.

Invite them in and make them feel welcome.

Follow Pope Francis's words, "who am I to judge". Stop priests from saying things like, "it is the parents fault that a child has homosexual tendencies".

Ask gay persons what their needs are and truly address them. Let us not kid ourselves: Coming out is an issue in itself in the family, school, church...

See above answers.

God created us all..... accept all... don't judge.

This is the "elephant in the room" question. Catholic social scientists have determined by surveys of priests, both diocesan and religious order, that the percentage of homosexual priests in the United States is anywhere from 50-60%. This being said, it makes no sense that the Church chooses to marginalize the LGBT community, historically calling them "disordered." The percentage of persons in this community has been estimated at 12% of the general population. Can we as a Church afford to so blatantly dismiss them from the Body of Christ because they have been born this way? We know that homosexuals bring gifts to the life of the Church as priests and pastors. It is imperative that their brothers and sisters be welcomed as well. And to the question, EVERYONE is either related to, knows, or loves a gay person. I believe that the Church must give itself "pastoral attention" to get beyond its focus on gender issues, and to see all people as made in the image and likeness of God. Jesus certainly would.

See preceding question.

God loves all, He does not create evil.

The Christian community can give pastoral attention to families with persons with homosexual tendencies by welcoming them and teaching the truth in love. In fellowship with other organizations like the Courage Apostolate, local parishes can join together in offering a spiritual support system that would assist men and women with same sex attraction in living chaste lives. Our brothers and sisters with homosexual tendencies will "gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the Church's teachings, especially in the area of chastity." The Courage Apostolate "extends the Church's invitation to a life of peace and grace." The Christian community should join with Courage in their outreach, finding "the steps necessary to living a fully Christian life in communion with God and others."

Offer the Courage apostolate and love the person and not the sin--we are all sinners.

We need to reclaim the narrative from the secular world. The Catholic Church's nuanced, welcoming, beautiful teaching on how to care for and approach those with homosexual tendencies is reduced by the media to a "bigoted, hate-filled" teaching that discriminates. We, as church, must make what we believe more clearly known.

Encourage, which is active in this diocese, is a wonderful resource for families.

Just accept them and welcome them! We have had gay parents in our school and we treated them like the other parents we had, with respect, empathy, love and kindness. Be open and understanding.

Many families have a member with "Homosexual tendencies" and they are not loved any less. I don't think God loves them any less. We have a "couple" that live on our street and they have two small children. They are a loving "family" and welcomed in school and community....They must be welcomed in our faith community. Do we understand it... Matthew 19:10-12, Gen 19:1-29 (what about vs 8 and daughters????) Rom 1:24-27 1 cor 6:9 1 Tim 1:10 and the words of the CTECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, #2357....(LOVING????), 2358, 2359 (BETTER)

If God made them homosexual than who are we to treat them as different than any other of God's creatures. Homosexuality is a normal condition of life and should be treated that way.

same answer

By speaking the truth about the love of Christ for such persons but not such tendencies.

In the same way we reach out to anyone else

This is a very difficult question to consider and to answer. Many years ago I was a seminarian studying for the priesthood at the oldest U.S. seminary, St. Mary's Baltimore. Several years later I was standing on the deck of the S.S. Constitution greeting about 35 other students who had chosen the same ship as the means of transport to Bella Roma and the Pontifical Gregorian University and to Vatican City and the Pontifical North American College. I left the seminary in third theology with two bleeding ulcers and no awareness of any "gay problem". 25 years later I received a call from one of the guys that I had met on the way to Rome who was now a bishop and who advised me that he was calling me because he was interested in the situation at Old St. Mary's Seminary and whether we had a "gay problem". I will never forget the change in his voice. It was almost casual like a recollection of the previous night's ballgame and then the most dramatic tonal change. I cannot describe it, I cannot imitate it. All I can do is say that my initial reaction was gratitude to God for giving us bishops like the one with whom I was speaking and that subsequent years have only increased my gratitude. His statement was brief but I will never forget it: "TOM, WHAT KIND OF AN ANIMAL WOULD DO THAT TO A LITTLE CHILD? GOD'S CHILD!" Several final thoughts on my experience or lack of same with respect to same sex attraction: At about the same time as I was assuring the bishop that we had no gay problem at Old St. Mary's, it was trying to live down the nickname of being called "The Pink Palace." In 1956 I traveled for an entire summer with a seminary friend of mine throughout Europe. I found out in 1992 that he as gay in 1956 and at that time was unsuccessfully trying to proposition another classmate of mine and I never suspected a thing. Given my present age and the fact that I do not have any impressionable aged children, and in view of the fact that Father Harvey, the founder of Courage was Nancy's professor at Dunbarton College and I knew and liked him, I would contact Father Paul Check, Father Harvey's successor, or Father Tom Scalia, Father Check's assistant and would do as they recommended. There is also a new priest listed in the appointments this week Change the scene slightly by putting my grandson (age 12 or 16) as a summer visitor at my home. I will still work with Check but the gay guy could never get within 10 miles of my home. In 1956 I traveled for an entire summer with a good friend of mine through Europe. I found out in 1992 that the gay guy was unsuccessfully trying to proposition another classmate of mine and I never suspected a problem. I am not going to leave a known gay person alone near a grandchild. (Thomas J. McKee - The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist)

Everyone is a child of God. Everyone.

