

Tips for Connecting with Families

1. A caution before you begin to connect with families: It is tempting to hear about a great idea that worked in one location and apply it to your location. However, each church and neighbourhood is different and requires the hard work of getting to know people, the strengths and needs first.
2. Prayer is foundational to any missional efforts to connect with families in the neighbourhood. Prayer is part of every step. Invite others to pray with and for you in your efforts.
3. Pay attention to demographics. Demographics can give you a quick picture of who is in your neighbourhood. In addition, demographics can help with ministry and grant proposals.
4. Ask where children, youth, and families hang out. Think about the schools, parks and community centres. Perhaps ask what is missing from those places.
5. Start where you are. Think about the strengths, passions and gifts that God has given you. Perhaps hold a street party. Or invite parents for coffee after the morning school drop off.
6. Build relationships. This part is essential but often takes a long time. Demonstrate that you care about the person (regardless of whether they step into the doors of the church!). Build trust.
7. Then experiment! Try something that the church hasn't done before. Perhaps this is Messy Church or a parent and tot drop in. See who comes and continue to build relationships.
8. Find ways to introduce God into your program or your conversations. Perhaps tell a story in the play group or talk about what draws you to the church with families that come out to your experiment. Perhaps saying grace at the beginning of every meal together.
9. Build opportunities to worship. Find creative ways that families can worship. Through the relationships that you have built, invite people to worship.
10. Celebrate what God is doing in your midst.

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