



LittleBox *of* GoodNewsTM

Deanery Workshops

Workshop Goals

We want you to learn the “why?” behind the Little Box of Good News, how to make your church more welcoming to families, and that our staff is here to support you!

Agenda

- Research and data regarding families of faith with Lauren Dunn
- Theology and oral tradition with Canon Morgan MacIntire
- Little Box of Good News with Grace Rose
- Church climate and atmosphere toward families with Tamika Gerhardt
- Next Steps

The stats we already know

Americans 18-29

- Considerably less religious than older Americans
- Fewer belong to any faith than older people

Americans 30-45 (Millennials)

- One in four unaffiliated with any particular faith
- More unaffiliated than Gen X and Baby Boomers at comparable point in their life cycles

Only 42% of parents regularly take kids to religious services.

Only 38% of parents send their kids to Sunday School or equivalent program.

Lots of doom and gloom. 0/10.

Not so fast, my friends!

Millennials' religious *beliefs and practices*

- Beliefs about life after death, heaven and hell, and miracles closely resemble older people's
- Young adults pray less often than their elders do, *but* # of young adults who pray every day is higher than in earlier decades
- Belief in God is lower among young adults than older adults *but* Millennials say they believe in God with absolute certainty in similar rates to older generations

Millennials' who are affiliated with a religion

- Intensity of their religious affiliation is as strong as GenXers at the same age
- Intensity of their religious affiliation is *stronger than* Baby Boomers at the same age (37% vs 31%)

Also helpful to know

Millennial Christians' struggle

- Most Millennial Christians describe themselves as faithful to Christ, committed, and ready to engage the world for the gospel
- *But they've been burned by their church experience*

What Millennial Christians are seeking

- Meaningful and authentic community
- Religious groups that act as a support group ("it takes a village") for them as parents...
- ...and that provide a sense of community for their kids
- A second home of caring community

“Millennials are in a record number of interfaith marriages. In a world where faith is often expressed more personally than shared communally, parents have an opportunity to share their unique beliefs and practices with their kids or to evolve the religious beliefs and traditions in which they were raised.”

- Liz Tenety, co-founder of Motherly

A recent Barna study found that parents—particularly mothers—are seen as the confidants, providers of support, and drivers of faith formation.

Practicing Christian teens consistently identify mothers as the ones who provide spiritual guidance and instill values of faith, as well as their partners in prayer; conversations about God and the Bible; and other faith questions.

-consistent with Barna data over various years-

If you were to ask a Millennial parent of faith if their faith is important to them and influences how they parent, what percentage would answer “Highly Agree”?

92%

Top Ways to Reach Millennial Parents

Develop new ways to do life together.

Develop opportunities for growth.

Develop outreach that impacts lives.

Develop an appreciation for technology.

Develop a community, not just a church.

Here's where Little Box of Good News comes in!

- Meets Millennial parents of faith where they are...literally! It arrives at their homes!
- Created for home faith formation
- Allows ample time for families to experience each activity, and each is repeatable
- Sustainably and ethically sourced, other factors important to Millennials



Sources

“What We’ve Learned from Millennial Parents of Faith,” International Network of Children’s Ministry

“Millennial Parents Are Raising Their Kids Without Religion,” Parents magazine

“Religion Among the Millennials,” Pew Research Center

“Survey: Surprising Results on Millennial Moms and Faith,” Church Leaders

“The Powerful Influence of Moms in Christian Households,” Barna

“Millennial Parents: 7 Ways to Reach Young Families Today,” Church Leaders



The New Old-Fashioned Way

Sharing the Good News through oral tradition

In the Beginning....



