



# Passing on the Torch

1992 Family Ministries Planbook

Including Resources for  
Christian Home and Marriage Week--February 15-22, 1992  
Family Togetherness Week--September 19-26, 1992

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Christian Home and Marriage Week — February 15-22, 1992

Family Togetherness Week — September 19-26, 1992

Prepared by  
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Department of Church Ministries  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



## A Department of Church Ministries Publication

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# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Preface.....  | i  |
| <i>Role of the Family in Faith Development:<br/>A Look at the Valuegenesis Report .....</i> | 1  |
| Your Marriage: Shaping the Next Generation.....<br>Sermon resource for February 15          | 7  |
| <i>Families Who Foster Faith.....</i><br>Sermon resource for February 22                    | 14 |
| <i>A Time for Turning .....</i><br>Sermon Resource for September 19                         | 21 |
| <i>Me-Me Children's Story.....</i>  | 28 |
| <i>Trouble With Hands Children's Story .....</i>  | 30 |
| <i>Jon's Hard Lesson Children's Story .....</i>   | 33 |
| <i>The Bible that Saved the Ships Children's Story .....</i>                                | 36 |
| <i>Growing Together Through Conflict Resource for Married Couples.....</i>                  | 38 |
| <i>Making Christian Values Winsome Additional Program Resources .....</i>                   | 44 |
| <i>Organizing a Caring Parent Group Additional Program Resources.....</i>                   | 77 |
| <i>Discussion Guide Resource for Caring Parents Groups.....</i>                             | 79 |
| <i>Selected Resources for Parenting and Values Training .....</i>                           | 84 |
| <i>Helping Youth Get the Most from Their Families Reprinted Article.....</i>                | 89 |
| <i>Marriage: A Heritage Worth Celebrating Reprinted Article .....</i>                       | 93 |
| A Song of Love .....  | 96 |
| Evaluation .....  | 97 |

## Preface

Here it is! The first annual **Family Ministries Planbook!** We feel sure the year 1992 will go on record as a big year for Family Ministries. Our theme for this year, **“Passing On the Torch,”** addresses a vital aspect of global mission, for evangelism begins at home. The fourth quarter of this year will also feature Sabbath School lessons focused on the Song of Songs, the longest piece of relational instruction contained in Scripture. Mark these important dates on your church calendar early:

***Christian Home and Marriage Week***      ***February 15-22***

Christian Marriage Day                      February 15  
Christian Home Day                         February 22

***Family Togetherness Week***              ***September 19-26***

Family Fellowship Day                      September 26

***“A Song of Love”***

Sabbath School Lessons                      October-December

The annual Family Ministries Planbook contains the materials you are accustomed to receiving in two packets for Christian Home and Marriage Week in February and Family Togetherness Week in September. There are resources for family life leaders and committees, seminar ideas, and more of your favorites as indicated by your evaluations of materials returned in recent years.

Let us offer our personal testimony. Preparation of these materials has been an experience of spiritual growth for us personally. We have been brought face to face with ourselves and with our human limitations as marriage partners and as parents. But we have found peace and comfort in Jesus, and in the full assurance of His grace, we find hope and courage for the future. We send them to you now with the prayer that He will grant you and the families to whom you minister every spiritual blessing with which he has blessed us.

Karen and Ron Flowers  
Department of Church Ministries  
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## **The Role of Family in Faith Development: A Look at the Valuegenesis Report**

The *Valuegenesis Report* delineates the findings of a comprehensive study of Adventist youth attending Adventist schools in the North American Division. It evaluates the current condition of the faith, the values, and the loyalty to Adventism demonstrated in the lives of 12,000 youth. The sample was taken from youth in grades 6-12 (approximately ages 11-18), and included a broad ethnic cross section. In addition, Valuegenesis takes an in-depth look at the three major institutions responsible for values transmission within the Adventist church: family, congregation, school.

While the results present both cause for encouragement and concern for the North American Division, the process of evaluation is in itself of great interest to those involved in Family Ministries. For *Valuegenesis* identifies one means of determining and evaluating dynamics within families, congregations and schools which promote faith maturity, Christian values, and loyalty to Adventism among youth.

