



ANNUAL REPORT

২০২৫

HELLO WE ARE THE IMAGINARIUM

We partner with congregations and communities to cultivate joy, belonging, and lifelong faith through innovative resources and collaborative learning communities that inspire fresh expressions of love for God and neighbor.

Together, we create spaces where people can encounter God, discover belonging, and grow into lives of joyful, everyday faithfulness.

The Imaginarium is funded by grants from Lilly Endowment Inc., built by the School of Theology and Ministry, and housed at Indiana Wesleyan University.

MEET OUR TEAM



BRANDON CHARLTON
Director of Grant Innovation
& Digital Strategy



REV. AMANDA DRURY, PHD
Executive Director of the
Imaginarium



REV. RONNIE FARMER JR.
Director of Christian
Parenting & Neighboring
Ministries



LIZZIE GATLIN
Ministry Programs
& Resource Manager



SHAMI GRIEVE
Director of Operations &
Project Management



MARIELENA GONZALEZ
Director of Finance
& Sustainability



REV. ETHAN LINDER
Associate Director of
Young Adult Innovation
Hub



TABBY LO
Design & Production
Manager



LAUREN SHEPHERD
Director of Nurturing
Children, Communication,
& Evaluation

REFLECTIONS FROM 2025

Greetings! As I look back on 2025, I am struck by how much of the Imaginarium’s work is about creating spaces where we get to witness what God is already doing—in churches, in communities, and in the lives of children and families.

This year, our work with the Strengthening Ministry with Children Coordination Program has kept us connected with 295 organizations across the country. Many of these organizations are now in the middle of their grant cycles, which means we are beginning to hear remarkable stories of what is happening on the ground. We have a front-row seat to ministries experimenting, learning, and discovering new ways to nurture the faith of children and those who care for them. Most meaningful are the stories of children and families whose lives are being transformed more fully into the image of God. It is a privilege to witness this work and to help these organizations learn from one another.

Closer to home, our Imaginarium: Parents program wrapped up another wonderful year. One of the highlights has been supporting parents throughout Grant County as they gathered in discipleship groups to talk, learn, pray, and practice faith together. What we have learned locally is now preparing us for what comes next: in the coming year, we look forward to sharing these resources with children’s ministries beyond Grant County.

We are also deeply grateful for our partnership with KidzMatter. This year, that partnership included hosting a PrayGround for more than 700 pastors and children’s ministry leaders.

Our Young Adult Innovation Hub also continued its important work as we enter the final stretch of this initiative. We have loved hearing updates from the churches that have partnered with us, learning from their experiments, and seeing the different ways they are creating meaningful connections with young adults. With one year remaining, we look forward to welcoming our final group of partner churches and entering one last season of iteration and learning together.

Finally, none of this work happens without the remarkable people who make up the Imaginarium staff. I am deeply grateful for this team. They are wise and competent people who deeply love Jesus and care about the work entrusted to us. I look forward to coming to work with them, and I am continually amazed by both the amount of work that gets done and the amount of laughter that happens along the way. It is a gift to do this work together. We are also grateful for the faculty and staff in the School of Theology and Ministry at Indiana Wesleyan University. It is a joy and a privilege to work in an office that wakes up everyday caring about the local church.

As we look toward another year, I am grateful for what we have learned, for the people who have trusted us to learn alongside them, and for the many ways we continue to see God at work in the lives of children, families, young adults, and the leaders who serve them.

REV. AMANDA DRURY, PHD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE IMAGINARIUM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STRENGTHENING MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN COORDINATION PROGRAM	4
IMAGINARIUM: PARENTS	6
YOUNG ADULT INNOVATION HUB	8
WHAT’S NEXT?	10



The Strengthening Ministry with Children Coordination Program supports 295 grant programs led by organizations across the United States. These organizations—including congregations, denominations, religious agencies, colleges, universities, seminaries, and nonprofits—have received grants from Lilly Endowment Inc. through one of two initiatives:



CHRISTIAN PARENTING & CAREGIVING

125 grant programs focused on supporting parents and other caregivers as they nurture faith and share their values with children.



NURTURING CHILDREN THROUGH WORSHIP & PRAYER

170 grant programs focused on helping congregations develop worship experiences and prayer practices that more intentionally and fully engage children.

The Coordination Program connects and equips these grantees through an Annual Gathering in Indianapolis, regular webinars and learning opportunities, a virtual community on Mighty Networks, affinity groups, and ongoing programmatic and technical grant support.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

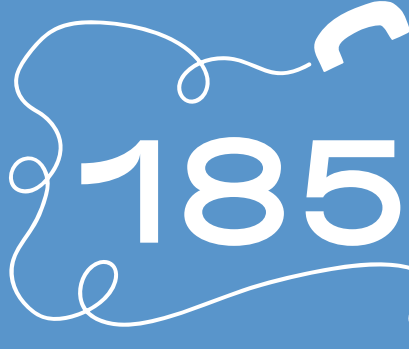


538 PEOPLE

ATTENDED THE ANNUAL
GATHERING IN INDIANAPOLIS,
TAKING PLACE OCTOBER 22–24.



