

Ideas for Summer Family Ministry:

Special Events & Encouraging Connections

Not every church has the ability to run a Vacation Bible School during Summer Break, but that doesn't mean there aren't other fantastic opportunities for ministry with families in your community. Check-out some of these great ideas from different United churches for inspiration.

Special Events

Consider hosting a special event like an ice cream sundae social, sing-a-long, field trip, movie night, or church picnic. Make sure to personally invite your families to attend, and ask if there are any accommodations that can be made to encourage their participation. Considering the timing of the event and transportation can go a long way to ensure participation. Focus on taking time to get-to-know your families better, encouraging mingling between older and younger church members. Could the movie be followed up with an intergenerational discussion time? Could fun conversation starters be left on the tables at the social? Or, consider playing [People Bingo](#) with a prize!

Britannia United Church in Ottawa ON hosts free family movies on Fridays in their Sanctuary. They offer a matinee and an evening movie - the afternoon film is geared more to seniors and the evening to children. They make a point to emphasize that *all* families are welcomed to join, including families of one, families without children, and chosen families. Sometimes movies are chosen to make you think and other times just for a "good belly laugh", says Rev. Jennifer Power.

Encouraging Connections

- Pair up community members as "Summer Prayer Buddies", inviting them to pray for one another throughout the summer as folks enjoy their summer break.
- Start a summer pen pal program where kids and seniors write letters to put in a "mail box" at the church on Sundays during the summer break. They can share stories about their adventures and pick-up letters when they're able to attend a service.

- Make a community "scrapbook" of your summer where folks can add pictures and stories from their adventures.
- Encourage children to offer pictures or cards they make to be taken to residents in retirement and long-term care homes.
- Encourage cottagers, campers, those on vacations to send in photos that might be put on a screen, or short video clips to say hello to those gathering.

Are there other events your community of faith can hold to encourage further relationship building?

Share your favourite ideas from your community of with your Growth Animator (jcantwell@united-church.ca). Your gifts of growing might be seeds of inspiration for others!