The Church's teaching on homosexuality has to be shared with these families as well as the groups that are available in the Church to help- such as COURAGE..Then they can begin to have discussions and offer help to that family member.

We must teach that while we may not love the fact that some of our brothers and sisters are in sinful relationships, we must continue to love them as brothers and sisters in Christ. We must not judge them; it is God's work to judge, not ours. The Courage program should be offered as a formation tool.

I believe there is a Diocesan program Courage and Pastors are already trained how to minister to anyone seeking information and healing conversation without diminishing the truth of the Gospels spoken in God's Wisdom and Love.

Love your neighbor as yourself preached not using words if they are Christ oriented what is the problem. in the past the church I belonged to had a homosexual organist. He was accepted by the parishioners. He was told to leave not because of his orientation. Somebody knew somebody.

Welcom them,

We need to try to get them from live in this kind of sin and try to help them and show the different better life with opposite person like man and woman and etc

Welcome them with open arms. They are also God's children

PREFACE: My youngest daughter is a homosexual who is engaged to be married in 2016 in a civil ceremony, so this is a critical issue for me. I will answer this question from my perspective as the father of a gay child. **MY FRIENDSHIPS:** A Catholic friend recently told me to support my daughter, regardless of what the faith teaches. Nevertheless, I have received great support and comfort from those I pray with regularly because they know how difficult it is for me to hold onto my beliefs at this time. **PERSONAL PRAYER/TRUST IN GOD:** I have learned to surrender this challenge to God every day and to trust that He will guide me at every stage of my relationship with my daughter. Several years ago, when she told me about her sexual orientation, I replied (after pleading for God's answer), "You're an adult now and you must make your own decisions about what's right and wrong. I have all I can do to figure out how I should live. I no longer have any right to tell you how to live." Note that I didn't endorse her behavior. If she interprets my silence as approval, that's her problem. I simply gave her the same freedom that the prodigal son received from his father because I knew that if I expressed opposition (a.) I would be judging her, which Jesus forbids; (b.) I would be attempting to prevent her from exercising her free will, which God forbids; and (c.) I would be throwing my pearls at the feet of pigs, which Jesus forbids, because I already know she would ignore me and harbor lifetime resentment against me. **MAINTAINING PERSONAL CONTACT:** I have tried to discern how to love my daughter and her partner because God insists that I do so. We've gone out for dinner and ice cream on many occasions. I simply accept the reality of their relationship without imparting my beliefs because the opening isn't there, in part because neither of them professes any belief in God. **PROBLEMS CREATED BY THE CHURCH:** The Church's teaching on homosexuality is, technically, accurate but the way it is conveyed, and the treatment of gays that it inspires, is flagrant, appalling and scandalous. To call homosexual behavior "disordered" while refusing to use the same scathing language to emphatically reject rape, sexual slavery and other evils done by heterosexuals, implies that homosexuality is worse than heterosexual sins. Even today the Church persists in this hypocritical double standard by publicly opposing equal legal rights and protections for gays, which implies that the Church tacitly endorses rights and protections for those in abusive "straight" relationships. Even the question posed above is outrageous. All discrimination is unjust, but the question implies that some discrimination is OK. Gays rightly accuse the Church of hypocrisy, and the general public agrees as it embraces gays and rejects Church teaching for the same reason. The Church's double standard is not just driving away gays; it's driving away "straights." Hypocrisy is the one sin Jesus spent the most time condemning among the Jewish elders. He addresses it bluntly in MT 7 and LK 6, "Why offer to help remove the speck from the other man's eye when you have a log in your own? Remove the log from your own eye first ..." **THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE:** To remove that log, the Church must admit that it has sinned against gays by minimizing the sins of heterosexuals in comparison to those of gays, and then repent – undergo a thorough change of thinking that leads to a complete change of conduct. How complete? The institutional Church must spare no effort to criticize heterosexual sin as harshly as it now criticizes homosexual sin. The church must emphatically teach that all sexual desire, "straight" as well as gay, must be surrendered to God, the author of our sexuality, because everyone's sexuality is in some way disordered. How can it be otherwise when our media is awash in nudity, malls are awash in cleavage-revealing clothing, pre-teen girls transmit nude "selfies," porn is the fastest growing segment of the Internet, and retailers hang Valentine's Day signs saying "Live for Lust?" The Church must scream, "Stop!" Ironically, straights and gays are all alike because we all need God to reorder our distorted sexuality. But unless the Church confessionally, humbly, seriously, unequivocally and repeatedly demands this of heterosexual society – individual, parish and corporate – regardless of the backlash, and even to the point of de-emphasizing its focus on homosexuality for a time, there is no way that gays will surrender their sexuality (or the rest of their lives) to God.

