



**CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY
ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR**

**ST. MARGARET'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA**

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Background

St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, located in suburban, South Baton Rouge, Louisiana, describes itself as an inclusive Christian community whose leaders strive through love, worship, and service to welcome all people just as God created them. The church's welcome knows no boundaries of age, race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, or economic condition. Church members describe their church family as "a family," "growing," "inclusive," and "open."

Since 2016, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church has doubled in its average worship attendance, welcoming several new families, including those with young children.

The membership of the church is 250 and in an average week, 105 people attend one of the church's two worship services. The Very Reverend Tommy Dillion currently serves as St. Margaret's rector and has been in that role since 2016.

Youth Ministry Information: Currently, there are eight seventh through twelfth graders on the rolls of the church. During a typical week, eight of them participate in either worship or another church programs.

There is not currently an active youth committee or person leading the ministry. Consequently, there is not currently an organized volunteer base.

The church has a 2020 budget of \$292,391, of which approximately \$0 is dedicated to the youth ministry. A typical youth budget generally includes the program expenses as well as the salary and benefits for the staff.

Children's Ministry Information: Currently, there are 15 children, birth through sixth grade, on the rolls of the church. During a typical week, an average of 9 of them participate in either Sunday school, the nursery, worship, or one of the other children's programs.

The ministry is led by *Molly Blackwell who is a volunteer serving in the youth faith formation role for the church.* There is not currently an active children's committee. There are about two adult volunteers involved each week in one of the major children's programs. Others help out at special events or behind the scenes throughout the year.

The children's ministry has a dedicated budget of \$500. Similarly, a typical children's ministry budget generally includes the program expenses as well as the salary and benefits for the staff.

St. Margaret's has a playground and an outdoor garden space that are available for the use of its children.

Ministry Architects was invited to do an initial assessment of the children's and youth ministries, and to make recommendations about how they might move strategically forward. As St. Margaret's experienced growth in its children and youth participation, church leadership realized the importance of building the infrastructure and intentional, sustainable practices to ensure that the ministry continues to thrive. Ministry Architects met with 29 individuals in nine focus groups or one-on-one meetings. What follows are the findings gleaned from those conversations along with recommendations and a proposed timeline for the future.

Children's and Youth Ministry in Context

One lens Ministry Architects likes to use for understanding children's and youth ministry is the idea of the "three rents." Rents are defined as core elements of the ministry that must be paid in order to establish a sustainable children's and youth ministry. The rents of numbers, programs and enthusiasm are often the most immediate evaluation tools used by children, youth, parents, staff, and the congregation at large. It has been Ministry Architects' experience that though these three rents, in and of themselves, do not ensure an effective or faithful ministry, they are the most common sources of discontent when people talk about their church's children's and youth ministry.

Ministries that "pay these rents" tend to have much greater freedom to be creative, take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas. The ministries that fail to pay these rents often find themselves mired in distrust, second-guessing, and discouragement.

Rent #1: Numbers-A significant percentage of children and youth need to be participating visibly in some aspect of the church's ministries. It is important for these target numbers to be clearly agreed on by the church leaders and the staff. Ironically, when target numbers are not established, the ministries are typically *more likely* to be judged by numbers than if the target numbers are clearly established.

The consensus is that this rent not paid. With a lack of target numbers for worship and programming, it is difficult to pay the numbers rent.

Rent #2: Programs-In order to earn the right to experiment with changes, the children's and youth leadership need to provide the church with a few visible, effective programs that give both children, youth, and parents something to talk about.

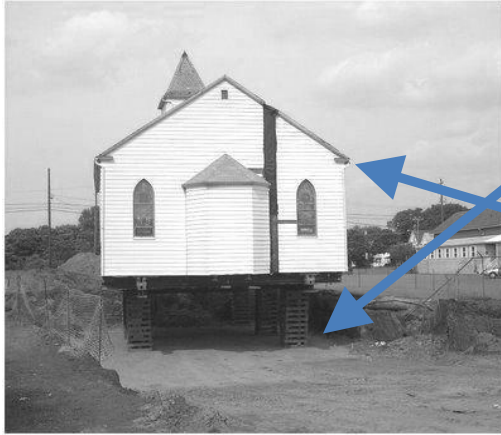
This rent appears to be partially paid. Families know that new programming is coming and they have been excited about the offerings before COVID-19 changed them.

Rent #3: Enthusiasm-The joyful enthusiasm and positive attitude of the children's and youth staff, volunteers, and the children and youth themselves are essential to building trust with the leadership of the church and with the parents.

The excitement of volunteers and the eagerness of families to build a thriving ministry suggest that this rent is being paid on time.

As the leadership of the children's and youth ministries develops its long-range vision, it will need, at the same time, to be attentive to these three rents. In this sense, the children's and youth ministries faces parallel challenges.





Laying the Foundation:
Building a foundation and infrastructure that will ensure the children's and youth ministries' *future* effectiveness, and at the same time,

Continuing to Do Ministry:
Maintaining the *current* children's and youth ministries in a way that builds the enthusiasm of children and youth, their families, the staff, and the church.

