



ENGAGE. ENCOURAGE. EDUCATE.

SUMMARY OF WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THE RECENT *EEE MEETINGS*

The Archdiocesan Family Life Office hosted a series of seven *Educate – Encourage – Engage Meetings* throughout the Archdiocese of New York. I am happy to report that our meetings lead to wonderful conversations and the identification of action items that will be addressed as part of our Office's Pastoral Plan.

The purpose of these meetings was to:

- **ENGAGE:** Meet and greet parish staff (clergy and laity, paid and volunteer) ministering in any field of Family Life including, but not limited to, marriage preparation, marriage enrichment, parenting, separated and divorced, bereavement, pornography, etc.
- **ENCOURAGE:** Provide resources and initiatives to be used in parishes and families.
- **EDUCATE:** Explore the riches found in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2021 document *Called to the Joy of Love: National Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry*.

The following is a summary of what we learned from those who attended the meetings:

- **The need for clarity regarding the mission of the Office of Family Life of the Archdiocese of New York.** Many seem to be unclear or unfamiliar with the work of the Office of Family Life and how it can be helpful to providing accompaniment and assistance to the parish, Catholic school, or individual family.
- **The need for engaged participation by all members of the parish and Catholic school families.** The Office of Family Life will work with parish and Catholic school leaders to assist families in their desire to participate, learn, and engage in the life of the parish and Catholic school, if one is present.
- **The need for initial and ongoing formation.** One of the four pillars of the USCCB's *Called to the Joy of Love* document is formation. Often we heard about the need of parish leaders to be formed and educated in the Faith in order to accompany others, including their own family members.

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- **The need for practical ways to connect family members to the Church.** People who are already involved in the life of the parish and/or Catholic school community enjoy the company of others. Initiatives and processes that seek to form a community are vital to the well-being of all.
- **The need for service to be provided at the local and regional level, in addition to the Archdiocesan level.** The Office will work to provide services at various locations throughout the Archdiocese and hold regular gatherings to continue to listen and respond to various needs.
- **The need for collaboration and innovation.** On several occasions, parents sought advice regarding how to collaborate with other parents when it comes to Catholic parenting. What may have worked for them just a few years ago, no longer seems viable. They see the Office of Family Life addressing the needs of the total family; as the family grows, so do the needs.
- **The need for ongoing conversation and commitment.** It was interesting to see the particular reason why people attended the meetings. Following most meetings, those gathered often ended by indicating their desire to continue the conversation.

Please make available to your parishioners our newly revised web site found at <https://archny.org/ministries-and-offices/family-life/> and encourage families to make use of the resources available as well as participate in any events and initiatives.

The schedule and registration information regarding the April/May 2023 **Educate – Encourage – Engage Meetings** can be found on <https://tinyurl.com/yc4mt8sa>