That part of the Gospel needs to be reviewed and may need to be eliminated. Times have changed and certain aspects of life need to change too. There was never the electronic age that there is now, if we do not change with the times, the young people will not follow the Catholic faith.

Continue to welcome them. Repeat the St. John Paul II quote "Love the person, not the act". Make available the Courage program. Feed them spiritually.

Don't think a single parish can do this. Should be addressed on a Diocesan basis.

Since the Gospel has almost nothing to say on this subject, about which understanding and knowledge are in considerable flux, we should be cautious about anything resembling a condemnation.

I'm not really sure I am qualified to answer this question fully and correctly. However, the last prepositional phrase, "in light of the Gospel", suggests that the answer can be found in the Gospel itself. The Church should not only preach the Gospel but the Church should also live it!

Teach that God loves them but not their actions, explaining that God created man and woman to complement each other. Faith is the Key.

This is a highly sensitive area, and our pastor, Fr. Don, explains it rarely comes up in our parish. If it does, it is usually within the context of the sacrament of Penance. Rarely do parents want to discuss the issue of a homosexual child or relative, and how to handle it from a Christian point of view. Homosexual Catholics are offered the usual means of sanctification, and can be referred to the Courage Ministry. There is also the Confraternity of Angelic Warfare, under the auspices of the Dominican Order. This group exists to nurture the virtue of chastity. Fr. Don is authorized to induct members who wear the medal of St. Thomas Aquinas and pray the Fifteen Prayers for Chastity each day.-- a powerful aid for not only homosexual persons, but those wishing to live a chaste

be loving

Here again we need to be more educated. My daughter in law (a non church goer) was very indignant when she reported to me that her friend told her that her child was told by a CCD teacher that being homosexual is a sin and implied that homosexuals would go to hell. I tried to explain that that is not the teaching of the church. The homosexual lifestyle and not the homosexual that is the problem. I also tried to point out that the church does not sanction the union of unmarried heterosexual couples. Maybe some booklets on the subject could be made available so that we could be enlightened

Love the sinner, not the sin. This message is not made loud and clear enough. The Church does welcome everyone, at the same time it cannot condone sin. The struggle against homosexual tendencies is no different than the struggle against many other kinds of temptation, some potentially serious and leading to mortal sin, that many other Catholics have to deal with. We must learn to offer these temptations resisted as a sacrifice to God, and it becomes a beautiful gift to offer to Him. The better the Church community understands Divine Mercy, the better the community can give this support to families, and individuals.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 40 |

30. How can parents and the Christian family be made more aware of the duty transmitting the faith with the support and solidarity of the Christian community?

