

Church Implementation Guide



Shaping Lifelong Faith

We need not go to heathen lands, or even leave the narrow circle of the home, if it is there that our duty lies, in order to work for Christ. We can do this in the home circle, in the church, among those with whom we associate, and with whom we do business. STC 81

It is in the home that the real work must begin. The greatest burden rests upon those who have the responsibility of educating the youth, of forming their character. Ellen White, *Child Guidance*

Implementing Home Grown In Your Church

Welcome to the Home Grown implementation guide. This tool is designed to be worked through with your church leadership team/board/ministry leaders. The goal of the tool is to help your church become more focused on impacting what happens in the homes of the people who make up your church family.

Here's the main point.

Church is the watering can – Home is the soil

We can put a lot of energy into creating great programmes for our church family. These programmes are valuable and vitally important however they are the water and nutrients for the plant. They make little difference if the plant is not in good soil. The soil is what happens at home.

We can develop bigger watering cans with more nutritious water however if the plant is not in fertile soil our efforts are somewhat limited. Keep in mind that in cases where people are in homes that are not positive spiritual environments and where they have little control over changing that environment we need to do what we can with the opportunities we have. However, ideally, the home is the primary environment for faith development.

It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is his first school. Here, with his parents as instructors, he is to learn the lessons that are to guide him throughout life...Parents, remember your home is a training school, in which your children are to be prepared for the home above. p1



Discussion Questions for your board:

Why do you think that, if our children follow the current trend of the Christian church in Australia, 7 out of 10 will have disconnected from faith by the time they are 25?

What factors do you think cause 80% of Christian homes in Australia to have no prayer or family worship time in the home?

What factors do you think stop families eating meals together?

Question 1

Who do you think is responsible for the spiritual development of a child?

How we answer that one question alone will have major implications for how we see ministry to families and the children within them.

Question 2

How do we get parents to become the primary spiritual voices in their children's lives?

Question 3

What factors do you think have, in many cases, have led parents to abandon or devalue their role as being their child's primary spiritual voice.

Question 4

Why do you think many parents are more interested in their child's 'success' than they are their spiritual growth?

Question 5

Based on our reading for last month and discussion at our last regional group, what ideas have you been thinking through that will resource parents to be the primary spiritual influences in their child's life and will make the church an environment that supports families in discipling children?

What is Home Grown?

Home Grown is a strategy being implemented by the Greater Sydney Conference Church Resource Team that aims to have each home in our conference make changes to become a more positive environment for faith development. This strategy includes every person in our conference. Whether it be a family with children, young people flatting or a single person household we believe every home can take at least one step toward being a more active environment for faith development.

We Believe

- That the home is the primary environment for faith development.
- Every home can take a step toward being a more positive environment for faith development.
- God never intended a family's faith to occur apart from local church engagement - however 'church/school' cannot do it alone.
- No home is the perfect environment and even in the perfect environment (Eden) the possibility is still there of choosing against God's way.
- Parents need churches that will help them know how to be spiritual leaders and where their children can really belong to a faith community.

The home has the greatest impact on young lives; with few exceptions, if we fail to impact the home, we will never make a lasting impact on children.
George Barna – Raising Spiritual Champions

What is the Strategy?

The Home Grown strategy is more an overarching focus that many things we are already doing can be grouped under to emphasize the difference that activity makes to everyday 'home' life. We are looking at church life through a new set of lenses that spotlights the impact our church makes in the home environment. It addresses the imbalance that has developed where people think 'church' and school have the responsibility for spiritual growth when that role is primarily a function of what happens at home.

It is part of our overall conference strategy of growing in discipleship and will take each of our five focus areas and particularly look at how we can promote these values in the home. It is a strategy that we anticipate will be particularly important for us to achieve Enabler 1 of our strategic framework – growing passionate spirituality. While we have focused a lot on what we can do in a congregation to promote discipleship, this strategy more particularly aims to impact the home level.

The strategy will include development of tools that help people analyse the daily patterns of their homes, determine their next step and shape an overall faith development plan for their home. It will then include an electronic newsletter, reminder tools, new resources and promotion of various existing resources to continue to promote the home grown message.

It includes synergizing strategies between conference departments to leverage impact from the energy the departments are already putting in.

