



Celebrating Family: Blessed, Broken, Living Love

*An initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of
England and Wales*



Celebrating Family - Social Context

The family is the place where social values, justice and peace are first formed.

It is within family that responsible and healthy human beings, capable of caring holistically for self, others and the whole of creation, are first formed.

The preventative care of family relationships, through which love, faith, values, self-worth and well-being are first communicated, lies at the heart of social action on behalf of families.

Family ministry is theologically grounded within the Catholic Church in the leadership mission and ministry of ordinary lay women and men



Why?

In 2004 families were invited to share their joys, sorrows and hopes of life at home, in the world around them and within the church

15,000 families took part. Findings are published in *Not Easy But Full of Meaning*



What did we hear?

We heard a lot about

- the busyness of family life
- pressures of juggling responsibilities
- stress, guilt and frustration
- feelings of not being accepted or valued
- loneliness

But even more about

- the huge joy of simply being together as a family



What did we hear?

We heard a lot about

- the significance of faith in God and prayer in sustaining families
- the particular significance of gospel values such as forgiveness, mercy and self-sacrifice
- appreciation for the Church's enduring adherence to the gospel and values of Jesus Christ



What did we hear?

But we also heard that

- the faith life of families is often an area where conflict is experienced
- the practices of the Church seem to exacerbate rather than help this conflict
- families rarely feel support for their family life from the Church but 'relationships with fellow parishioners' are more significant than the Mass or Sacraments

We heard very little from families about the holiness of their ordinary lives





Supports parishes to become more friendly, welcoming and family-sensitive



- Ministry of Welcome training resource
- Everybody's Welcome parish toolkit
- What is Life Like? If you or someone in your family is bereaved, mentally ill, divorced and remarried, disabled, gay, another Christian denomination or doesn't share your faith in God?
- Family Groups



Raises awareness of family and marital spirituality



Home is a Holy Place Resource Pack – multimedia, highly adaptable pack, with three reflection points

- God is present in shared family love
- Family's relational life echoes Trinitarian life
- God is always everywhere; sacramentality of the home



Clarifies roles of homes, schools, parishes, aiming to support parents and grandparents



- *Partners in a Shared Task* pilot - a home-school-parish conversation
- Grand-parenting resources in conjunction with Catholic Grandparents Association
- Developing a toddler group strategy
- Acknowledging parenting and relationship support as critical form of family catechesis



Faith in the Future

The Bishops' fundraising has enabled 11 dioceses to develop



➤ Support for confident parenting (Cardiff, Birmingham, East Anglia, Hallam, Leeds)

➤ Coordinated family ministry (Hexham & Newcastle, Plymouth, Portsmouth)

➤ Celebrating Family themed work (Middlesbrough, Shrewsbury, Wrexham)

12 diocesan leaders sponsored on MA Leadership for Family Ministry and Faith Formation programme in Chicago





Website links

www.listening2004.org.uk

www.celebratingfamily.org.uk

www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk

www.homeisaholyplace.org.uk

www.passingonthefaith.org.uk

www.catholicmarriage.org.uk

(2010 Catholic Marriage Preparation Survey)

www.cedar.uk.net (in development)

Catholics Experiencing Domestic Abuse Resources

Email: Elizabeth.Davies@cbcew.org.uk