

# *Stages of Family Growth Life Cycle*

Cultural and ethnic backgrounds play an important role in how these stages, rewards, challenges, etc., are understood and handled. Divorce, death, remarriage or a catastrophic event may interrupt this growth cycle at any point and thus raise other rewards, challenges, spiritual tasks and needed resources.

Stage	Spiritual Task	Ministry Resources	Alignment to Existing Ministries	New/Specific Family Life Initiatives
Single Adult Family	Vocation discernment Dealing with moral values as an adult Establishing an adult faith relationship with God/community	Young Adult Groups Adult Faith Enrichment Faith in Action Opportunities Vocation Education Young Adult Affirmation Mentoring Resources		
Establishing Family (Courtship/Marriage/Forming New Family Unit)	Develop couple spirituality-entering the covenant relationship; domestic church Finding or forming a church Accepting/negotiating differences in faith expression	Marriage preparation programs 2nd Marriage/Blended Family preparation Interfaith Marriage Ministry Natural Family Planning Resources Young Marrieds Support Group Marriage Enrichment Programs Married retreats, annual renewal of marriage vows		
First Child in Family	Expand to family spirituality Develop religious traditions/rituals Awareness of vocation of parenting Expand generosity of service Nurturing couple relationship	Marriage Enrichment Programs Baptismal Preparation Programs Young Marrieds Support Groups Family Prayer materials Values Education/Media Awareness Faith-based sexuality education Parish Parenting Program/ Network Christian Sexuality Materials/ Media		
School-Age Family	Accept each child's strengths & limitations with grace Nurture couple relationship Teach/model values & morals Maintain healthy boundaries Incorporating faith practices Pass on faith to children through traditions, rituals, prayers, stories Family as "servant" community Making peace with family of origin	School-age Parenting Programs School-age religious education Family-centered enrichment Marriage Enrichment Programs Ministry to Marriages in Crisis Divorce Ministry Single parent support network Ministry for children with losses Family Counseling Services		

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<i>Adolescence and Family</i>	<p>Letting go of children while maintaining family unity, values</p> <p>Cooperate with larger church for adolescent faith development program (TEC, Search)</p> <p>New forms of family prayer and recreation</p>	<p>Youth Ministry Programs</p> <p>Marriage Enrichment</p> <p>Ministry to Marriages in Crisis</p> <p>Ministry to Teens with Losses</p> <p>Parenting Teens Materials</p> <p>Drugs, Alcohol, Sex Education</p> <p>Media Awareness Training</p> <p>Parish Parent Support Systems</p>		
<i>Letting Go Of Family</i>	<p>Letting go, "healing the dream"</p> <p>Redefining spirituality of couple</p>	<p>Bereavement Ministry</p> <p>Marriage Enrichment</p> <p>Ministry to Struggling Marriages</p> <p>Support for People Caring for Aging Parents</p> <p>Support for Dealing with Mid-life</p> <p>Support for Widowed, Separated &amp; Divorced</p>		
<i>Empty Nest Family</i>	<p>Emphasize personal spirituality</p> <p>Exploring new opportunities</p> <p>Wisdom, acceptance, trust</p> <p>Dealing with own, spouses' and parents aging</p> <p>Realizing relationships to include children's spouses, in-laws and grandchildren</p>	<p>Marriage Enrichment</p> <p>Support for Struggling Marriages</p> <p>Support for Widowed, Separated &amp; Divorced</p> <p>Celebration of Aging Church Members</p> <p>Retirement Groups</p>		
<i>Aging Family</i>	<p>Acceptance</p> <p>Preparing for eternity, life review</p> <p>Integrates</p> <p>Emphasizing personal spirituality</p> <p>Wisdom, acceptance trust</p>	<p>Bereavement Ministry</p> <p>Outreach to Homebound Elderly</p> <p>Like-to-Like Social Group for Elderly</p> <p>Hospice</p> <p>Parish Nurses</p> <p>Reminiscence Opportunities for Older Church Members</p>		