As the children's ministry leadership steps into this parallel process, four rules of thumb –children's ministry norms – will be helpful to keep in mind. These are not necessarily targets for success; they are simply what an average church typically experiences:

1) 15% of the Worshipping Congregation: In a typical church, the size of the children's ministry tends to settle at a number around 15% of the worshipping congregation. A church with an average worship attendance of 105 could expect an average weekly attendance of around 16 children per week. The current weekly attendance of 10 children is slightly below what could normally be expected for the ministry.

2) \$1,100 per Child: With a budget of approximately \$500 (including program budget, staff salaries, and benefits) dedicated to the children's ministry, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church does not have the capacity to effectively reach and maintain any weekly participation level for children. With 10 currently participating every week, the ministry is under-funded to retain even the currently attending children. In order to maintain the ministry at its current rate, it would be wise to consider how to give the ministry the resourcing it needs.

3) 1 Full-Time Staff Person for Every 70 Children: According to this rule of thumb, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church has the capacity to sustain the engagement of about 0 children on a weekly basis. Although, there's a volunteer largely managing typical staff responsibilities, this configuration seems inadequate to sustain the needs of the ministry and will typically result in burnout.

4) 1 Adult for Every 5 Children: Ministry Architects likes to think in terms of spans of care, recognizing that, realistically, most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church's Christian nurture of more than about five children on an ongoing basis. With 2 weekly volunteers, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church is currently at a ratio of 1 adult

leader to every 4 children, giving the ministry a capacity for 10 children weekly. This ministry is under-staffed by volunteers and, when using multiple rooms for programming, not able to provide the necessary ratios laid out in the church's Safeguarding God's Children policy.

As the youth ministry leadership steps into this parallel process, five rules of thumb – youth ministry norms – will be helpful to keep in mind. These are not necessarily targets for success; they are simply what an average church typically experiences:

1) 10% of the Worshiping Congregation: In a typical church, the size of the youth ministry tends to settle at a number around 10% of the worshiping congregation. A church with an average worship attendance of 105 could expect an average weekly attendance of around 10 youth per week. The current weekly attendance of 8 youth is just slightly below what could normally be expected from the ministry.

3) \$1,500 per Youth: Without any of the annual budget (including program budget, staff salaries, and benefits) dedicated to the youth ministry, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church is not financially equipped to sustain any weekly participation of youth in some aspect of the church's life. With 8 currently participating every week, the ministry is under-funded to retain even the currently attending youth. In order to maintain the ministry at its current rate, it would be wise to consider how to give the ministry the resourcing it needs.

4) 1 Full-Time Staff Person for Every 50 Youth: According to this rule of thumb, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church has the capacity to sustain the engagement of about 0 youth on a weekly basis. Even if there was a volunteer largely managing typical staff responsibilities, this configuration seems inadequate to sustain the needs of the ministry and will typically result in burnout.

5) 1 Adult for Every 5 Youth: Ministry Architects likes to think in terms of spans of care, recognizing that, realistically, most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church's Christian nurture of more than about five youth on an ongoing basis. With one weekly volunteer, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church is currently at a ratio of 1 adult leader to every 8 youth, but only provides the ministry with a capacity for 5 youth weekly. In other words, the team is too small to attend to the relational needs of the 8 youth who currently attend. The volunteer pool will need to expand if the church wants to sustain its impact with youth.

Building a Sustainable Staff

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a single staff person, instability is a predictable result. Ministry Architects has found that the most stable approach to staffing a ministry, particularly in the early stages of a rebuild, is to build a staff of three *different* kinds of people:

- **The Architect:** A person who designs the building plan and ensures that building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan.



- **The General Contractor:** A person who manages the flow and sequencing of work, manages the building process according to the agreed-upon blueprint, and ensures that the appropriate number of “laborers” is in place for each stage of the project.
- **The Laborers:** Those people charged with specific gifts and responsibilities for particular aspects of the work. In children’s and youth ministry, a laborer might have particular skills in relating to children and/or youth, in planning and managing events, or in teaching.

Each of these roles is important as St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church pursues a more sustainable model of children and youth ministry. As the church moves forward, the following observations will be helpful to keep in mind:

- At St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church, there is no person or group playing the role of the architect. The ministry simply moves from one event to the next without a clear vision or stated outcomes.
- At the same time, the youth faith formation volunteer is often expected to serve in all three of these roles. This is a recipe for congregational dissatisfaction and volunteer and staff burnout.
- If the church decides to hire a staff person to oversee the ministry, it is important to keep in mind that a staff position should be serving primarily as an architect or general contractor with volunteer support serving as laborers.



Assets

Strengths to protect in the current children's and youth ministry

Inclusive and Proud of It

Inclusion, welcome, and social justice were on the lips of most all listening group participants when describing their church. The feeling of inclusion seems to extend to newcomers as well as to families who are already part of the flock. The theology of St. Margaret's makes it a destination for families looking for an open community in which they can raise their children.

Feels Like Family

Person after person commented about the sense of family and feeling of community they've experienced as being part of the St. Margaret's congregation. Both long-time members and newcomers shared the same feeling. Several people who have been members for two years or fewer mentioned walking through the doors of the building for Sunday worship and immediately knowing that this would be their home. Some people noted the complete inclusion and affirmation they experienced, others noted that their children were immediately embraced and held all the way through the service. Regardless of the initial reason for or method by which they visited, the hospitality that was extended from the first moment they arrived was the reason for many people staying.

Growing, Growing, Growing!