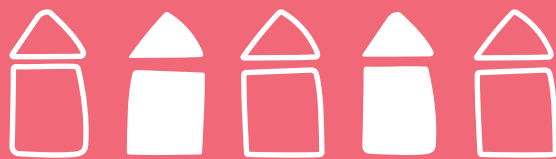
Snapshots from the Annual Gathering.



185

INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATED
IN AT LEAST ONE OPEN
OFFICE HOURS CALL.





147

INDIVIDUALS
CONNECTED ACROSS
21 AFFINITY GROUPS.



GRANTEE STATISTICS & GEOGRAPHY

The **295** grant programs represent a diverse network of Christian organizations:

- **37%** are congregations and denominational organizations
- **33%** are Christian higher education institutions
- **30%** are parachurch organizations and religious nonprofits

KEY

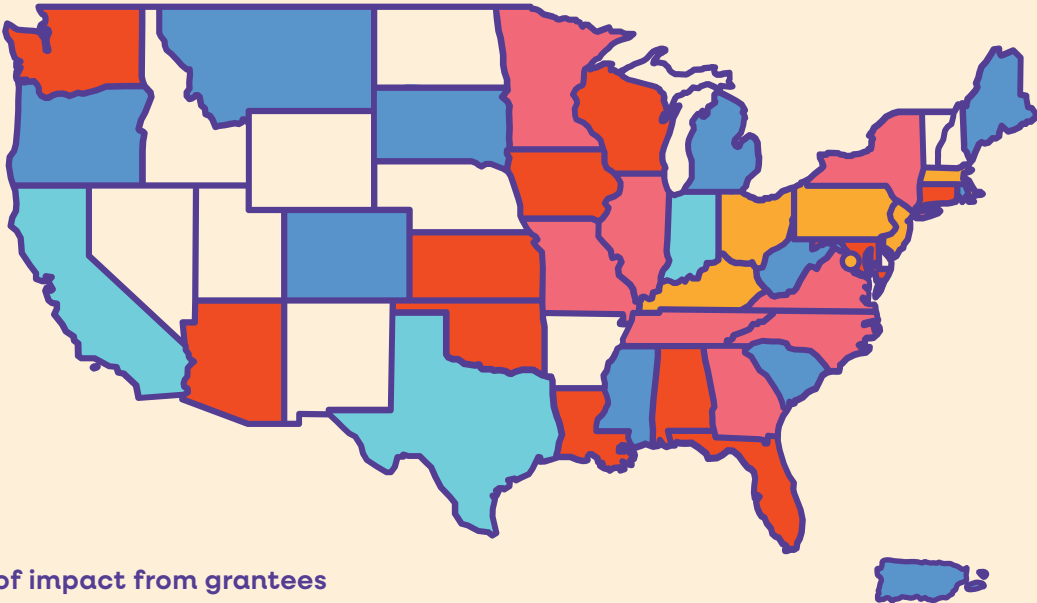
1-2 Programs

3-4 Programs

5-8 Programs

10-14 Programs

18-19 Programs



Read stories of impact from grantees
across the country.

IMAGINARIUM: PARENTS

Imaginarium: Parents partners with Grant County congregations, parents, and caregivers to discover meaningful practices of faith that are embedded in everyday life and rooted in racial harmony. Through special events, resources, and opportunities for connection and education, we seek to help parents and caregivers develop the empowering conviction that faith formation is already happening within their care.

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING & HOW WE ARE RESPONDING



ORDINARY PRACTICES ARE WHERE FORMATION IS ALREADY HAPPENING.

We create resources and tools that integrate faith into existing routines rather than asking families to create entirely new ones.



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS CREATE A STRONGER FOUNDATION FOR FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP.

Our Family Discipleship Groups give couples and individuals space to tend to the relational foundations that shape their parenting and family life.



THE MOST EFFECTIVE SUPPORT IS CONCRETE, NOT CONCEPTUAL.

Our formative work with parents begins by reducing burden and offering simple, practical ways for families to interpret and inhabit their everyday lives with God.



HURRY IS A SPIRITUAL BARRIER

We create spaces for families to connect and access meaningful resources that reduce burden rather than add more tasks to busy lives.



The Stevens Family at their holiday family photo session.

MOMENTUM EVENTS

Momentum Events serve as consistent touchpoints of hospitality that reduce burden and create space for parents and children to simply be together. At each gathering, families receive practical tools and prompts that help them notice God's presence in everyday life.

Activities have included "I Don't Feel Like Cooking" nights at IWU's Baldwin Cafeteria, family movie events at IWU's Globe Theater, and free holiday family photo sessions.



Explore and purchase Imaginarium: Parents resources through our online store.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

700+

CHILDREN'S PASTORS &
FAITH LEADERS RECEIVED
RESEARCH ON PLAY AT THE
KIDZMATTER CONFERENCE.



13 LOCAL
PARENTS

WERE TRAINED TO LEAD A FAMILY
DISCIPLESHIP GROUP.



430

PEOPLE REGISTERED FOR
A MOMENTUM EVENT



99.3%
OF REGISTRANTS

OPTED IN TO TEXT REMINDERS,
REINFORCING THAT FAMILIES VALUE
SIMPLE, DIRECT COMMUNICATION
THAT MAKES PARTICIPATION EASIER.



