



## Celebrating the Family Friendly Partners Network Experience

Congregational leaders from the **North Wisconsin Family Friendly Partners Network** shared ways FFPN impacted their church and church families during their network's closing event on January 21-22, 2011. This report is a compilation of those results. A list of all responses collected in each category can be found at the end of the report.

Church leaders also shared events or activities their church had started or tweaked because of their involvement as a North Wisconsin Family Friendly Partners Network congregation. These ministry ideas can be found on the FFPN website at [www.familyfriendlypn.com](http://www.familyfriendlypn.com)

### FFPN Impact on North Wisconsin Churches

**Congregational leaders of Family Friendly Partners Network (FFPN) churches in North Wisconsin were asked to finish this statement:**

*"The Family Friendly Partners Network helped My CHURCH..."*

**Their responses (51 total) could be categorized into four main impact areas:**

1. Taking action
2. Shifting philosophy
3. Intentional planning
4. Understanding needs

**FFPN helped network churches in North Wisconsin...**

† Take action to become "Family Friendly Churches."

Four out of ten responses (41%) indicated that FFPN helped their church take action to provide programs and resources that support families, marriages, and parents.

- 48% of those comments talked of programs and resources that strengthened *families*
- 33% spoke of action taken to encourage *parents* in their role as faith shapers.

- 19% indicated programs started to strengthen *marriages*

‡ Shift and refocus their leadership’s philosophy and subsequent ministries towards a “Home Centered, Church Supported” ministry style.

More than 27% of responses spoke of FFPN helping their leadership and ministry teams shift their thinking towards a “Home Centered, Church Supported” ministry style that partners with homes to encourage, train, and equip parents to be the primary faithshapers in their children’s lives.

- 71% of those comments spoke of shifting the *ministry style* of their church
- 29% specifically indicated that FFPN training had impacted the philosophy of church *leadership*

‡ Plan for family ministry in intentional ways.

- 22% of responses spoke of FFPN helping their church be more deliberate and intentional in their planning to minister to marriages, parents, and families

‡ Understand their needs in regards to families and their church

- 10% of the comments focused on better understanding the needs of their church and its families because of FFPN training.

## FFPN Impact on North Wisconsin Church Families

**Congregational leaders of FFPN churches in North Wisconsin were then asked to finish this statement:**

*“The Family Friendly Partners Network helped our CHURCH FAMILIES...”*

**Of the 36 responses to this statement, the most common answers related to:**

1. Helping parents better understand their role as faithshapers (22%)
2. Strengthening and supporting families (19%)
3. Strengthening marriages (14%)
4. Increased conversation at church and home regarding God’s view of human sexuality (11%)

In addition, respondents indicated that FFPN helped their church families in the area of parenting skills (8%), building relationships at church (8%), thinking about their needs and becoming aware of the church's available support and resources (8%), getting additional people involved in the church's ministry (6%), and reaching out into their communities (3%).

## Full Report of Comments in Each Category

On January 21-22, 2011, as the North Wisconsin FFPN core teams and their champions gathered for Event 8 at Zion Lutheran in Colby, Wisconsin, churches took some time to celebrate the Family Friendly Partners Network experience. As part of the "celebration" process, they were asked to finish the following two statements:

- *The Family Friendly Partners Network helped my church...*
- *The Family Friendly Partners Network helped our church families...*

We have attempted to group the responses into impact categories and reported on the most common areas above. In this section, you will find all of the comments as listed on the response sheets.

### FFPN helped network churches in North Wisconsin...

#### ✝ Take action to become "Family Friendly Churches" (21 responses)

10 comments in this category talked of programs and resources that strengthened *families*

- "Reach out to strengthen families"
- "Present programs to encourage individuals and families in their Christian life"
- "Supply ministry support that families are in need of. In many cases the families are unaware of these needs until it has been brought to their attention"
- "Begin to think about how their family works"
- "To start working in an organized manner to assist our young families with young children to grow in their faith"
- "To keep our families together serving each other"
- "Create programs that have begun the process of including all families"
- "More resources are available to families"
- "To be of service to our families"
- "Helped our church families through new ideas incorporated in Sunday school, confirmation, and marriages, etc. "

7 comments in this category spoke of action taken to encourage *parents* in their role as faith shapers.

- “Have had more parents of confirmands in worship”
- “Start to look at ways we can help parents in their role as faith shapers”
- “Implement programming to assist parents in passing on the faith”
- “Reinforce parents as a leading role in the faith formation of their children”
- “Parents are stepping up – feeling empowered instead of stupid”
- “Tweak several of our ministries to partner with parents in the process of faith formation”
- “Parents have learned ways to share faith with children, grown in their own faith, more resources for family values”

4 responses indicated programs started to strengthen *marriages*

- “Strengthen marriages”
- “Twenty five couples have come together to be “marriage mentors’ to those preparing for marriage and soon to others with need”
- “Hosting more events that can be healing or bringing together couples”
- “Grow and focus our marriage and pre-marriage ministries”

‡ **Shift and refocus their leadership’s philosophy and subsequent ministries towards a “Home Centered, Church Supported” ministry style (14 responses)**

10 comments in this category spoke of shifting the *ministry style* of their church