Examples of how each department can be part of the strategy include:

- Children's Ministry – Promoting and resourcing family worship ideas and providing faith development tools for parents and children.
- Communications – Promoting the overall concept and maintaining awareness
- Family Ministries – Marriage tools/resources, Resources for growing healthy family dynamics.
- Health – Promoting an holistic picture of health in the context of home and next steps in terms of holistic health
- Personal Ministries and Sabbath School – Promoting ideas for serving in a home context and leveraging Sabbath School as an environment to encourage the process.
- Prayer – Promoting 'home grown' prayer resources/ideas
- Stewardship – Promoting discipleship in the context of family particularly in terms of stewarding of time, talents and treasure.
- Woman's Ministry – Promoting a holistic picture of how woman shape a positive home environment

- Youth Ministries – Leveraging existing programmes to promote positive steps at home. Promoting faith development at home with this age group.

The overall strategy will include conference departments, pastors and local church leadership teams combining ideas and resources to stimulate positive faith development in the home.

The Next Step?

While there are excellent tools, especially for nuclear families, that outline what it means to be a positive environment for spiritual growth, it seems many of these tools have limited impact and at best are used by people/families that are already moving in a positive direction. The Home Grown strategy attempts to break these tools down to smaller steps so that each home, regardless of its current point, can take one positive step. It is anticipated that this one step will provide a stepping stone that then leads to more steps. Each home will probably have a different next step.

Next steps may include.

- Eating at least one meal together as a family each week without the television on.
- Parents praying for the child as they drop them to school
- Parents praying in their drive way, to be an effective husband and father, before entering the house after work
- Developing in a particular heart building habit personally or as a home
- Using various resources for a creative home worship time at least once in the week
- Cutting back on screen time to create more 'together' time.
- Using a marriage resource to take a next step in the quality of their marriage,
- Having a prayer journal

There are as many ideas as there are people and each one step can be a starting point to moving in a more positive direction.

Assessment Tool:

This short tool is designed to provide a starting pointing for your discussions. It combines the opinions of your leadership team into one measurement that will be useful in establishing where your leadership team currently sees the church in terms of Home Grown effectiveness.

- Answer the following statements as they apply to your church.

5=This is exactly us
4=Very much describes us
3=Often
2=To some extent
1=Hardly
0=Not at all

- When your leadership team have each added their totals average them to determine a Home Grown score for your congregation.

1	I think most of this congregation would be involved in a daily time of spiritual growth.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2	Family worship is encouraged in our church	0	1	2	3	4	5
4	I think most people in our church would know how to study the Bible for themselves in a way that helps them grow in their relationship with God	0	1	2	3	4	5
5	Our church considers that impact a new programme will have on home life before adding a new programme or ministry.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6	Our church is intentional about having children sense a feeling of belonging.	0	1	2	3	4	5
7	Our church is way more than what happens on Sabbath mornings	0	1	2	3	4	5
8	Our sermons mostly include application of how the message impacts our ordinary, everyday lives.	0	1	2	3	4	5
9	This church is very supportive of family life	0	1	2	3	4	5
10	This church is very intentional about strengthening marriages.	0	1	2	3	4	5

1	This church makes resources available that are helpful for personal spiritual growth.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2	Our church provides opportunities for families to serve together	0	1	2	3	4	5
3	The various ministries in our church work together in a way that supports faith development in the home	0	1	2	3	4	5
4	Personal spiritual practices are often emphasised in our church	0	1	2	3	4	5
5	This church encourages parents to be the spiritual leaders of their children	0	1	2	3	4	5
6	Our church understands that faith development primarily happens at home	0	1	2	3	4	5
7	Our church cares about each members spiritual growth	0	1	2	3	4	5
8	I believe our church moves people to experience God's love	0	1	2	3	4	5
9	In our groups, classes and sermons our church engages with Scripture in creative ways that connect with life	0	1	2	3	4	5
10	Most people in our church could easily explain how their faith relates to everyday life	0	1	2	3	4	5

Growing in God's word Total

Enter your scores in the Table below for each of the five growth areas. Then average out the scores of your team.

My Score	Team Average

Then for **each area** use the following scale as a guide

Just Beginning 0-10	Needs more intentionality 11-20	On the way	Happening Well 31-40	Very Well Developed 41-50
-------------------------------	---	------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Home Grown Resources currently being developed.