Since 2016, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church has nearly doubled in its average Sunday attendance, from about 55 to 105! In one listening group of eleven people, nine of them had been part of St. Margaret's for two years or less. The growth spans age groups, as well. It's not only young families, but also people in their 20s to 60s. This provides incredible opportunities for intergenerational ministry to happen and that momentum was widely felt by people in listening groups. Most often, people shared a positive acknowledgment of this trend and offered it as a reason to celebrate.

Young Family Connections

Young families feel connected to one another in very positive ways. Prior to the pandemic, a group of families was meeting regularly for fun and fellowship. Even very recently during the pandemic, families met to plant a garden and play together. One listening group participant even mentioned the church's recent nomination for Baton Rouge Parents' Magazine Family Favorite Award for favorite church or family worship center! Cultivating, strengthening, and nurturing relationships among families with children will be an invaluable element for moving the ministry forward in a healthy and sustainable way.



Visibility & Location

St. Margaret's Episcopal Church finds itself in a prime, suburban location, situated on a large piece of open property, surrounded by popular businesses and neighborhoods, and the only Episcopal church in South Baton Rouge. The exposure of this property allows for name recognition as St. Margaret's advertises its ministry for children and youth as well as provides the opportunity for passersby to see ministry happening on the lawn.

Clarity of Need

Among those in focus groups, there was an across-the-board consensus that the children and youth ministry is ready to move to the next level. There was a healthy appreciation of the obvious progress of the past few years, paired with a clear desire to do more. While acknowledging a deficiency might not sound like an asset, the fact that everyone in listening groups agreed on the desire to put forth the work to build a more robust ministry is something to celebrate!



Challenges

Obstacles to moving the children's and youth ministry strategically forward

Volunteers Spread Too Thin

St. Margaret's has a history of a few volunteers doing all the work for several years at a time. This is a recipe for fatigue and burnout. Without a volunteer recruitment process and plan to develop volunteers, this trend will likely continue.

No Previous Program

Although it can be simpler to start from scratch rather than correct existing challenges in a ministry program, there is also significant challenge in creating a program from the ground up. Without existing infrastructure, St. Margaret's will need to anticipate several challenging pieces including development of a dedicated budget, effective programming, staffing, and volunteer development, among others.

Lack of Critical Mass

The number one thing that attracts kids is other kids. Even considering the recent growth of the young families' demographic, data suggests that a family who considers themselves a "regular" church attender is typically present around one Sunday per month. Keeping this in mind, Sunday school classes and youth group gatherings can feel the effect of the absence of just one or two people leaving others with a feeling that no one is coming. Parents and youth alike shared their desires for more participation so that activities will feel full.

Welcoming, Yet No Way to Welcome

With great pride, most listening group participants described their church as a welcoming place. However, when asked, no one seemed to be aware of a specific process to connect with first time guests once they leave the building. Most people spoke anecdotally about specific people who had been warm and welcoming. While it's a benefit to have organic, positive encounters with other congregants, as the church continues to experience growth, it is equally important to have a plan for the red carpet to be rolled out to young families from the time they step into the door. Until that occurs, with each new member, it will become increasingly difficult to maintain the organic growth that the church has already seen.

What's on the Menu?

Outside of the pandemic the church finds itself in, parents with school-aged children have their weekly, monthly, and annual routines down. They know what time their children eat lunch, what classroom they're in during different times of the day, and what they're doing over winter break. It becomes second nature to anticipate these "knowns." However, that feeling does not exist surrounding the "menu offerings" available for children and youth at St. Margaret's, both weekly and throughout a child's life. Until it is



intentionally communicated to families on a weekly, monthly, and annual calendar, as well as the milestones available in their faith community during their child's life, it will be difficult to achieve the participation potential the church currently has. .

Not Able to Meet Safety Standards

Though St. Margaret's has adopted the Safeguarding God's Children policies as set forth by The Episcopal Church, with the current number of volunteers on Sunday morning, it is difficult to provide programming for multiple ages with two volunteers per class. This current arrangement does not allow for the ministry to meet the safety standard. Although, it's not anticipated that something will occur, the church is unnecessarily taking on additional risks. Additionally, there are also things opportunities that the church could currently offer but may be limited because of the current lack of volunteers.

Competing Ideas

While the majority of people celebrated the joyful noise made by young children in worship, there is a small group of voices that disagree, offering their opinion that a child's place in church is not in the worship service. While differing opinions can co-exist, it is important for families to continue feeling welcome without hearing criticisms, especially as children are in worship for the entire service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Reframe the next 18 months as a time of building long-term infrastructure for the children's and youth ministries. Understanding that significant and immediate momentum will be built throughout the process of renovating the ministries, target February 2022 as the date when the ministry renovations will be complete.
- 2) Establish a Prayer Team to undergird this renovation process.
- 3) Present this report to the Vestry, requesting that they endorse an 18-month strategic design process for the children's and youth ministries.
- 4) Establish a Youth and Children's Ministry Renovation Team, made up of four to five volunteers. These non-anxious, goal-oriented people will free up the staff and volunteers to focus on exceptional day-to-day ministry, while the Renovation Team ensures that the outcomes of this assessment are achieved.
- 5) Address the current pressure points facing the children's and youth ministries.

Pressure Point #1: Delegate Responsibilities

Create and clearly communicate the volunteer job description for the youth formation volunteer position.

