

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Welcome to the Family Tree Programme.

We hope this programme will be used by families of all shapes and sizes, by people who are related, who live together as well as by people who wouldn't normally think of themselves as a family. A class or a school, a scout or youth group, a



sports club or community organisation or even a parish may feel that your common interest, location or activity makes you like a family on some level. Sharing some common bond which connects you, and respecting and caring for each other are the only real requirements for undertaking this programme.

Each of the four sessions in the programme looks at different parts of a tree and explores the ways in which a family is like a tree. They aim to highlight basic human and Christian values like honesty, respect, inclusion, forgiveness, dignity, cooperation and generosity by considering how the different parts of the tree care for each other and for the environment around them.

By exploring how the tree cares for the area in which it grows, the programme also tries to make the connection between our families and the wider human family, as well as the family of creation. It encourages a greater sense of care and responsibility for the earth and the people and animals with whom we share it, both locally and globally. And it asks us to look at our attitudes, choices and actions to see what more we can do and how we can do better – to branch out like the tree.

The Programme tries to create opportunities for each member of the family or group to identify or develop their own particular gifts and talents, and to give expression to them. It does this through its focus on communication, prayer and dialogue, various activities and the completion of a creative and practical task

We want this programme to be inclusive, and we have chosen materials which are both faith based and secular, and which could be used collectively by people of different faiths.

The sessions are designed to be completed in four different time slots. They can be done over several weeks, or if preferred, over several days in one week. As the leader of the programme, you will need to decide what works best for each group in their particular circumstances. We suggest you take some time to prepare materials and to become familiar with the tutorials.

In addition to the worksheet for each session, there are other resources for the programme as a whole which you find at the SMA website www.sma.ie using the Resources link for Family Tree Programme.

Most of all we hope that this programme will be interesting and fun, that it will be a time for including everyone and hearing everyone. We also hope that it will build relationships and understanding so that everyone can look out to the wider world and the people and things within it that need our care. In that way we hope that it will truly encourage us all to grow in love together.

The next step for you now is to move on to the first Tutorial.