- DVD that promotes faith development ideas especially ideas for next steps. Includes examples of homes around Sydney.
 - CD that can be listened to in the car that promotes the strategy and stimulates thinking
 - Table Talk tin that stimulates faith development conversations at meal times.
 - Gracelink Extension Cards that help integrate the gracelink values into daily life
 - Next step tool that helps families analyse their daily plan and leverage time for faith development.
 - Planning process tool for church leadership teams
 - Sermon outlines that promote the Home Grown values that can be used by pastors/elders/other preachers.
 - Resource packs for life Milestones that help recalibrate Home Grown concepts. The milestones currently being developed are.
 - Pregnancy – Preparing for the faith development of your baby and the impact on your connection with God.
 - Child Dedication – Developing a faith development plan for your family.
 - First Day of School – What it means to be growing in faith in the school context.
 - Baptism.
- Still to be developed – Leaving School, Marriage

Home Grown Sabbath (develop as separate guide)

Major Home Grown focus that encourages people to put in place and try one step for a month.

Package for churches:

- Sermon outline they may wish to use for adults or children
- Drama script
- Video clips promoting the ideas
- Bulletin cover with information overview
- Banners/posters
- Resource box

Deuteronomy 6

Based on Deuteronomy 6:7 there are four key times all families can leverage to build the faith of their children.

- Meal Time – When you sit at home – Focussed discussion as a teacher to establish valued
- Drive Time – When you walk along the road – Informal dialogue as a friend to help interpret life
- Bed Time – When you lie down – Intimate conversation as a counselor to listen to the heart.
- Morning Time – When you get up – Encouraging words as a coach.

In Your Church:

Making sure child dedications include an emphasis on the role of the home in shaping the child.

Marriage enrichment opportunities. Date night. Marriage month,

Prayer ideas – prayer reminders

Journalling – Home Grown journal being developed.

Equipping the home to be the primary place where faith is lived and nurtured should be the goal of every ministry of the church rather than just adding family ministry to the Children's Ministry Director's job description.

Learning faith skills

Take it Home Sabbaths that focus on ideas to share in the home. May include testimonies of ideas that work. DVD segments sharing ideas that work.

Service projects that can include various ages and whole families can be part of.

Linking Church and Home – Growing Children

- Parenting seminars that help parents grow in their role as primary spiritual leader.
- Multi-generational small groups where children worship and study the Bible with adults for at least some of the time
- Having children serve in various roles around the church with an adult
- Reworking children's programmes so that parents are more interactive in the programme (maybe a section at the start of Sabbath School that parents and children do together)
- Train local church boards/leadership teams to rethink how the church supports the home as primary spiritual environment.
- Work through a strategy for how the church will work with children who are not from a Christian home or a home where we know that the parents will not be on board with positive spiritual growth.
- Resource parents with ideas/tools for family worship
- Resource parents with ideas for discipling their children
- Addressing cultural discipline issues and equip parents for more effective discipline that can grow the child.
- Equip parents in developing a relationship with God.
- Develop service events that can include families.

- Equip parents, model to them and work with them to do Bible Studies with their children (working with the church) when possible.
- Equip older members to be mentors, carers in the church (keep in mind Safe Place guidelines)
- Put in place prayer support people who agree to pray for a particular child.
- Develop sermons on Christian Living, Spiritual Growth

What some of our churches are already doing.

(This is not a complete list, please add what your church is already doing that works in joining home – school – church dots so that we can put the ideas together to stimulate thinking)

- Making one Sabbath a month 'together' Sabbath where Sabbath School, worship service and AY's are all together and include aspects that will particularly connect with various age groups.
- Running a together time for the first 15minutes of Children's Sabbath School before parents leave for adult classes.
- Have a prayer network to make sure each child is prayed for daily by another person in the church apart from immediate family.
- Making sure adults are intentional about learning the names of children in the congregation. (keeping safe places in mind)
- Running classes for parents on how to grow their children spiritually
- Family small groups where children are involved.
- Intentionally involving children in ministries particularly welcoming, sound, offering collection, prayers.
- Running workshops on how to go about family worship

Build auippmn existing church vision

Build into existing church calendar

Establish new measurement of success – what gets measured gets done.

Introduce simple measures that will keep you focused on Home Grown strategies.

Give 'Home' Lenses to everyone rather the creating a new 'silo'

Every home is unique due to its season in life, the ages, children or not, marital health and special circumstances. Provide tools that make it easy for families to customize.

Orange Thinking:

The Home = **Red** (where the heart is)

Church & School = **Yellow** (the light of the world)

Imagine the power when **Home** and **Church** and **School** collide

Think Orange

This section is developed from: Reggie Joiner *Think Orange* David C. Cook Colorado Springs, 2009.

Average Child per year:

Home: 1950hrs (awake)

School: 1300hrs (hopefully awake)

Church: 130hrs

Church is The 'Watering Can' and while what happens is vital in terms of belonging to a community and being resourced for spiritual growth, the real action is at home and school.