- The Rector, volunteer responsible for youth faith formation, and the Renovation Team will create alignment on the expectations for this volunteer position
- Create a volunteer job description for the youth formation position
- Clearly communicate the job description to the congregation

Pressure Point #2: Plan for the Next Four Months

Create and clearly communicate a ministry program plan for the next four months so that, even in the pandemic, families know what to anticipate.

- Schedule a monthly opportunity for young families to gather, honoring COVID-19 guidelines
- Schedule two youth activities, honoring COVID-19 guidelines
- Clearly communicate this "short and sweet" plan to the congregation

Pressure Point #3: Build the Team

Recruit enough volunteers to ensure that all bases are covered for the next four months.

- Make a list of immediate volunteer positions that need to be filled.
- Using the church photo directory create a list of potential volunteers.
- Divide up this list of potential volunteers and begin calling them personally.
- Go back to step one until all positions have been filled.



Pressure Point #4: Designate a Budget

Create an anticipated budget for the upcoming fiscal year along with annual benchmarks to grow into a ministry budget that is in alignment with programmatic expectations

- Looking at data from the past two years, and with the institutional knowledge of staff and volunteers, create an actualized budget that takes into account volunteer contributions and donations, regardless of their in-kind donation status.
 - Agree on target numbers for children and youth participation and decide on a sustainable staffing model that will effectively support those numbers
 - Staff, volunteers, and Vestry create a budgeting plan with annual benchmarks
- 6) Build the long-term infrastructure required for long-term, sustainable children's and youth ministries including the following tasks:

Building Infrastructure and Stability

In building a ministry there are key pieces to creating a solid foundation. Those key pieces to building infrastructure and stability are the following items:

- **Host a Virtual “Quick Start” Summit:** Invite the Renovation Team, key volunteers, and youth/children's staff to participate in a Quick Start Summit in which the renovation process is launched and the pressure points outlined in the Assessment Report are addressed. The Summit tackles the items that need to be done first and builds momentum for the youth and children's ministries renovation process.
 - Identify any progress in implementing the recommendations of this report.
 - Orient the Renovation Team to their specific responsibilities.
 - Assign Renovation Team members responsibility for implementing the recommendations of the report.
 - Calendar the dates involving Renovation Team.
 - Create a plan for communication between the Renovation Team and staff to ensure that all parties feel they're “in the know.”
 - Draft the following documents, finalizing them within no more than two weeks after the Summit:
 - A finalized version of the calendar for all weekly programs and major special events through December 2020.
 - A results-based, written job description for the volunteer in charge of youth faith formation
 - A clear and complete list of volunteer needs in both ministries, including relational and behind-the-scenes, weekly events, and special event leaders.
 - A broad “fishing pond” list of at least 25 possible volunteers to call about volunteer positions. The list includes people sure to say yes, and it includes people who will never say yes (but might one day).

- Reasonable participation goals have been established for all youth and children's ministry events and weekly programs through December 2020 and clear lines of responsibility for filling those events have been established.
- **Control Document Development:** Complete and publish an 18-month calendar, create major event notebooks to help event planners succeed, and generate a preventative maintenance calendar that schedules behind-the-scenes activities for each month (like "September: nail down the date for next year's VBS").
- **Compliance Documents:** Ensure that copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained, permission and health forms are in place for future needs, an application and screening process for every volunteer is in place, and all adults working with any youth and children affirm the Safeguarding God's Children policy.
- **Children's and Youth Database:** Create a youth and children's ministries databases has, collecting the most recent information for families, youth, and children. All are categorized in a manner that will follow up on First-Time Guest and MIA families, youth, and children. Children/youth have been identified with appropriate tags so that targeted communication for one-time visitors to long-time members is streamlined and effective.
- **Attendance:** Track attendance for all youth and children's activities in one cloud-based, electronic system.
- **Marketing:** Establish clear internal marketing processes that allow parents, youth, children, leaders, and the broader church are exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the children's and youth ministries.
- **Communication:** Document the rhythms and methods for effective and timely communication with parents, youth, children, and leaders utilizing as many forms of communication as possible including updating the youth and children's pages of the church's website, social media, mass texting, mail, e-mail, etc.
- **Youth and Children's Ministry Manuals:** Develop a manual for the youth and children's ministries, including the most recent youth and children's directories, a 12 to 18-Month calendar, results-based job descriptions for staff and volunteers, compliance documents, budgets, game plans, a preventative maintenance calendar, and notes for every major children's or youth ministry event.
- **Fall Kick-Off/Parent Orientation:** Develop an intentional, family-based, incredibly fun Fall Kickoff event to launch the youth and children's ministries in the fall of 2021. Use that event to cast the vision, share information, and build enthusiasm about the year ahead.

Developing and Nurturing Staff and Servants

As the foundation is built, the church will need to assess the staffing structure that will best serve the ministry as it moves forward. The church will also need to ensure it is engaging and equipping the leadership.

