

Getting the Word Out

PUBLIC RELATIONS AS A MINISTRY

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How to Make

Family

of the

Year

Event

Purposeful

Promoting good family life should be the work of each fraternity and region. The Secular Franciscans have the perfect venue to inspire and educate families in our communities – the Regional Family of the Year Award.

It is an honor for a family to be recognized as Regional Family of the Year, but, it can be much more -- a useful tool for education and for practicing the Family Commission. Society needs role-models for good family living, and we have them in abundance.

How do we get our members to nominate families?

Annual meetings are the perfect venue to reach almost every fraternity. Take ten minutes to explain the importance of the award -- not just because it is a way of recognizing the efforts of our families, but also because we are desperate as a society to see that good family living is possible and worthwhile. Inform the ministers that we need to broadcast to our communities how families can live the Gospel. Then, pass out a brief preliminary nomination form and tell them that you will collect it within 10 minutes. Also allow them to take extra nomination forms back to their fraternities so their members can also nominate families. Remind the fraternities often about getting nominations back soon.

How do we get all the information about our nominated families?

Once the preliminary forms are reviewed, the nominators should be contacted for additional information. The National Family of the Year nomination form can be an excellent guideline.

The families, themselves, should also be contacted by the Family Commission Chair. Additional information should be gleaned about family life, the how-tos of building family relationships, church and volunteer activities for all members of the family.

How do we honor our families of the year?

The annual meeting should be planned so that one of the dinners or lunches will focus on the Family of the Year. Family members, friends, fraternity members, parish priests, volunteer organizations where members of the family serve could all be invited. (Who knows, perhaps, among the guests, will be others who have the vocation.) Provide flowers and a plaque or some other memento of the event.

How do we use our Family of the Year to help educate the community?

An article announcing and profiling the family of the year for the region should be sent to media where the family lives. It should also be sent to the diocesan newspaper and the family's home parish. Included in the article should be some how-to advice on good family living.

If possible, and if the family is willing, interviews could be scheduled on local talk shows.

Benefits for such a campaign include: honoring a family for a job well done, promoting good family living in the community, good-will for the Secular Franciscans, and a greater understanding of the work of the SFO in relation to the Family Commission.