Appendix Resources:

Joining The Dots Home – Church – School

Wake up, watch TV, sit through class, play with friends, eat, afterschool sports, play Wii, homework, muck around on the computer, Bed – Wake up and do it all again.

“I know we should be doing something about family worship – we’ll get to that next month when things aren’t so busy.” “I send my children to a church school, I pay enough for them to sort this one out.” “I drop my kids to Sabbath School and even take them to Adventurers and Pathfinders – the youth pastor will sort them out if he’s worth his salt– after all isn’t it his job?”

In the Greater Sydney Conference our focus on Growing in Discipleship includes strategies to create disciple-making environments for our children. It is as children that our worldviews are being shaped, values formed and most decisions made for Christ. The older a person gets the more unlikely they are to change.

However, to make this work takes all of us. No one programme, event, ministry or even school can do it alone. We need to be very intentional about joining the dots between home, school and church. While spiritual growth is the Holy Spirit’s work, we are called to do all we can to create environments conducive to the Spirit’s leading.

Home:

Home is the soil of discipleship. It is where children come to understand who they are and how to interpret the world. Children spend about 1900 hours at home each year (this does not include sleep). While we want our children to be ‘successful’ and often go to great lengths to help our children with their academic achievements, what matters more than anything is that our kids have an authentic relationship with God.

A child’s primary picture of God is deeply connected to the picture they have of their father. A child’s understanding of how God relates to them is shaped by their observations of their parent’s marriage. A child’s ability to understand God’s Grace is connected to the unconditional love of mum and dad. In Greater Sydney, our departmental team will be working with churches to deliver and promote resources for family worship, tools for growing in faith as a family and ideas to help in shaping faith building conversations and experiences.

If you are a parent, your personal relationship with God and with your spouse affects your children more than you realise.

In our consumeristic society, it seems the things that matter most i.e. worship, serving, connecting, growing and sharing are mortgaged at the altar of ‘success’. We can be left with homes that are beautiful buildings but do not contain spiritually fertile soil. While in an imperfect world we will have situations that are not ideal, and every family has some degree of

dysfunction, together we need to do what we can to return the primary place for spiritual growth back to the home. At the same time, we need to remember that even in an ideal home faith is still a choice and sometimes our children will choose directions we would rather they didn't. What we need to do together is shape environments that lift the chances of healthy decisions being made.

School:

Our higher calling – and God's ultimate desire – is for our students to connect, in a real way, with Him. We fight to compete for the attention of our students in a modern world that pulls at the materialistic, mind dulling, self-loving human nature in all of us all. How then, can we truly nurture in our students a meaningful encounter with God? (From the Encounter Bible Curriculum Overview)

A mother and father are not the only adult influences our children need for healthy faith development. Our children spend more than 1300 hours at school. Obviously this is a big factor in terms of spiritual formation.

At our Adventist Schools a new Bible Curriculum is being implemented, *Encounter*, that is shaped on the building blocks of healthy faith development. Our church pastors are also being made familiar with this curriculum so that their sermons, language and local church initiatives can work with the same foundations in mind.

Our schools provide healthy role models and environments that promote spiritual discovery and growth. A child's faith development is significantly enhanced if another adult, who has a relationship with the child, gives the same faith message as a parent. Our schools are an ideal place for this to happen. Our schools also promote a worldview that integrates faith into all aspects of life.

At the same time, school cannot take the place of home. It is a watering can for the plant, not the soil. Even though we see lots of amazing stories where the Holy Spirit changes lives in the school environment, in spite of difficult home situations, the ideal is to have school complementing what happens at home.

Church:

In the past parents have seemingly abdicated the spiritual growth of their children to the church. While Sabbath Schools, Adventurers and various church programmes are important, once again, the ideal is for these environments to reinforce what happens at home. Our children spend about 130 hours each year in a local church programme. The spiritual growth impact, while vital, is limited. Our local church leaders are being equipped for effective faith development but they cannot, for the most part, take the place of the spiritual influence primary care givers can have.

All of our departments are working toward equipping our leaders for effective discipleship. However spiritual formation is way more about relationship than it is programmes. This is where it takes all of us. Do you know the names of

the children in your congregation? Do you think the children in your congregation sense that they really belong in the church family? Have you thought about what a church experience looks like from a child's perspective? Do you support parents and make their job easier? Does your congregation do anything to help grow marriages?