- **Strategic Staffing:** Propose a clear, appropriate long-term staffing plan, including the professional and volunteer components, for the youth and children's ministries that will provide the church with significant capacity to sustain a thriving ministry to its targeted number of children and youth.
- **Leadership Development:** Complete results-based, written job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions in the youth and children's ministries and create a structure for the ongoing training of all volunteers at least quarterly.
- **Volunteer Recruitment:** Build a fortified volunteer leadership team, some of who will do relational ministry with children and youth, while others work behind the scenes. Create a clear and complete list of the volunteer needs. Create a "fishing pond" list of at least 25 possible volunteers to call on for weekly volunteer positions.
- **Leadership Launch:** Schedule and implement an inspiring leadership-training event for all volunteer youth and children's workers at the beginning of each school year.
- **Student Leadership Development:** Develop a written game plan for combining the church's current student leadership opportunities into a system that gives increasing load-bearing responsibility for mentoring and ministry leadership to children and/or youth.

Clear Strategies and New Initiatives Developing

Once the foundation is being laid and volunteers are engaged and clear on their roles, the church will then need to shift its focus to establishing clear strategies and developing new initiatives such as:

- **Montessori School of Baton Rouge & KidCam Connections:** Develop specific communication strategies for inviting the families of Montessori School of Baton Rouge and KidCam to worship with St. Margaret's, as well as children's ministry activities. Create communication timelines that coordinate with publications being created by the Montessori and KidCam staff. Seek opportunities to build exposure and welcome the families into the St. Margaret's community.
- **Parent Support:** Sponsor and execute an encouraging parent support event and create mechanisms for engaging the majority of parents in the children's ministry in some way.



- **Measurable Markers of Effectiveness:** Determine reasonable participation goals for all youth and children's ministry events and weekly programs through December 2021 and take responsibility for filling those events.
- **Magnetic Missions:** Build on the desire expressed by many youth and children to make a difference in the world as well as their local community by providing a well-publicized calendar of mission initiatives for children, youth, and families. Invite all age-appropriate visitors and first-timers to participate in these initiatives, recognizing that the social-justice DNA of St. Margaret's may be the most natural plug-in point for many outsiders.
- **Youth/Children's Contact:** Develop and implement processes for ensuring that each youth, child, and/or parent in the ministry receives a contact from someone on the children's or youth leadership team at least once a month
- **First-Timer Process:** Develop a process for welcoming new families, children, youth, and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed. Document a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church.
- **Alignment of Competing Ideas:** Draft a document that provides guidelines for the health and behavior of children and youth participating in programming as well as the manner in which adults celebrate their participation, so that families and congregants are aware of mutual expectations.
- **Confirmation:** Develop a Confirmation plan with the assistance of the clergy and input from a key group of parents. Determine the duration of the program, what age it is to take place, etc.
- **Program Design:** Host a virtual Program Design Summit create the annual rhythm and special events for the children and youth ministry.
- **Family Ministry:** Plan a few family events throughout the year focused on building family relationships and fun fellowship.
- **Rites of Passage (or Milestones):** Develop a written plan for the processes, events, and privileges that might include opportunities like:
 - **Welcome to Worship**
 - Purpose: intentionally extends the welcome mat to children and their parents. It also introduces children, and the adults who care for them, to worship and worship space.
 - **Kindergarten children invited to Children's Church**
 - Purpose: To invite younger children into the special worship experience of elementary age children.
 - **Bibles to 8-year olds**
 - Purpose: To invite children into the community's practice of reading scripture together.

- **6th graders moving into the middle school ministry**
 - Purpose: To welcome the rising 7th graders into the middle school ministry.
- **Blessing of the Backpacks**
 - Purpose: To mark the passage of summer and to help children and adults transition back into the fall schedule, reminding the children that Jesus is always with us.
- **High School Graduation**
 - Launch the church's high school graduates from the youth ministry, confident that they are surrounded by a supporting church family and committed to live out their faith as adults.

TIMELINE

The following provides St. Margaret's Episcopal Church with a timeline that can serve as a blueprint for the strategic launch of sustainable, long-term children's and youth ministries.

**Tasks marked with an asterisk (*) Ministry Architects is responsible for completing per St. Margaret's July 13 contract addendum. Tasks not marked with an asterisk will be completed by the Renovation Team members while being chaired by Ministry Architects in months 1-6 and coached by Ministry Architects in months 7-18.*

September 2020

Focus: Starting Right and Work Begins

Outcomes:

- This report has been presented to the Vestry of the church for the strategic renovation of the children's and youth ministries and the Vestry of the church has given full support of this plan.
- *A virtual Quick Start Summit has been scheduled for September or October.
- The Renovation Team for children's and youth ministries has been recruited and the first meeting has been scheduled to take place during the Quick Start Summit in October.
- *Ministry Architects has begun chairing the children and youth Renovation Team through February 2021.
- A prayer team has been recruited and charged with praying for the children's and youth ministries. They have received a copy of the assessment report and timeline.
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the children's and youth ministries key volunteers have been provided.
- In anticipation of the upcoming budgeting year, drawing on the knowledge of the past director of youth formation, the Rector, and any volunteers with institutional memory of programming expenses, an actualized budget has been created, taking in to account donations of supplies and services, so that the previous cost of the existing ministry is known and understood as clearly as possible
- A virtual Program Design Summit has been scheduled for October or November, inviting key volunteers and staff to participate in crafting the programmatic offerings of the children and youth ministry.
- Work has begun on Pressure Point #1: Volunteer job description for the youth formation volunteer position has been created and clearly communicated