- “That passing on our faith should be shared in the home.”
- “Focus on passing on the faith to the next generation”
- “Faith formation is being moved from the church back into the home through Catechism instruction”
- “The network has planted the seed(s) of fostering a home centered, church supported family ministry.”
- “Start talking about and realizing that responsibility isn’t the church but parents”
- “Begin to think about the role parents play in faith of their children and importance of that role”
- “Promote the idea that we need to support families with more than basic law and gospel and expand law and gospel to include what scripture says families, especially children need in this life and the next.”
- “Caused us to relook at how we approach being a support to the family versus the old way of telling them (paradigm shift)”
- “Begin to focus on family ministry”
- “Embrace the concept of “partnering” with our families – and opportunity”

4 responses specifically indicated that FFPN training had impacted the philosophy of church *leadership*

- “To open the mind of the leaders in the church how important it is to pass our faith on to our children”
- “Leadership is more aware of the importance of building up families”
- “The Pastor looks at family ministry much differently”
- “Leaders are starting to think “families” when programming”

† **Plan for family ministry in intentional ways (11 responses)**

- “Think about each event that we do and make sure that it is family oriented/family friendly”
- “Provided us with framework to create an intentional plan to minister to families across the lifespan”
- “FFPN has given us wonderful tools to begin ministry’s in our church”
- “Be more intentional about supporting and equipping Christian parents”
- “Help us see ministry in a bigger way – we can do more (or it’s a new outreach)”
- “Training and information so we can create an intentional program to help couples, pre-marriage, families, and their while church life.”
- “Become more “intentional” in our ministry – have a plan”
- “It has given us stepping stones to walk on to build a way to knowledge of God’s love.”
- “It is the go to tool to build the future”
- “We have seen the problems but had nothing to offer them with help and hope. FFPN has raised the alarm and given us the chance to focus, plan and prepare to help”
- “Given churches a better understanding of what Christian life means and the information and tools to promote it”

† **Understand their needs in regards to families and their church (5 responses)**

- “Identify areas of ministry that we didn’t know existed or needed a ministry”
- “Realize that statistically we are like other churches every where”
- “The survey that was taken of our congregation has helped us see where the needs are”
- “Acknowledge a need by supporting us going to these seminars”
- “Start to have conversations about subjects that they would have otherwise not had”

↑ **Helping parents better understand their role as faithshapers**

**(8 responses)**

- “Recognize their role in the lives of their children as faith shapers and realize it’s not solely the church’s responsibility”
- “When we commissioned our Sunday School teachers, we had the parents come up and get commissioned as “teachers of the faith” too. Several said that changed the way they thought of their role.”
- “Ideas have been shared such as Resurrection Eggs, Bibles to 3 and 4 year olds, etc.”
- “To be able to take what they learned at church and use those ministries at home.”
- “Understand their importance in the mission of helping all of our kids, grandkids, nieces, nephews home to heaven”
- “To begin to see the importance they play in faith formation”
- “To take some ownership in their children’s faith life by becoming involved in Sunday School”
- “Parents are telling us how much they are learning or relearning about God as they help their kids with Confirmation homework or Sunday School lesson follow-up.”

↑ **Strengthening and supporting families (7 responses)**

- “Become more involved as a family in any event we do.”
- “Become more active as families – by offering opportunities and activities for families to be together”
- “Helped to strengthen families”
- “It has given our families church members that can make small steps toward a better/stronger family if they choose to use it.”
- “Providing tools and resources to help families grow in their relationships with Christ and each other”
- “Have places, ways and events to spend time as a family growing in their faith”
- “Be recognized as a family unit, not just a related group of different ages (ministry focuses)”

↑ **Strengthening marriages (5 responses)**

- “Strengthen and celebrate their marriages through couples events and vow renewal events”
- “Marital relationships encouragement”
- “Learn how they love each other in different ways”
- “We have had one Marriage Celebration and will have another in February.”
- “Celebrate our common bonds (celebration of marriage event)”

↑ **Increased conversation at church and home regarding God's view of human sexuality (4 responses)**

- "The importance of purity for our children"
- "The Pam Stenzel Sexuality Video was well- received and opened conversation"
- "Begin to see what tools and tasks they can use/play in the sexuality of their children"
- "Encourage parents to talk with children about faith based sexuality"

↑ **Parenting Skills (3 responses)**

- "Have a program to attend to learn stronger parenting skills"
- "Through a new parenting program"
- "We currently have evolving a young mothers group that is in a parenting process for their young children"

↑ **Building Relationships at Church (3 responses)**

- "Begin to develop relationships with each other through Christ"
- "Form small groups – develop new relationships –growth"
- "Starting to create relationships (Bible studies, small groups, etc.)"

↑ **Think about their needs and become aware of the church's available support and resources (3 responses)**

- "Become more aware of the variety of needs families face, and how many families have needs in common"
- "Become aware that the church can support and help in providing some answers to family problems"
- "To want to learn more about what help and information is out there to help them"

↑ **Getting additional people involved in the church's ministry (2 responses)**

- "By allowing people from our congregation to participate in the workshops to expand our resources and knowledge"
- "Beginning the work of finding "champions." Getting peopled involved."

↑ **Reaching out into their communities (1 response)**

- "To be more active in reaching out and ministering in our community"