Kids need parents who will help them advance in their relationship with God. Kids need environments that promote healthy pictures of what it means to grow in faith – our Schools. Parents need churches that will help them know how to be spiritual leaders and where their children can really belong to a faith community.

Imagine the impact when home, school and local church collide.

For more information on children's faith development, or for family discipleship resources contact brendanpratt@adventist.org.au or contact the Children's Ministry Department at the Conference Office.

Family-Equipping Ministry

Joy Strother in *Three Perspectives on Family Ministry* 2010

What stops young people growing to have a biblical worldview?

Moral Therapeutic Deism

Despite strong interest in religion and even active participation in vibrant churches, millions of students in our ministries were unable to articulate even the most basic tenets of Christian faith.

(2005 report from sociologist Christian Smith)

- Young people are emerging from our children's ministries and youth programs with the belief that religion is all about doing better and becoming happier; for the most part they perceive God as a distant and benign Creator whose purpose is largely to help us feel better about ourselves.
- Despite all the investments and supposed advances in age-organized ministries over the past thirty years, churched children and youth are growing up less likely than ever before to have a biblical perspective on life.
- In our well-intentioned efforts to reach students for Jesus Christ we have developed ministry models failing to call parents to embrace their role as primary disciple-makers in their children's lives. The church has tacitly encouraged this parental abdication by relentlessly promoting benefits and life changes that would accompany increased

participation in ministry activities. As a result, the church and families are being split spiritually along too many key fault lines.

The home has the greatest impact on your lives; with few exceptions, if we fail to impact the home, we will never make a lasting impact on students.

- The ministries having the greatest success at seeing young people emerge into mature Christians, rather than contented churchgoers, are those that facilitated a parent-church partnership focused on instilling specific spiritual beliefs and practices in a child's life from a very early age. (Barna Research)

Two Central Actions:

1. Engaging and equipping parents as their children's primary disciplers
2. Partnering with parents to develop a definite plan for their children's Christian formation.

Parents

- Most parents did have a purpose for their children's lives, but this purpose was not maturity in Jesus Christ. Their purpose was for their children to be 'happy'.
- Most parents, even Christian, would default to the world's definitions of happiness and success in parenting unless we consistently placed a biblical understanding of their responsibilities on front of them.
- Because most parents in our churches were never disciplined by their own parents, these parents did not naturally arrive at biblical conclusions about their responsibilities.

Objectives

- Our goal as a church is to partner with parents to see God raise up generations of children and students who love God with all their hearts, soul and strength. We hope that our students and children will:
 1. Love God as a way of life (worship) Rom 12:1-2
 2. Love others as a way of life (service) Mark 10:45
 3. Love the church and understand their roles in the body of Christ (community) Eph 4:4-7
 4. Love the Bible and can handle it properly as the authority and foundation for life (scripture) 2 Tim 3:15-17
 5. Love to tell others about Christ (the gospel) and share their stories (testimony) Rom 10:14-15
 6. Love to grow closer to God through personal spiritual disciplines such as prayer and Bible study (discipleship) 1 Tim 4:7-12

A Collision of Faith: Home – Church – School

Our higher calling – and God's ultimate desire – is for our students to connect, in a real way, with Him. We fight to compete for the attention of our students in a modern world that pulls at the materialistic, mind dulling, self-loving human nature in all of us. How then, can we truly nurture in our students a meaningful encounter with God? (From the 'Encounter' Bible Curriculum Overview)

"I know we should be doing something about family worship – we'll get to that next month when things aren't so busy." "I send my children to a church school, I pay enough for them to sort this one out." "I drop my kids to Sabbath School – the youth pastor will sort them out if he's worth his salt– after all isn't it his job?"

'Growing In Discipleship' is the mission statement for the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. All the ministries of the conference are working together to create a disciple-making environment. The Growing Fruitful Disciples model is being used extensively in this process. The model provides a framework for developing a shared understanding of discipleship. It also provides a framework for shaping and delivering resources. Pastors, teachers and church leaders are able to see how the various resources and processes being promoted by the conference are part of an overall discipleship picture.

A key focus area in the Discipleship strategy is being intentional about disciple-making environments for children. It is during childhood that worldviews are shaped, values formed and most decisions for Christ are made^[BS1]. (George Barna, 'Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions' Regal, 2003 p.47)

No one programme, event, ministry or even school can do it alone. The conference emphasises the need to join the dots between home, school and church. While spiritual growth is the Holy Spirit's work, the conference believes it is called to do all it can to create environments conducive to the Spirit's leading.