| Text Response |
|--|
| Not sure. |
| Interesting question! My parish hasn't figured it out yet...but we are talking about it |
| Witness from the pulpit. |
| Offer free materials and people would "bite" and once they get a taste they would want more. |
| See example by living their life as a loving Christian. |
| I guess through sermons, and more small group sessions on related topics |
| Many parishes do not offer adult education in the Faith, unless it is part of an adult conversion program. In the Diocesan Synod, the issue of family time constraints came up often, and was identified as the primary cause for the inability of parents to make time for adult catechesis. I wonder if anyone has asked parents of CCD students if there is interest and time for such a program. I do know that the parish Bible Study program is well-attended by retirees and those with free time. Also, I have heard of successful programs in parishes that offer coffee hour after a Sunday Mass where a leader addresses a specific issue of interest to families. This allows for adults to get to know their neighbors and to feel more a part of the parish community. |
| Better catechesis and homilies |
| We have a monthly piece in our bulletin in preparation for the World Meeting of Families to try to address the issue. |
| The best method to making parents and the Christian family more aware of the duty transmitting the faith with the support and solidarity of the Christian community is education. One may think it a radical idea, but maybe religious education programs on preparing the youth to receive the Sacraments of Initiation should follow the path of our educational system, K-12. The church should consider the age of receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation to be 17 or 18. In addition, the church should make adult education programs available at the parish level to help further prepare and encourage us in our Christian duty to evangelize. |
| Regular preaching on this subject, programs to support the whole family in catechesis. |
| They need to be encouraged to be disciples and spread the Good News. People need to have somewhere to go for help and support. There is nothing like the support of a true Faith in God to comfort the heart. |
| FAITH IS CAUGHT, NOT TAUGHT!!! All by example....through school and religious ed classes and programs DUTY??? Gift.....Joy of sharing.... |
| I believe that the strongest missionary practice is how we live our lives. Catholics need to be known as people of love and caring for others, of people who forgive and accept. Sometimes it seems as if the church expects the laity to behave in a manner that is different than what the Church projects. |
| same answer |
| Please. How many times can the same question be asked. |
| They must be continually educated - offered scripture study, good homilies and education so they understand both what and how to transmit their faith. |
| This can be done on many levels, starting with catechesis available to all and not cost prohibitive. |
| Through supporting Religious Ed. programs and following through at home with prayer, Mass attendance. Reaching out to other families to bring them back to the faith |
| We can not "transmit" what we do not possess. What I mean is that we must teach that our faith formation is ongoing, not just ending with Confirmation in the eighth grade. Our families must be invited to a new level of formation that is a life long enrollment in the school of prayer. |
| Before the married couple has children, they need to commit their lives of faith in God and then the duty of transmitting the faith is automatically taught to each child. |
| our 9:00 am Children's Mass seems to be addressing this issue. |
| Engagement and walk in their shoes. This is not some theoretical exercise. Needs to be welcoming, supporting and practical. |
| Invite them to come to Church |
| To call transmission of the faith a "duty" is to totally misunderstand this activity. It is meant to be joyful, the response to a deep yearning to reveal to others the loving God we know and love. The use of the word "duty" reveals that the Church is more interested in legalistic solutions than human solutions. Transmitting the faith as a duty strips it of all meaning. As Paul says in 1 Cor 13:1-3, no matter what I do, if it's not motivated by love, it's a total waste of time for me. |
| we need to keep in mind the gift of life and love all. |
| Reeducate them on church doctrine to clear up many misperceptions. |
| Show us how to evangelize! An Episcopal church in a neighboring town has a weekly community supper during Lent. Anyone is invited and it is free. I assume it's a way to serve the community and build fellowship. Let's take some lessons from our Protestant sisters and brothers on evangelization and fellowship building. |
| I do not want to sound cynical but the wording of this question assumes that there is support and solidarity within the Christian community. I sometimes wonder about that, meaning I question the validity that there is such a thing as solidarity in the Christian Community. I think that this question needs to be reworded. Then again I may have misread the question. |
| Ongoing adult religious education is essential. How to provide it is challenging. |
| Our Pastor visits our families to transmit and share faith and the teachings of the church. The parish invites members of the community to share their experiences for example: A Doctor came to show a group of young girls their reproductive organs and how they function and how under the teachings of the church the contraceptives affect their bodies. |
| With our clergy presenting the Church's position in their homilies, and also having programs for the parish community, as well as Diocesan community at large. These should be offered to all age groups explaining their importance to them at every level. |
| Through preaching at Family Masses |
| Through education . I think the pre baptism class might be a good start . While I know that it is important to explain the sacrament to the young parents I think equally important is to stress the responsibility of giving their children something greater than themselves by having them grow up knowing God and seeing that God is an important part of the life of their family . I like to share stories of my journey to young people and how I look back now and see God's hand in my life . We were a family of eleven children growing up in a farm in the west of Ireland with no electricity or running water (oldest born in 1933 and the youngest 1948) we emigrated to England and the USA when we were in our teens . One brother died at age 41 but the other 10 were alive and well up until three years ago and all ten of us with our original spouses all twenty of us at mass every Sunday and some of us daily communicants as well as doing weekly adoration . Some of us active in our parishes as lectors eucharistic ministers etc. attributed that to the fact that when we were growing up we said the family rosary at night. Shortly before he died my father said to me one day during a very casual conversation " I never close my eyes at night without praying for every one belonging to me " I knew then what had kept me safe all those years . I knew that my mother prayed and lit candles for us but when my dad revealed that to me in his quiet way I felt the power of his love and prayer. WE older people have an obligation to the next generation to share our story and tell them what works and what does not |
| This needs to begin with a love of God, and a love for the beauty and traditions of the Church, and an understanding of what Jesus' sacrifice means to our lives. So we are back to catechesis/ faith formation , as a continuous process. Solid faith formation will grow the Christian community where families would desire to transmit the Faith, because we want to share what we love with those we love. |

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------|-------|
| Total Responses | 35 |