- The Rector, volunteer responsible for youth formation, and the Renovation Team have alignment on the expectations for this volunteer position
- A volunteer job description for the youth formation position has been created
- The new job description has been clearly communicated to the congregation

October 2020

Focus: Renovation Underway, Quick Start Summit, Volunteers, Calendars

Outcomes:

- *A Quick Start Summit has taken place in which the renovation process has been launched and pressure points outlined in the Assessment Report have been addressed. The Summit tackled the items that needed to be done first to initiate the children's and youth ministries renovation process. During this summit the following will be accomplished:
 - Work began on creating an organizational chart that will clearly outline responsibility for staff and volunteers.
 - Reasonable participation goals were established for all youth and children's ministry events and weekly programs through December 2020, with clear lines of responsibility for filling those events.
 - A fishing pond of 25 potential volunteers in the children's and youth ministries was created.
 - A game plan for welcoming new families, children, youth, and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed was implemented. The plan has included a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church.
 - Work began on Pressure Point #2: Prior to the upcoming Program Design Summit, a ministry programming plan for the next four months has been created so that, even in the pandemic, families know what to anticipate
 - o A monthly opportunity for young families to gather, honoring COVID-19 guidelines was scheduled
 - o Two youth activities, honoring COVID-19 guidelines were scheduled
 - o This "short and sweet" plan was clearly communicated to the congregation
- Work on Pressure Point #3 began: Volunteers were recruited to ensure that all bases are covered for the next four months of "short and sweet" programming.



- Results-based job descriptions were written and distributed to the appropriate volunteers for the children's and youth ministries.
- The 2020-2021 children's and youth ministries calendar was finalized.
- A detailed 2021 budget for the children's and youth ministries was completed and submitted to the appropriate group.
- A process for welcoming new families, children, youth, and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed, along with a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church, was drafted.

A MissionInsite report was secured by the church for reference during the renovation process.

- A sustainable staffing plan was created that takes into account target participation numbers for children and youth, aligning volunteer contributions with the need for paid staff.
- A budget growth plan was drafted, with input from the Vestry, staff, and key volunteers, that uses annual benchmarks to grow the ministry budget to be in alignment with the desired participation numbers

November 2020

Focus: Attendance Tracking, Participation Goals, Budget, Continuing Education

Outcomes:

- A process for tracking and recording attendance in all children's and youth ministries programs has been created and implemented.
- Reasonable participation goals have been determined for all children's and youth ministries events and weekly programs through August 2021 and steps to accomplish those targets have begun to be implemented.
- A written communications process has been established for inviting the families of Montessori School of Baton Rouge to worship, as well as children's ministry activities.
- Work on the children's and youth database has begun, collecting the most recent information for families, youth, and children. All are categorized in a manner that will follow up on MIA families, youth, and children. Children and youth have been identified with appropriate tags so that targeted communication for one-time visitors to long-time members is streamlined and effective.
- A process has been implemented to ensure that each youth, child, and/or parent in the ministry receives a contact from someone on the children's or youth leadership team at least once a month



- *A virtual Program Design Summit has taken place, inviting key volunteers and staff to participate in crafting the programmatic offerings of the children and youth ministry.
- An 18-month children and youth ministry calendar was designed during the Program Design Summit.
- Following the virtual Program Design Summit, a brochure has been created to give to all families (current families and newcomers) that clearly communicates the “menu” of offerings for children, youth, and families
- A process for welcoming new families, children, youth, and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed, along with a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church, has been implemented.
- A budget growth plan was implemented.
- *As a result of the Program Design Summit, Ministry Architects began drafting a game plan for a ministry initiative or process, a major event notebook, and a children and youth ministry manual.

December 2020

Focus: Pressure Points, Communication, Database

Outcomes:

- All pressure points have been addressed.
- A brochure has been distributed to all families, and is available to newcomers, that clearly communicates the “menu” of offerings for children, youth, and families.
- The results of the Program Design Summit have been effectively communicated on the website and to the congregation.
- Communication norms have been determined and those best practices are being implemented.
- New, non-threatening opportunities for adult involvement in the program have been created. Parent involvement has been encouraged, both visible and behind-the-scenes.
- A plan for the Rites of Passage processes, events, and privileges has been drafted that might include opportunities like:
- **Welcome to Worship**
 - Purpose: intentionally extends the welcome mat to children and their parents. It also introduces children, and the adults who care for them, to worship and worship space.



- **Kindergarten children invited to Children's Church**
 - Purpose: To invite younger children into the special worship experience of elementary age children.
- **Bibles to 8-year olds**
 - Purpose: To invite children into the community's practice of reading scripture together.
- **6th graders moving into the middle school ministry**
 - Purpose: To welcome the rising 7th graders into the middle school ministry.
- **Blessing of the Backpacks**
 - Purpose: To mark the passage of summer and to help children and adults transition back into the fall schedule, reminding the children that Jesus is always with us.
- **High School Graduation**
 - Launch the church's high school graduates from the youth ministry, confident that they are surrounded by a supporting church family and committed to live out their faith as adults.
- *As a result of the Program Design Summit, Ministry Architects has drafted a game plan for a ministry initiative or process, a major event notebook, and a children and youth ministry manual.
- *Ministry Architects has drafted a Volunteer Recruitment and Development plan resulting in systems for volunteer recruitment and training, job descriptions for all positions, and process for celebrating volunteers for their service

January 2021

Focus: Compliance, Summer Calendar, Volunteer Training

Outcomes:

- A plan for the Rites of Passage processes, events, and privileges has been launched.
- An encouraging parent support event has engaged the majority of parents in the youth and children's ministries in some way.
- A volunteer application, an application process and a screening process for all weekly hands-on volunteers have been created and implemented
- Background checks have been done for all weekly hands-on volunteers.