Church:

Over the last four years the conference has put significant resources into creating healthy church discipleship environments. The pastors and elders have been extensively trained in the discipleship framework and much work has been done on growing pastors in their personal spiritual practices.

Every second week pastors from across the city come together for discipleship resourcing and discussion on how their discipleship plan is being implemented. The conference discipleship coordinator meets with church

leadership teams to help discern God's leading for that congregation. The team then maps out its next step. The discipleship inventory is used to give a quick diagnosis of the congregation. The fruitful disciples framework helps the church identify areas to work on and how to synergise the ministries of the church around discipleship.

Conference leaders are very pleased with how congregations that represent various expressions of being church have embraced the discipleship strategy. While each church has a different '*next step*' overall the churches are working together with a common framework.

While the conference was seeing significant increases in various measures of church health the strategic planning team of the conference still felt they were missing the mark. It was then that the Home Grown discipleship strategy was developed and is currently being implemented.

In 'Child Guidance' Ellen White, in the first 52 chapters spells out the importance of the home being the primary environment for discipleship.

It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is his first school. Here, with his parents as instructors, he is to learn the lessons that are to guide him throughout life...Parents, remember your home is a training school, in which your children are to be prepared for the home above. p1

Later chapters outline the important role of the school in shaping a child's character including a chapter (54) describing how teachers and parents can work in partnership.

The character of the work done in our church schools should be of the very highest order...both at home and at school simplicity and godliness should be maintained p310

Our schools are the Lord's special instrumentality to fit the children and youth for missionary work p311

In the formation of character no other influences count so much as the influence of the home. The teacher's work should supplement that of the parents, but is not to take its place. In all that concerns the well-being of the child, it should be the effort of parents and teachers to cooperate p319.

Later chapters emphasise the place of a healthy church community in the spiritual formation of children. While the church plays a vital role in giving a sense of belonging, providing community and supporting parents, faith development starts at home^[BS2]. Chapter 81 describes the coordination between the home and church.

Ministers may do their work faithfully and well, yet it will amount to very little if parents neglect their work p550

At every opportunity let the story of Jesus' love be repeated to the children p552

Home Grown:

The Home Grown strategy still uses the Growing Fruitful Disciples Framework as a base however translates it to a home environment. The conference recognise that, for the most part, church is the watering can while what happens at home is the soil of discipleship. Children spend about 1900 hours at home each year (this does not include sleep). It is in the home where most children come to understand who they are and how to interpret the world.

The Home Grown strategy aims to have every family taking the next step in terms of discipleship. From initial observations of the strategy it seems once a home takes one discipleship step other steps soon follow.

One father who was part of a Home Grown Sabbath School Class decided his 'next step' would be to pray for his children as he dropped them to school and watched them walk through the gate. He rarely prayed for his children. The next Sabbath he described how this step brought tears to his eyes and he then found himself praying for his children during the day and even praying as he arrived home from work, before walking inside, that he would be the husband and father his family needed. That family now has family worship as one step grows into further steps.

The local church, resourced by the conference, comes along side with supporting ministries. The conference coordinates Home Grown parenting workshops, family worship resourcing events and training for how children's ministry leaders can impact the home. The conference's marriage enrichment programmes focus on discipleship in the home context. The conference also makes available an electronic newsletter that shares Home Grown ideas. A coaching system is being developed where more experienced parents take on a mentoring role.

In Greater Sydney, the departmental team is working with churches and schools to deliver and promote resources for family worship, tools for growing in faith as a family and ideas to help in shaping faith building conversations and experiences^[BS3]. The 'table talk' tin which includes conversation starting questions for families to discuss at meal time is being well received.

Pastors and Teachers in the Greater Sydney Conference are being taught that the home has the greatest impact on young lives; with few exceptions. If we fail to impact the home, we will never make a lasting impact on students. The 'Think Orange' material by Reggie Joiner (David C Cook, 2009) is adapted and used extensively in training churches to synergise ministries with a focus on re-activating the home.

The Home Grown strategy involves a lot of energy and resources going into addressing the consumeristic worldview. Marriages, church involvement and personal spiritual practices are being strangled by a materialistic values orientation. Church members can be left with homes that are beautiful buildings but do not contain spiritually fertile soil. While we encounter situations that are not ideal, no family is perfect, the conference is doing what it can to return the primary place for spiritual growth back to the home. The conference stewardship department is addressing worldview issues and moving people toward a biblical worldview that is conducive to discipleship^[BS4].

