

But I'm Already Very Busy?

We all appear so busy these days. But we never forget our family do we? Being in a Parish Community Group will mean that once a month you will be forging a friendship with those around you, building the community into a true family in Christ, built on love.

What If I've Already Got Enough Friends?

Well, maybe a group needs you! And if you do have many friends, you don't have to lose them to belong to your Parish Community.

Some people are shy, some outward going, some find it easy to chat while others need a little encouragement. Its about bringing everyone together as a family for all.

Could it be that many people don't stay after weekend masses because they really don't know anyone to stop and chat with? What if we could create a network where everybody knew at least 10 families?

Benefits To The Parish

Through your group, you will find you are bringing a happy loving spirit to your parish.

Experience shows that Parish Community Groups are a great asset to the parish, since many people find the confidence to be more actively involved in parish life.



History Of "Our Parish Community—A family for all".

Originally called The Family Groups Movement, it was first identified as a valuable resource for parish community building during the Listening 2004 consultation. In 2007 the Bishops' Conference's Marriage & Family Life Project Office invited Fr Peter McGrath to help launch several Family Group parish pilots. Family Groups are now running many parishes across England and Wales. The Groups, established between 2007 and 2015, span the dioceses of Cardiff, East Anglia, Liverpool, Nottingham, Salford, Shrewsbury, Southwark, Westminster as well as Arundel and Brighton. A National Steering Group was convened in October 2014 to establish foundations for the Movement in England and Wales and to support and promote the development of new Family Group pilots. The Steering Group is run by the Family Groups and supported by regional FAMILIAS (Association for Catholic Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Ministry) representatives and a Chaplain.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
Parish Office 01483 416880
Or
Email godalming@abdiocese.org.uk



"I therefore take this opportunity to invite everyone in the Diocese – lay faithful and religious, deacons and priests – to join with me in forging our parishes into communities of saints, into strong, lively and welcoming schools of discipleship. Where all are welcomed and their dignity as children of God always recognized.... where all know the riches of the faith and seek to share it with others."

Bishop Richard Pastoral Plan(1.3) 2023



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON

Diocesan Formation Team

Serving the communities of our Diocese

The Arundel & Brighton Diocesan Trust
is a Registered Charity No. 252878

The Parish Community Group

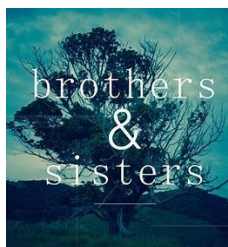
Have you ever heard someone say “I wish I knew more people in our church?” Perhaps it’s something you’ve said or thought yourself? Or perhaps you have wondered how you could be more involved? Or maybe you’ve said to yourself: “How can we show our children what it means to be Catholic?”

If you recognise yourself in these questions, perhaps Parish Community Groups are for you.

Changing Faces Into Names and Names Into Family

*Do you find it difficult meeting new people?
Nearly everyone does.*

By joining a group you will be in immediate contact with other families. Once you know them, you’ll find you are able to greet people at Mass in a completely new way. A Parish Community Group is a great way of helping you to break down the barriers if you find it difficult to talk with people.



What Are The Aims?

Very simply to build relationships and the bonds within your Parish, to share your life experiences, life journey, the fun times and the hard times together in the love of Christ and of each other. To support one another, encourage one another, to listen to one another. To be as St Paul calls us “brothers and sisters in Christ”.

Who Will Be In My Group?

A group is made up of about 20 members, with a cross section of ages, including some children of the same age – like an extended family.

Anyone and everyone is welcome to join, from grandparents to babies.

It truly is a family for all.



What Happens In a group?

The groups gather once a month or so for a picnic, barbecue, casserole night, quiz evening, games or in the park, etc to enjoy being with one another and gradually to develop strong, supportive relationships. Some gatherings can be just for the adults (to give parents of young children a bit of breathing space) while others include everybody.

It’s **YOUR** group and you can decide together what to do!

Every gathering is a special time to develop friendships and enjoy spending time together.

The groups work together to build the parish community by sharing experiences. This is a key way Parish Community Groups live the faith in the circumstances of everyday life.

How Committed Do I Have To Be?

A Parish Community Group is just like a family. The bonds that develop the feelings of belonging create a sense of responsibility for one another. As in any family, there is sometimes the need for extra effort. As with all aspects of life, “you reap what you sow”. You will get from the group what you put into the group.

What Can I Give To A Group?

Yourself! You can give your friendship, support and time to other members of your group. You just have to be yourself. You can sit down and talk, share and listen with others. What you do doesn’t really matter. It is **YOU** that matters. As with your own family, sometimes you need to make an extra effort. You might not feel like participating but you might just be what someone else needs.

What If I Feel Marginalised?

The motto is “**A FAMILY FOR ALL**”. Parish Community Groups provide an extended family for all who wish to belong: church-going or not. Groups reflect the diversity of the parish they are drawn from. There is giving and receiving by all members of the group to each other. Everyone has so much to offer. God has not favourites!

Do We Have To Be “Holy”?

You just have to be yourself. Many non-church attendees have found belonging to a group is a great way to become involved in the faith life of their family. Parish Community Groups provide a non-threatening environment for non-church going partners and friends. Come one come all!

“By creating a Parish Family for all, you will experience acceptance, love, care and support from those around you. The Lord’s call to us all, comes alive: ‘love one another as I have loved you’”(John 13:34)