- All paperwork for hands on, weekly volunteers has been updated and is in compliance with the Safeguarding God's Children policy.
- Any necessary forms for the safety of children and youth and legal protection of the church have been secured or created
- Copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained. Permission slips for each offsite event in addition to standard medical release forms for the entire year have been created.
- Work has begun on the summer calendar for 2021.
- A mid-year training event has taken place in which all volunteers received support and training in their specific roles. A "check-in" with each volunteer has taken place to evaluate how the volunteer has been doing in their role and addressed any concerns.
- *As a result of the Program Design Summit, Ministry Architects has delivered a game plan for a ministry initiative or process, a major event notebook, and a children and youth ministry manual.

February 2021

Focus: Database, Volunteer Recruitment, Mid-Course Evaluation

Outcomes:

- Work has been completed on the database of all children, youth, and their families and each person is "tagged" with a category.
- The summer 2020 calendar for the children's and youth ministries has been completed and distributed.
- Work has begun on the 2021-2022 children's and youth ministries calendar.
- A Confirmation plan has been developed with the assistance of the clergy and input from a key group of parents. The plan included the duration of the program, what age it is to take place, and what will be taught.
- Volunteer recruiting season has opened.
 - Volunteer job descriptions have been reviewed and updated as needed.
 - Names of potential volunteers have been added to the fishing pond.
 - All volunteer needs have been determined for the 2021-2022 school year.
 - The volunteer needs list and the potential volunteers list has been merged.
 - Current volunteers have been asked to evaluate and possibly renew their commitment to the children's and youth ministries.



- Recruitment has begun for hands-on weekly volunteers, event coordinators and behind-the-scenes volunteers for 2021-2022
- The 2021-2022 children's and youth ministries calendar has been completed through August 2022 including a Fall Kick-off.
- A preventative maintenance calendar has been created for the children's and youth ministries that will help regularly deal with on-going "behind the scenes" ministry maintenance.
- *Ministry Architects has completed its position chairing the Renovation Team, has put plans in place to transition to a coach position for the newly established Renovation Team chair, and has set up monthly calls with the Renovation Team chair.
- The Renovation Team has completed a 6-month mid-course evaluation of the renovation process and made any adjustments necessary to improve the work being done.

March 2021

Focus: Calendar, Nursery

Outcomes:

- The Renovation Team has met monthly and decided how often they will meet for the remainder of the 18 months.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call.
- Work has begun on assembling a Children and Youth Ministry Team to handle the "in the weeds" roles and responsibilities of planning and executing an excellent children and youth ministry
- A nursery families taskforce of 2-3 people has been assembled to evaluate the nursery. Some examples of an effective evaluation may include but are not limited to:
 - Securing "secret shopper" friends who give honest feedback from the perspective of a newcomer (parent of babies, parent of toddler, parent of preschooler)
 - A refresh of the physical space for the nursery to make sure it is equipped with the provisions that a young family would expect
 - An evaluation of the spiritual nurturing that occurs for this age group
 - Researching any necessary curriculum and creating a plan for curriculum application for nursery-aged children



April 2021

Focus: MIA, Communication, Major Event Notebooks

Outcomes:

- MIA children and youth have been systematically contacted.
- Communication methods currently being used to promote the children's and youth ministries and share the successes with the congregation have been evaluated and added to if necessary.
- Work has begun on major event notebooks – creating a template for the notebooks and collecting information on each children's event.
- A document has been created and implemented that provides guidelines for the health and behavior of children and youth participating in programming as well as manner in which adults celebrate their participation, so that families and congregants are aware of mutual expectations.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call.

May 2021

Focus: Outcomes:

- A volunteer thank-you event has been scheduled and promotional materials have gone out to all children's and youth volunteers.
- The collection of updated information from each child, youth, and family has been completed and the database for children's and youth ministries has been updated with that new information.
- Building on the desire expressed by many youth and children to make a difference in the world and their community, a calendar of mission initiatives for youth, children, and families has been well publicized. A plan to invite all age-appropriate visitors and first-timers to participate in these initiatives has been put in place, recognizing that the social-justice DNA of St. Margaret's may be the most natural plug-in point for many outsiders.
- *Dependent on CDC travel recommendations, a 2-day onsite visit to celebrate the work that has been accomplished, work with the Renovation Team on timeline tasks, and create a new program game plan has been scheduled for the summer.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call.



June 2021

Focus: Benchmarks, Marketing, Christian Formation

Outcomes:

- Clear, internal marketing processes have been established that allow all church members to be exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the children's and youth ministries.
- A few family events have been calendared for the upcoming year. They have focused on building family relationships and fun fellowship.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call.

July 2021

Focus: Game Plans, Curriculum, Volunteer Thank You

Outcomes:

- All game plans that have been launched since September 2020 have been evaluated and tweaked as necessary for impact and sustainability.
- The effectiveness of this past year's curriculum has been reviewed and decisions have been made for any necessary changes for the upcoming school year.
- A volunteer thank-you event has occurred.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call.