School:

Parents are not the only adult influences children need for healthy faith development. School teachers also play a significant role in the child's development.

The Adventist schools of the Greater Sydney Conference are keen to join the dots between home, church and school. Schools are also part of the Home Grown strategy and provide another resource base for parents. Various workshops coordinated through the school, newsletter sections and *send home* materials are available to assist parents with discipleship in the home^[BS5]. One head of campus even runs a class on Sabbath mornings, at a local church, to resource parents for discipleship. This class has proved to also be a useful outreach tool for parents at the school who are not part of the church community.

Our school teachers understand that while it is important that children are 'successful' academically; the only thing that matters 100 years from now is a child's relationship with God. One school is trialling the discipleship framework individually for each student. *The teachers then help the children to shape their own next step.*^[BS6] One principal commented 'We have very intentional programmes in place for developing children academically, what would it take to be even more intentional about their faith development?'

Once again the Growing Fruitful Disciples Framework provides a template of understanding for how the home, church and school can work together. Some teachers are even shaping homework exercises around the key discipleship areas.

The schools provide healthy role models and environments that promote spiritual discovery and growth. A child's faith development is significantly enhanced if another adult, who has a relationship with the child, gives the same faith message as a parent. Schools are an ideal place for this to happen.

The Adventist Schools in Greater Sydney are currently implementing a new, Australian/New Zealand inter-union co-ordinated, Biblical Studies Program entitled '*Adventist Encounter Curriculum*'. The curriculum is shaped on the building blocks of healthy faith development using the Spiritual Growth framework developed by Pr Ben Maxson. The curriculum promotes a worldview that integrates faith into all aspects of life by using the Transformational Planning framework developed by Lanelle Cobbin. Our church pastors are also being made familiar with this curriculum so that their sermons, language and local church initiatives can work with the same foundations in mind.

Some churches are working with their local Adventist school to integrate the school and the 'Gracelink' Sabbath School curriculums so that one main message is being presented with one set of memory verses. While still having a long way to go, the Greater Sydney Conference schools and churches are keen to work together in joining the dots in terms of faith development. Imagine what it would look like to have parents, school teacher and Sabbath School small group leaders coming together to pray for and discuss the faith development of a child.

Like the church, the school cannot take the place of home. Even though there are lots of amazing stories where the Holy Spirit changes lives in the school environment, in spite of difficult home situations, the ideal is to have school complementing what happens at home and in the church.

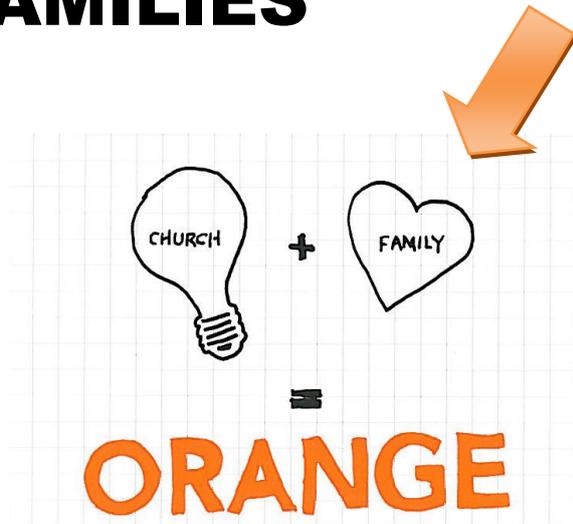
Children need parents who will help them advance in their relationship with God. Children need environments that promote healthy pictures of what it means to grow in faith – Adventist Schools. Parents need churches that will help them know how to be spiritual leaders and where their children can really belong to a faith community.

Imagine the impact when home, school and church collide.

Compiled by Kylie Ward

IDEAS TO SUPPORT YOUR FAMILIES

- During a church service, model what a family worship might look like.
- Provide a list of good Bible stories that parents can read with their children.
- Model family life by running a family camp.
- Be cautious with your language – not everyone is a traditional family. Some people are single, divorced or widowed. As much as we want to support family we need to be inclusive of the whole church community.
- After the church service families meet together (family central) and are given “take home” components to do as a family. This could include activities, questions based on the sermon, memory links or Gracelink lesson pamphlets.
- Try Kids in Discipleship. For more information see www.kidsindiscipleship.org.
- Throw this question to the elders and leadership team – “How could my church do a better job of bringing families together?” Just asking the question will provide ideas and sensitize leaders to supporting families.
- Have families attend Adventurers and Pathfinders together. It’s important that faith building activities are not seen as babysitting services.
- Have a parent meeting once a quarter which is an opportunity to connect, hear parents concerns and provide support.
- Visit families to support them by your presence and prayer. Visitation is a great activity for all leaders in the church not just pastors.
- Have a section in the church bulletin with family discussion questions or household discussion questions based on the sermon.
- Have a newsletter (or put in the bulletin) a list of ideas to make family life fun and faith-filled.
- Include a weekly family worship tip in the church bulletin or on the powerpoint slides during announcements. An easy way to do this is to base them on the Gracelink themes.
- Have a library of family resources.