244 FAMILIES REGISTERED FOR "I
DON'T FEEL LIKE COOKING"
EVENTS, WHICH TOTALED

809
INDIVIDUALS



247

PEOPLE ATTENDED
FAMILY MOVIE EVENTS



63 FAMILIES REGISTERED
FOR A FREE HOLIDAY
PHOTO SESSION

YOUNG ADULT Innovation HUB

The Young Adult Innovation Hub partners with congregations to build relationships, create spaces, and develop opportunities that engage and empower young adults in transformational ministry. We encourage congregations to reimagine young adult ministry in ways that respond to the realities of young adulthood within their unique communities and contexts.

2025 GRANT ACTIVITIES

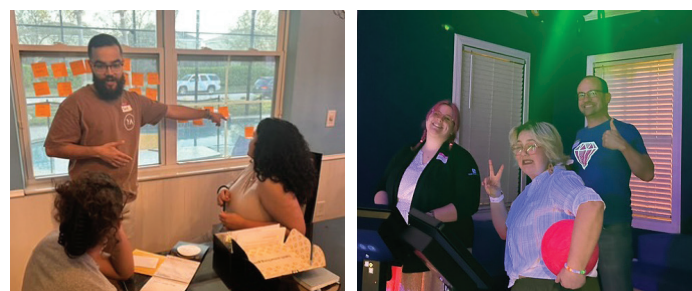
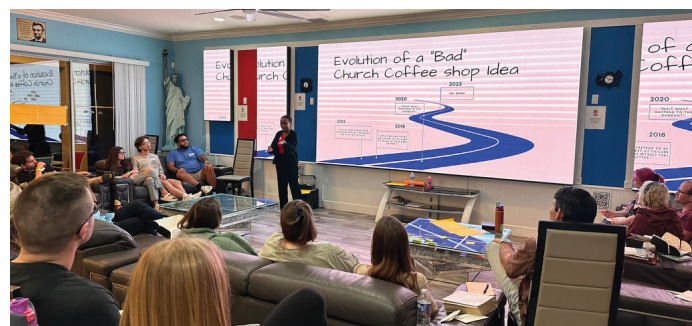
This past year, the Young Adult Innovation Hub focused on sustaining relationships with previous Imaginarium Fellows while recruiting, equipping, and mobilizing a new cohort. At the same time, we continued identifying and developing resources that can equip future young adult ministry innovators.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

THE HATCHATHON IN ORLANDO

In February, our Fellows gathered in Orlando for a Hatchathon with Ministry Incubators, providing an opportunity to imagine, develop, and strengthen their ministry ideas together.

This year's gathering generated a growing number of projects centered on neighbor-focused ministry and engaging young adults through the life of their local communities.



Highlights from the Hatchathon.

A NEW COHORT OF FELLOWS

We partnered with six new congregations, each receiving a \$15,000 Imaginarium Fellows grant to develop and implement innovative approaches to young adult ministry.

Through our work with these congregations, one insight continues to emerge: young adults want to be load-bearing participants in their local churches. They are looking for meaningful responsibilities, supportive relationships, and genuine opportunities to lead.

ONGOING SUPPORT AND COACHING

To help congregations move their ideas into practice, we paired each congregation with a coach who provided at least three months of ongoing support.



Explore stories and projects
from past Fellows.

OVERALL WINS



ESTABLISHED A
**DIVERSE AND
INCLUSIVE**
NETWORK OF PASTORS, CONGREGATIONS,
AND MINISTRY PROJECTS.



DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED A STRATEGY FOR
**PROMOTION AND
RECRUITMENT**



STRENGTHENED CONNECTIONS WITH PRACTITIONERS IN
**YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY,
RESEARCH, & STORYTELLING.**



IDENTIFIED A STARTER KIT
OF MINISTRY MODELS THAT CAN BE
ADAPTED & SCALED
IN A VARIETY OF CONTEXTS.



BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE
& COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS TO HELP

**LOCAL
CONGREGATIONS**
RECEIVE AND IMPLEMENT GRANT-FUNDED
PROJECTS.



AWARDED GRANTS TO
**FORTY-NINE
CONGREGATIONS,**
EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES TO
EXPERIMENT WITH NEW APPROACHES TO
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY.

WHAT'S NEXT?

KEY				JANUARY	
● Strengthening Ministry with Children Coordination Program ● Young Adult Innovation Hub ● Imaginarium: Parents					
FEBRUARY ● Coaching with Current Fellows ● Academic Advisory Committee Gathering		MARCH ● Wesleyan Church Children's Pastor Conference ● I Don't Feel Like Cooking Tonight – Grant County Family Event		APRIL	
MAY ● Creation of Sustainability Kit		JUNE		JULY	
AUGUST		SEPTEMBER ● Launch New Affinity Groups		OCTOBER ● KidzMatter ● Annual Gathering	
NOVEMBER		DECEMBER ● Award Observe & Discern Grants ● Open Application - Final Round of Subgranting			