The Framework of our Stories



Torah

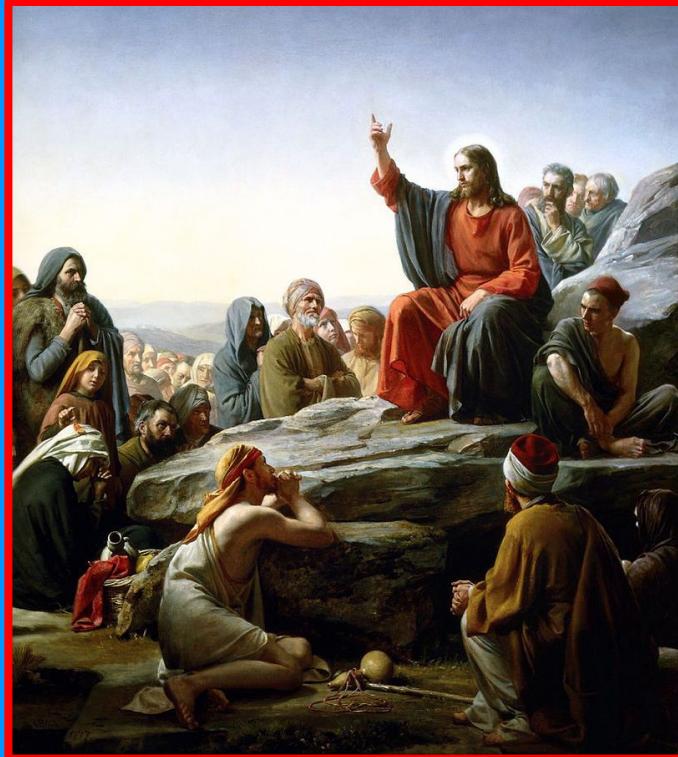
- Believed to have been written by Moses
- Scholars disagree about when it was written, but do agree that Moses was born many hundreds of years after the world was created
- Rest of our OT contains history, wisdom and poetry and stories about the prophets



New Testament

- The Gospels were written several decades after Jesus died
- Evidence of House Churches (Acts, 1 Corinthians, Romans...)
- Epistles were meant to be read out loud to the gathered community

Jesus: Storyteller Extraordinaire



- Jesus was a Rabbi, a teacher who taught through oral tradition
- Some examples:
 - Parables
 - Beatitudes
 - Lord's Prayer
 - Can you think of more??

The Power of a Story

Connect



- Establishing familiarity - human connection vs. reading off page
- The Gospels are powerful because we connect with the person of Jesus & the people in his stories

Engage



- Stories ask us to engage our minds AND our hearts - they stir emotions
- Think of the Parable of the Good Samaritan

Empathize



- Stories help us put ourselves in our neighbor's shoes - glimpse into lived experience of other
- Think of the Prodigal Son

Remember



- Stories create visual images in our minds - they use analogy and metaphor to paint pictures
- Think of the Parable of the Sower

Share Your Story

- Whether you know it or not, YOU have been sharing oral tradition your whole life! It's what we do in our families and in our communities!
- Take a few moments to think about a story that has been told and retold in your family for years (faith related or not) that has shaped who you are.
- Share those stories with your table group.

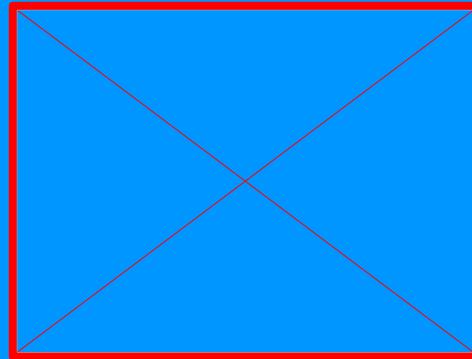
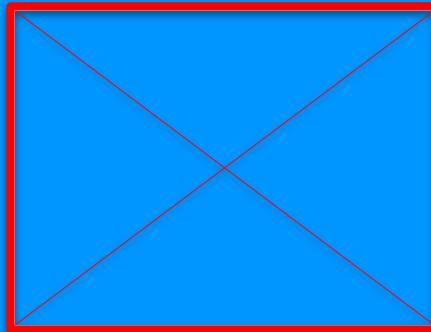


What is the Little Box of Good News?