- Capitalise on existing holidays like Easter and Christmas, which are natural family times. Provide activities to build faith to these times. Resources are available on www.nnzc.org.nz.
- Ask this question of your church board or leadership team. “How do you encourage your key Leaders and Pastors to protect their family time?”

Is the church calendar overscheduled with competing programs for families, kids and parents?

Compiled by Kylie Ward

IDEAS TO MAKE YOUR CHURCH ORANGE

1. Have a meeting with the family ministries team, children’s ministries team and the youth team to discuss plans for the year. It will be amazing to watch the integrations happen just by having these leaders in the same room.
2. Hold a leadership summit with your Board plus key leaders, making orange the theme. There is so much “good church” in think orange.
3. Think about your church structure. Does it facilitate integration?
4. Simplify programs to make much more time for family. Sometimes less is more.
5. Think about your entire congregation. Are there singles, grandparents or blended families that you need to consider.
6. Coach your sermon by providing a list of ‘take home’ questions. This will harmonize the message of the sermon into listener’s everyday lives. Remember to write questions for every age group and stage of life.
7. Consider a revisit of your church mission statement. Is it time to rethink your church’s vision to more effectively include those of all ages?
8. A church that serves together stays together. Provide opportunities for people of all ages to serve together, for example, take bread to needy people or go to weed gardens. These are activities that people of all ages can get excited about.
9. Involve families in your worship service. Have a whole family lead the song service, choose the hymns and take the prayer.



10. Celebrate milestones at church. Celebrate anniversaries, birthdays and promotions, as well as acknowledging rites of passage like starting school, finishing year 13, moving to high school. Acknowledge the person with a small gift or prayer or both.
11. Don't create more programs; just add another generation to already existing programs.

Resources

Websites:

Adventist Discipleship Resources:

www.ifollowdiscipleship.org

<http://growingfruitfuldisciples.com/>

www.gscadventist.org.au

Web Resources:

- rethinkgroup.org
- theorangeconference.com
- familytimes.org
- www.cmconnect.org
- www.d6conference.com
- kidmo.com
- jimwideman.com
- worshiphousekids.com
- www.HomePointeModel.com

Children's Discipleship:

Anthony, Michael J (ed) *Perspectives on Children's Spiritual Formation*, B & H, 2006

Barna, George, *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, 2003

Beckwith, Ivy, *Postmodern Children's Ministry*, Zondervan, 2004

Brunner, Kurt and Stroope, Steve, *It Starts At Home*, Moody, 2010

Chanley, Michael (ed), *Collaborate*, Minister's Label, 2010

Dawn, Marva J, *Is It A Lost Cause?*, Eerdmans, 1997

Fisher, Barbara, *Developing A Faith-based Education*, David Barlow, 2010

Fowler, Larry, *Rock Solid Kids*, Gospel Light, 2004

Goodwin, David (ed), *Celebrate Children Volume 2*, Kidsreach, 2011

Gillespie, Bailey and Judith, *Keeping The Faith*, AdventistSource, 2001

Griffiths, Mark, *One Generation From Extinction*, Monarch, 2009

Habenicht, Donna J and Burton, Larry, *Teach The Faith*, Review and Herald, 2004.

Holmen, Mark, *Building Faith at Home*, Regal, 2007

Holmen, Mark, *Faith Begins at Home*, Regal, 2005

Holmen, Mark and Teixeira, Dave, *Take It Home*, Gospel Light, 2008

Joiner, Reggie, *Think Orange* David C. Cook Colorado Springs, 2009

Kingston, Carrie and MacDougall, Isobel, *Children In The Way?*, Monarch, 2011

Paulsen, Jan, *Where Are We Going?* Pacific Press, 2001

Powell, Kara and Clark, Chap, *Sticky Faith*, Zondervan, 2011

Tolman, Tammy, *Piece By Piece*, HSM, 2008