August 2021

Focus: Ministry Manual

Outcomes:

- *Dependent on CDC travel recommendations, a 2-day onsite visit to celebrate the work that has been accomplished, work with the Renovation Team on timeline tasks, and create a new program game plan has taken place.
- With the most recent information on children, youth, and their families, a directory of all families and a directory of all volunteers have been created to be distributed at the Fall Kick-off.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call.
- The Children's and Youth Ministries Manuals (both hard copy and digital) have been completed, including the following items:
 - Vision documents
 - Directories
 - Volunteer directory



- Volunteer training agendas and notes
- Attendance records
- Annual calendar
- Results-based job descriptions
- Game plans and new initiatives
- Meeting agendas and minutes for Children's and youth ministries Committee/Renovation Team.
- Christian Formation Plan and record of curriculum resources used for the current year
- Budget and other financial documents
- Recruiting template, with a record of all the volunteer needs for the year
- Compliance documents

September 2021

Focus: Reflection and Re-Assessment, Curriculum, Major Event Notebooks, Leadership Launch

Outcomes:

- An annual review of the renovation process has been completed.
- Current pressure points have been named.
- Curriculum has been distributed to all teachers/volunteers and they have been trained to implement the curriculum.
- Major event notebooks for each major event for the children's and youth ministries have been handed out to this year's event coordinators.
- All volunteers have experienced a Leadership Launch, lasting 2-4 hours that clarified their roles, inspired them to grow in their own faith and equipped them to serve. The Safe Sanctuaries policy was reviewed and adopted by all volunteers.
- A Fall Kick-off has taken place that welcomed children, youth, and parents into a program they can get excited about, introduced parents to a format and structure they can feel confident about and provided a forum for receiving information from families. All participants feel energized and enthusiastic about the coming year's programs.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call.

October 2021

Focus: Fall Kick-off, Directory, Compliance

Outcomes:

- All children's and youth programs have adhered to the Safeguarding God's Children policy.



- A detailed 2022 budget for the children's and youth ministries has been completed and submitted to the appropriate group for approval.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call.

November 2021

Focus: Benchmarks, Strategic Staffing, Budget

Outcomes:

- With the changes in the children's and youth ministries, the volunteer staffing to meet the size and scope of the children's and youth ministries has been evaluated and a game plan to meet those needs has been created if necessary.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call.

December 2021

Focus: Compliance, Game Plans

Outcomes:

- All game plans that have been launched in 2021 have been evaluated and tweaked as necessary for impact and sustainability.
- All paperwork for hands on, weekly volunteers has been updated and is in compliance with the Safeguarding God's Children policy. Background checks have been completed on each volunteer.
- A game plan has been created to develop student leadership in the youth and children's ministries. The youth and children have been given charge of creating a welcoming environment.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call.

January 2022

Focus: Summer Calendar, Participation Goals

Outcomes:

- Reasonable participation goals have been determined for all children's and youth ministries events and weekly programs through December 2022 and steps to accomplish those targets have begun to be implemented.
- Work has begun on the 2022 summer calendar.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call.



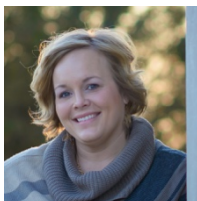
February 2022

Focus: Sustainability, Calendars

Outcomes:

- A timeline for the next 12 months has been created that includes game plans and tasks to address the current pressure points.
- Game plans have been put in place to sustain the processes and procedures during the renovation
- Ongoing coaching has been secured and a sustainability plan has been put in place.
- The staff and Renovation Team have celebrated what God has done with their 18-month investment.
- The Renovation Team has transitioned their role to providing support and accountability to the children's volunteers and focusing on strategic issues such as three-year goals and one-year benchmarks, curriculum selection, calendars, and volunteer recruitment.
- The summer 2022 calendar for the children's and youth ministries has been completed and distributed.
- Work has begun on the 2022-2023 children's and youth ministries calendar.
- *Ministry Architects and the Renovation Team chair have had a monthly call and a plan for sustainability has been put into place.

The *Ministry Architects* Team Serving St. Margaret's Episcopal Church (Baton Rouge, Louisiana)



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Since 2000, Monica has served in a variety of roles in both small and large churches, and understands the unique opportunities each setting brings. She has a passion for setting up systems that help to equip people in relationship and mission. Monica believes that churches are always changing and with the correct structures in place, ministry will continue to flourish and new possibilities emerge during moments of transition. Monica earned a B.A. in Sociology from the University of Colorado at Boulder and a Master of Divinity degree from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Monica lives in the Kansas City area with her minister spouse, their two children (for whom they try every day to create normal lives as a double preachers' kids) and their dog, Princess Leia (who likes long walks, terrorizing rabbits, and cleaning up after meals).



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Bryant began working in youth ministry in 1996 in the United Methodist Church. He has been a worship speaker for summer camps, taught seminars for youth workers, and written curriculum for the Florida United Methodist Camping programs. Bryant graduated from Florida Southern College with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology. In his free time, Bryant enjoys all things outdoors, technology, movies, and hosts *The Sustainable Ministry Show*. He and his wife, Tonya, and two kids live in Kernersville, NC.