- Family-centered faith formation program created by EDOLA
- Quarterly subscription box
- Focused activities for families in each box around:
 - What is... [prayer]
 - [Prayer] in yourself
 - [Prayer] in your home
 - [Prayer] in your family
 - [Prayer] in your community
 - [Prayer] in the world
- Exclusive online activities



Exclusive Online Content



Our Family Prayer

Grace at Meals

God thank you for this food and for _____
(Something that makes you happy)

And for _____
(Something that is a challenge)

We ask you to bless our time together as a family and for _____
(Someone outside our family)

In your name we pray. Amen.

Draw Your Prayer

Car Prayer

God as we travel to _____ We thank you for _____
(Activity we're going to) (Something we're thankful for)

And for all the blessings of this life.

Give us _____ and _____
(A "powerful" adjective) (A "gentle" adjective)

And protect us as we go through all the things in our day.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Draw Your Prayer

LittleBox of GoodNews | Cajita de Buenas Nuevas

Biggest Questions:



What's the Cost?

- Tiered pricing
 - Pay It Forward: \$49.99
 - Pay Your Way: \$37.99
 - Pay What You Can: \$24.99
- Subscription
 - Equal to four boxes (all tiers)
 - Only way to get the stuffed Lamby!



Why Subscribe?

- Science:
 - Cycle of Change
 - Automatically restarts resolve
- Encouragement to complete box
 - Next one is coming!
 - Keeps relationship with God on the mind
- Lamby!!!

Parish Box/Subscription

Posters



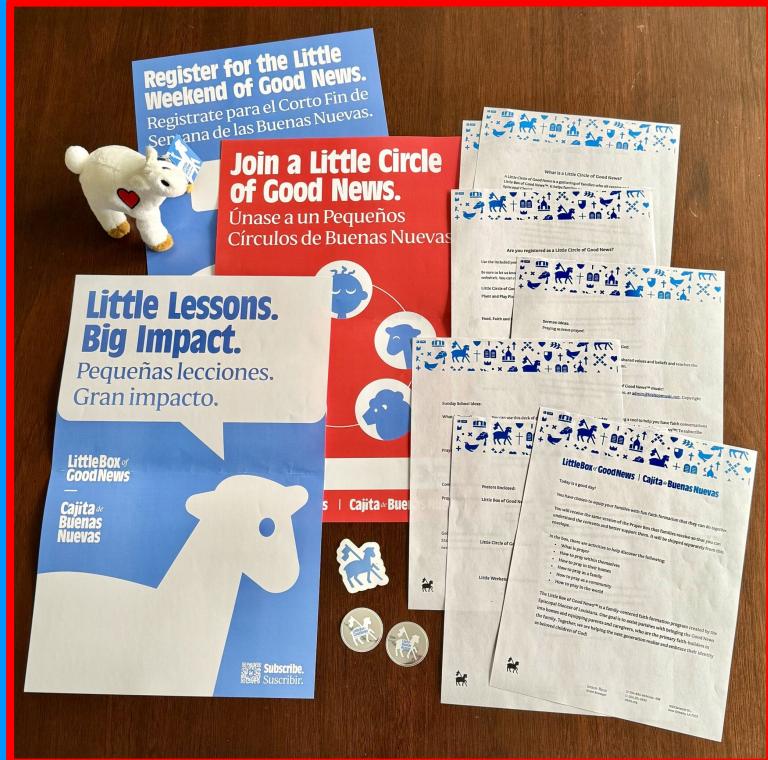
Sunday Connections



Community Connections



Support



Parish Box Sample Excerpt

Sunday School Ideas:

What Is Prayer?

You can use this deck of cards and do this activity in the Sunday School classroom. Then, encourage children to go home and continue the activity with their families (see booklet pages 6-12).

Prayer in the World

The families will have planted seeds of prayer. You can go deeper with the children by talking about how we care for creation in the Episcopal Church (see booklet pages 38-43).

Community Connection:

Prayer in your Community

Families will be writing and decorating notecards telling others that they are praying for them. Maybe they will give them out to others at church! Look for them and ask about them.

Going Deeper as a Community:

Start a bulletin board or table with notecards where anyone in church can write prayer needs and others can write a prayer card in response.

Sermon Ideas:

Praying as Jesus prayed.

Prayer as anything that helps us get close to God.

