

V. Family Communities

A. Introduction

B. What is a Family Community?

A Family Community is a Community which shepherds both young people and parents

C. Why have Family Communities?

- Family Emphasis is Biblical - See Appendix

- Our 2020 Vision
 - We have established Our Vision as sowing Biblical victory to and through families.
 - Churches say family is their highest priority

Multiple Generations

Family Communities enable families or portions of families, and those seeking a multi-generational experience, to spend more time together and have a deeply worthwhile experience.

D. A Family Community may include:

- Entire or partial family units
- Wide or limited age range of young people
- Nuclear or non-nuclear family representatives

E. Who might want to be in a family Community?

- Parents who want to shepherd their children in a Community setting
- Families that like to stay together
- Individuals who want an intergenerational experience (e.g., Titus 2)

F. What is the major component of a Family Community?

The Community chooses its major component

- Connection
- Transformation
- Worship
- Outreach
- Service

G. What is the commonality of a Family Community?

- First, each Family Community has the purpose of gathering families and multiple generations
- Second, most Family Communities will have a second draw/purpose

H. Do all ages stay together in Family Communities?

Preference - depends on the preferences and ages in the particular Community

Major Component - depends also on the major component:

- Connection.

- Transformation.

- Worship.

- Outreach.

- Service.

I. Transforming Young People

1. TMA (Teaching, Memorization, Activity)

- Teaching

They come to understand a Biblical truth

- Memorization

They write God's Word on the tablet of their heart

- Activity

They reflect, reconsider, and plan to apply the Biblical truth.

2. Together or separate

It's fine to: 1) Keep everyone all together, 2) break into two groups for the transformation time, 3) alternate.

3. Together

Some people believe in running an adult transformation time with young people in the room and making few accommodations for the young people. Family-integrated churches subscribe to that model.

A Family Community could choose instead to build their transformation time around:

- Less content
- More application
- Less hearing
- More sight and touch

Many adults feel that this four-fold approach is just as helpful for the adults as the young people, because the result is more transformation. These four ingredients have the additional benefit of leveling the playing field for adults and young people.

- puppet show or skit
- watercolor painting, clay sculpture, or drawing
- nature walk through a local park
- scrapbook
- compose a song, or a poem

4. Curriculum when together

- All young people - "The Family God Uses" by Blackaby(Lifeway) - holding family devotions with several families together
- All young people - "Lessons for Families" by Saddleback (CTWOS) - designed for Family Communities in which parents and young people are to be transformed together using the same objectives and verses.
- Elementary - "Discover 4 Yourself" by Harvest House - like adult small group, but designed for children

- Elementary - "Big Book of Discipleship Basics" - Community sessions for upper elementary age young people, including transformation and fun activities. Reproducible.

5. Separate

There are at least five good ways to staff a separate transformation time for young people:

- Parents take turns leading the TMA time for their young people, or
- Parents in two Family Communities trade off leading the TMA time for each other's Family Communities, or
- Older young people are formally trained to lead TMA times for the younger, often with help by parents or a youth intern; the older young people may or may not be paid to do this, or
- Bible college students are paid as youth interns to lead a TMA time for the young people, or
- Adults who are committed to ministry to young people lead the TMA time for the young people.

6. Curriculum when separate

- All of the above curriculum
- All curriculum for young people, esp. curriculum that matches what the adults are doing though it assumes a classroom setting rather than a home, so is 1) less personal, 2) less discussion-oriented, 3) spends less time discussing relationships within the family, 4) gives much less time to connection, worship, outreach and service, and 5) is not designed to be used with a wide range of ages.
- For all young people - "Take It Home" (Gospel Light). Designed for churches that want to become churches that minister to families, heavy on "activities" for each grade, CD to print out handouts.

- Elementary - "Bible Study Guide for All Ages" (www.BibleStudyGuide.com) Parents to do serious group factual Bible teaching in the home going through the Bible

7. Ways to structure a separate TMA time for young people¹

- Two rooms. Consider meeting in a home that has two separate rooms. A yard or pool or playground doesn't hurt.
- Two teachers. Have two teachers; both of them must be CPP-approved.
- Not a classroom. Avoid a "School" feel. For example, young people might sit on cushions and face each other in a circle. Consider bringing props or decorations to make the room fun and exciting.
- Ground rules. Develop a list of ground rules (core values and practices) and have each young person commit to follow them at all times.
- Friendliness. Allow friends to stay together, but encourage the young people to interact with everyone at each meeting.

J. Every Family Community can stay together for most components

No matter what its major component may be, any Family Community may choose to keep adults and young people together for:

¹ Five of these ideas are from Reid Smith, "The Childcare Conundrum" in *Family Friendly Small Groups* (SmallGroups.com, 2007), pages 11-12.

- Connection - e.g., doing icebreakers together, especially using things like building blocks that all can do; sharing appropriate personal concerns
- Transformation - e.g., teaching younger people together, especially through stories, and especially by choosing age-appropriate topics
- Worship - e.g., having each generation teach songs they like to the other
- Outreach - e.g., delivering fliers in the neighborhood in pairs of mixed generations
- Service - e.g., babysitting together, litter-picking together

All five components may be achieved powerfully through:

- A meal together
- A retreat together
- Camping together
- A weekend mission project together

K. What can multiple Family Communities do?

- Grand Prix
- Bible quizzing
- Harvest Party

L. What curriculum is available for multiple generations?

- Civic organizations, e.g., Camp Fire USA Community Family Clubs curriculum for families
- Homeschool publishers, e.g., Homeschooling Bible Curriculum "Foundations" for families
- In-home child care educators, e.g., National Association for family child care providers

- Churches, e.g., Saddleback Church "Lessons for Families" for its family groups
- Mainstream publishers, e.g., Group Publishing for wide age range church programs