

Synod Pilot Project

Implementing Exemplary Youth Ministry in Your Congregation

This pilot project is a partnership between the Minneapolis Area and Saint Paul Area Synods and Luther Seminary with the aim of helping congregations gain a deeper understanding of the Exemplar Youth Ministry study findings, assessing the current state of youth and family ministry within congregations, creating an integrated vision of congregational youth and family ministry, and coaching congregation on how to live into this new identified future.

Who are the partners?

1. Luther Seminary's Children, Youth and Family Ministry team, with Terri Elton and Tim Coltvet being the main point people,
2. The Minneapolis Area Synod, with Jo Mueller as the synod staff contact, and the Saint Paul Area Synod, with Rev. Susan Miller as the synod staff contact.
3. Teams from congregations in the Minneapolis/Saint Paul Area Synods.

What will this pilot project entail?

1. Teams from each congregation will gather monthly,
2. The first meeting will gather all of the team together. Four other meetings (one each quarter) will also gather all of the teams together. (The location would move from church to church.) Meetings will be three hours with a mixture of large group learning and individual team work.
3. The other monthly meetings (two in between the quarterly meetings) congregational teams will meet alone at their own church to work on assignment given in the large group meetings. The work from these various assignments is to be posted on a shared website. This will allow groups to interact between quarterly meetings, as well as the coaching staff for feedback each month.
4. Team leadership (pilot project coordinators from each congregation) will meet periodically between the quarterly large group meetings for a time of check-in and coaching training. (This could be done by conference call.)

Who should be on the congregational teams?

1. Congregations will covenant to bring together 4-6 people from your congregation to be a "dream team." These folks would covenant to meet monthly for one year to learn together with other congregations about the exemplary youth ministry project, to discuss how to make the ideas take root and grow in your context, and to begin to implement some of the learning from the study in your congregation.
2. The people who would be part of your dream team would include any paid youth ministry staff people, plus 4-5 other folks from the congregation. These folks should be early adaptors – that is, people who are able to understand how an idea can work in your context and help make it happen.
3. While most of the people on each team will be folks involved in the children and youth ministries at your congregation, it is advisable for at least one member of the team to be someone who is a leader in the congregation but who has not been very involved in the congregation's youth ministry.

Other items:

1. The costs will be \$500 per congregation. This will go toward bringing in outside resource people and working the online web tool, and some hospitality expenses.
2. This third round of this coaching project is being opened, free of charge, to any of the congregations that participated in the first two coaching sessions. This is an opportunity to have a “refresher” and/or continue working the process from your current vantage point.

At the end of the pilot project year, four things are hoped for:

1. Each of the participating congregations would consider becoming a site for Luther Seminary CYF students in the future, either as congregation education sites (10 hours a month unpaid) or part-time staff (10-20 hours a week paid for up to 20 months).
2. People from within these congregational teams would be available and willing to coach/walk along side other area congregations seeking to go through such a process.
3. Seminary, synod and congregational leaders would learn more fully how to help congregations move forward in understanding how to implement the findings of the exemplary youth ministry study.
4. Congregations would be enriched in their overall ministry, but specifically in being a vibrant congregation tending to youth and family ministry.

If you are interested, please contact one of the following –

- Terri Elton, Ph.D., Director of Center for Children, Youth and Family Ministry, Luther Seminary: 651.523.1622 or telton@luthersem.edu
- Rev. Tim Coltvet, Director of Contextual Learning and Congregational Coaching at tcoltvet001@luthersem.edu
- Jo Mueller, AIM, Minneapolis Area Synod: 612.230.3305 or j.mueller@mpls-synod.org
- Rev. Susan Miller, Saint Paul Area Synod: 651.224.4313 or susan.miller@spas-elca.org