Praying as a family helps cultivate a sense of shared values and beliefs and teaches the importance of faith, gratitude and compassion.

Music:

We encourage churches to use the Little Box of Good News™ music!

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Bulletin Insert:

Did you know that our diocese has been creating a tool to help you have faith conversations as a family? All families are invited to receive the Little Box of Good News™! To subscribe or purchase a box, go to littleboxofgoodnews.com. Our parish discount code is _____.

Please reach out to us at littleboxofgoodnews@edola.org to prepay for a discount code for families!

Parish Box/Subscription

Posters



- Little Box of Good News subscriptions
- Little Circle of Good News
- Little Weekend of Good News

Sunday Connections



- Sunday school ideas to go deeper
- Sermon ideas
- Music

Community Connections



- How families are encouraged to connect
- Ways to go deeper as a community
- Wording to insert in bulletins

Support



- Access to full staff support for your Little Circle of Good News
- Information about upcoming events
- Ideas for Little Circle of Good News gatherings
- Lists of families who subscribe with your coupon code

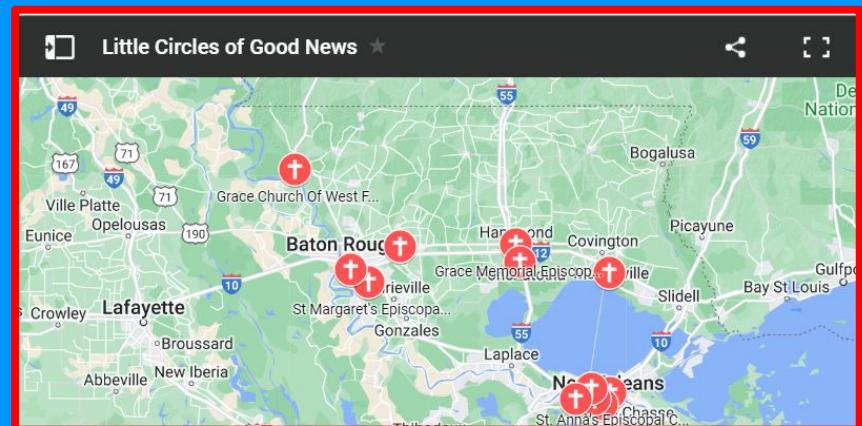
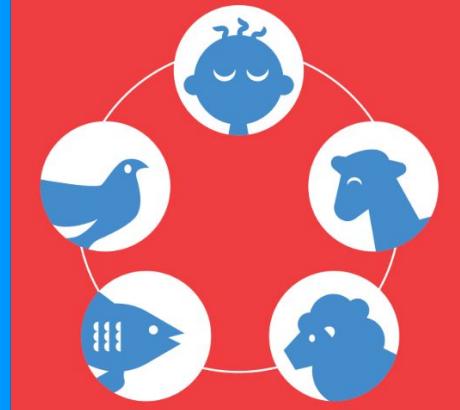
Little Circle of Good News

What is it?

- Gathering of families
- Way for families to connect with each other outside of church (a third space)

What is needed?

- Parish Support
- Priest Support
- Host Family
- Monthly/quarterly gatherings



Little Circle of Good News Ideas

Little Circle of Good News Gathering Ideas:

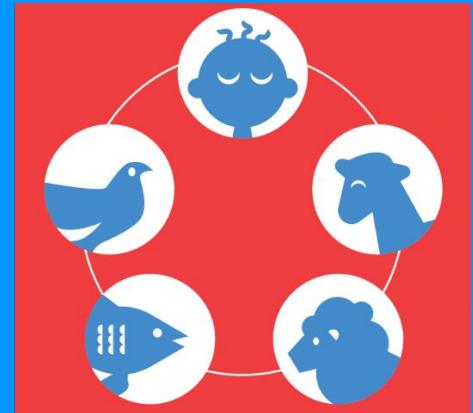
Plant and Play Picnic Gather as a community at a park to do the Prayer in the World activity. Families can bring picnics to share and share time in play.

Food, Faith and Fun Gather for a pizza dinner in your parish hall. Share images and stories about what your family sacred spaces look like and what elements were important to your family.

Going Deeper Dinner Host a dinner or potluck where families can share about what they discovered when they did the “Going Deeper” sections of the booklet.

Workshopping Wonder Have a time for parents to get together while the children play. Encourage parents to share the wonder questions and responses from their children and assist each other with tricky questions.

Remember, this is YOUR parish's little circle. There is no right or wrong way to gather!



Little Weekend of Good News



When: June 21-22, 2025

Where: Grace Church, St. Francisville

Cost: \$25/person (\$100 max/family)

The Little Weekend of Good News is a fun-filled two day retreat that will leave your whole family feeling energized and empowered to live your faith in your family life.

Families do not have to subscribe to attend or to be part of a Little Circle!

Welcoming & Enhancing Faith Formation for families with Little Circle of Good News

Recap - What have we learned

- Our Millennial Parents believe that faith is a huge influence in the way they parent
- Family Curriculum - Tools to connect, engage, and empathize through stories and oral tradition in ways that not only support our family values, but equipping our parents that they can provide faith formation confidently.
- Benefits the Church
 - You get to be part of the village, connecting families.
 - Creating an authentic & caring community
 - Intergenerational third space in spreading the Good News

During the development of Little Box of Good News, the component of Little Circle of Good News came to life, and as the details were coming together, we recognized a larger big picture question.

How welcoming are our churches towards young families?

What is our current climate and atmosphere towards families?

Church Aspects to Consider *focusing on your current strengths & opportunities*



Architecture

- Things we do
- Calendars
- Worship Services
- Programs



Atmosphere

- What does it feel like to be here?
- What do people experience?
- What are the relationships people build here?

What is our current climate and atmosphere towards Families?

Architecture

Strengths & Opportunities

Children welcome bags
playground
Christmas Pageant
Three Kings Celebration
Choristers

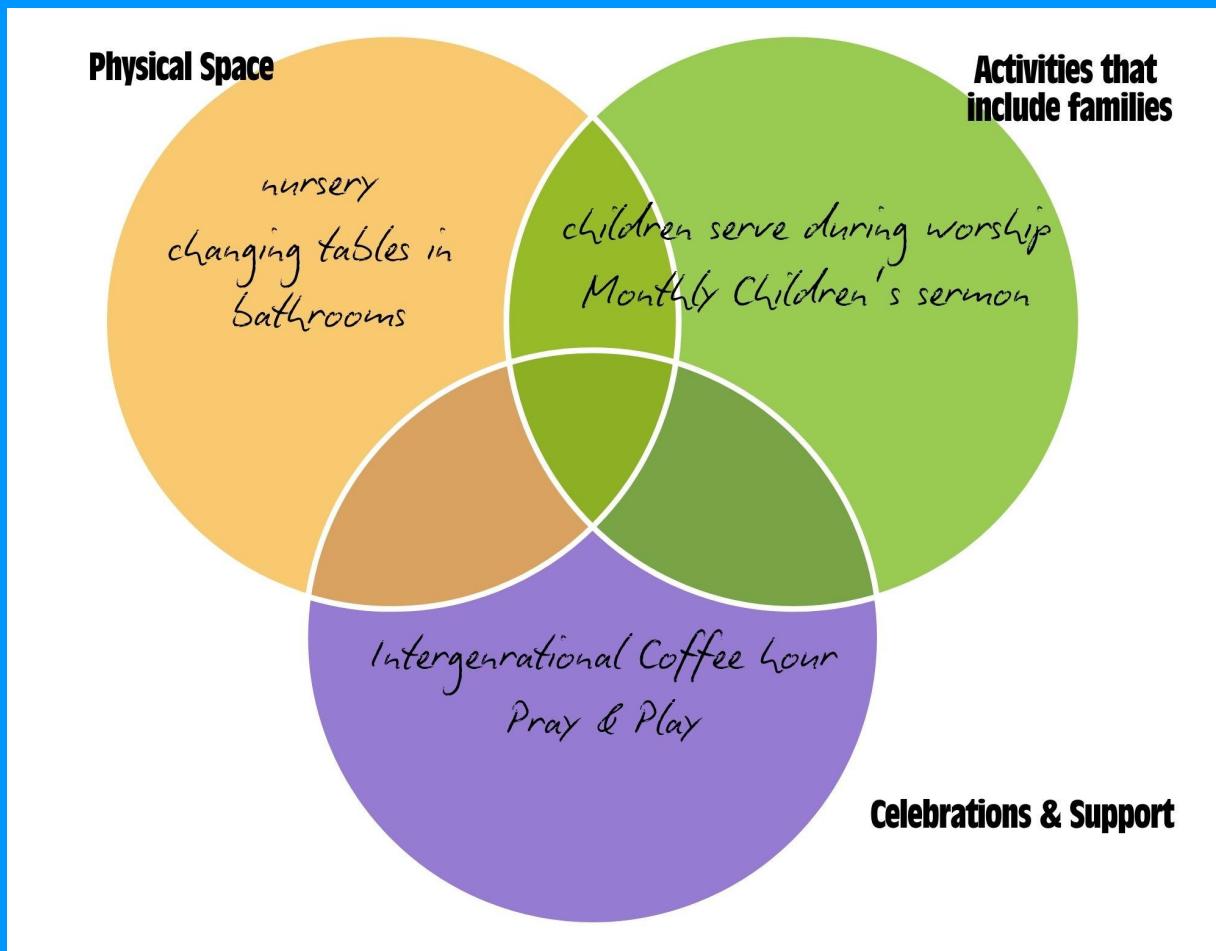
Atmosphere

Strengths & Opportunities

family friendly
diverse
inter-generational
and family

How can you implement the box in your context?

- WE ARE NOT CREATING MORE WORK!!
- You have a lot of good stuff here! What already exists for you to plug into?



Ideas

Physical Space	Activities that include Families	Celebrations & Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pray ground• good signage• stools and changing tables in restrooms• private space for nursing mothers• busy bags• nursery/childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bulletin welcome message• Normalizing some noise and commotion in worship• Children's sermon• Children around the altar for Eucharist or Baptisms• Have kids activities at church events• Invite children to usher/ acolyte/sing/flowers/altar guild - or as a family• Little Circle of Good Nes	<p><i>(reaching families where they are)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LBGN for homes or Circle• Pastoral care plan for families (birth of new child, sick parent, financial support, babysitting),• Birthday cards• Back to School prayers,• Anniversary of baptism cards• Prayer partners• Mentor family• bubbles and popsicles at coffee hour

What small shift can you do right now?

- Become More Welcoming To Families
- Implementing Little Circle of Good News

Want assistance? We can help!

The Rev. Canon Morgan MacIntire
Canon to the Ordinary
mmacintire@edola.org



Call me...

...if you want a cheerleader or want
the Bishop to know how awesome your
programming is going!

Lauren Dunn
Diocesan Youth Coordinator
ldunn@edola.org



Call me...

... for anything to do with youth
... for anything to do with young adults
... for Safe Church assistance
... for creative ideas to enhance your ministries
with young people!

Tamika Gerhardt
Francis Joseph Gaudet Missioner for
Congregational Vitality & Beloved
Community
tgerhardt@edola.org



Call me...

... for support & resources about ministry
... for assistance with action planning
... for questions about growing your ministries!

Grace Rose
Little Box of Good News
grose@edola.org



Call me...

... to start a Little Circle of Good News
... to get discount codes for your parish
... for information about the Little Weekend
... for anything else about the Little Box
of Good News!

Prayer for the Little Box of Good News™

O God, our Divine Parent, we give gratitude for the love and guidance you provide to all your children, through the gift of Jesus, your Son.

Through your creative power, you unfold luminous pathways for generations of families to live deeper into your grace.

We offer the formation of our children to your holy will. May all those who receive these resources become inspired doers of love, mercy, and justice to the world today.

Amen

Next Step: Become a Test Parish

Complete survey and receive your first parish box free! (\$50 value!)
(At the end of the survey, you will receive a coupon code)



https://providence.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3OiJLV5oILqeoEm