As measured by *Valuegenesis*, "faith maturity is a process, not a product. It is much more than a set of right beliefs; it is a way of life. It is reflected in the priorities, dispositions, and behaviors of people. The person of maturing faith, then, integrates eight core dimensions of faith:

1. Trusts in God's saving grace and believes firmly in the humanity and divinity of Jesus
2. Experiences a sense of personal well-being, security, and peace
3. Integrates faith and life, seeing work, family, social relationships, and political choices as part of one's religious life
4. Seeks spiritual growth through study, reflection, prayer, and discussion with others
5. Seeks to be part of a community of believers in which people give witness to their faith, and support and nourish one another
6. Holds life-affirming values, including a personal sense of responsibility for the welfare of others, affirmation of cultural and religious diversity, commitment to racial and gender equality, and a commitment to healthful living
7. Advocates social and global change to bring about greater social justice
8. Serves humanity, consistently and passionately, through acts of love and justice"<sup>1</sup>

The degree to which these eight dimensions were present in the lives of the Adventist youth studied was measured using a faith maturity instrument which rated levels of faith maturity on a seven-point scale. Of particular interest to family life educators is the emergence from the *Valuegenesis* study of 41 characteristics of families, congregations, and schools which are associated with faith maturity and loyalty to the church.

## Family Effectiveness Factors

“*Valuegenesis* identified 20 characteristics of family life that are related to faith maturity or denominational loyalty. These family effectiveness factors are grouped into five categories: family practices, mother religiousness, father religiousness, family support, and parental control. As each of the factors increases [within the family], the faith maturity and/or denominational loyalty of the child increases. But note that these factors are not listed in order of their relative strength.”<sup>2</sup>

| Family Effectiveness Factors Related to Faith Maturity and Denominational Loyalty |   |                                   |                                |  |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Family Effectiveness Factor   |   | Related to Both Faith and Loyalty | Related to Faith Maturity Only | Related to Denominational Loyalty Only |
| FAMILY PRACTICES  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages in projects to help other people</li> <li>• Engages in family worship</li> <li>• Family worship is interesting and meaningful</li> </ul>   | X                                 |                                |  |
| MOTHER  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mother is religious</li> <li>• Mother is comfortable talking about her faith</li> <li>• Mother talks about her faith with child</li> <li>• Mother and child talk together about faith</li> </ul> | X                                 | X                              |  |
| FATHER  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Father is religious</li> <li>• Father is comfortable talking about his faith</li> <li>• Father talks about his faith and child</li> <li>• Father and child talk together about faith</li> </ul>  | X                                 | X                              |  |

| Family Effectiveness Factors Related to Faith Maturity and Denominational Loyalty   |  |                                |  |   |
|---|--|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Family Effectiveness Factor   | Related to Both Faith and Loyalty                              | Related to Faith Maturity Only | Related to Denominational Loyalty Only |   |
| SUPPORT   | • Parent/child communication is frequent and positive          | X                              |  |   |
|   | • Family life is experienced as loving, caring, and supportive | X                              |  |   |
|   | • Parents help child with school work                          |                                | X                                      |   |
| CONTROL   | • Family enforces standards about drugs*                       |                                | X                                      |   |
|   | • Family enforces standards about “popular culture”**          | X                              |  |   |
|   | • Family enforces standards about Adventist way of life***     | X                              |  |   |
|   | • Parents punish wrong behavior                                |                                | X                                      |   |
|   | • Parents have strong standards against alcohol use by child   |                                |  | X |
|   | • Parents set limits on child's use of time                    |                                |  | X |
| <p>* Standards include tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs<br/> ** Standards include caffeinated drinks, rock music, dancing, movies, and competitive sports<br/> *** Standards include Sabbath observance, diet, exercise, modest dress, and sexual behavior</p> |  |                                |  |   |

Of the 21 family effectiveness factors, 17 promote both faith maturity and denominational loyalty. Although all 21 factors were found by *Valuegenesis* to positively effect youth in the development of faith maturity and/or denominational loyalty, the study isolated the least effective determinants to be the “control” factors. The study found family worship to be the strongest family effectiveness factor— when it is experienced by the child as “interesting and meaningful.”



In addition to the quality of religious experience in the home, however, the study highlights the importance of the combination of this positive religious experience with a loving, caring, supportive atmosphere.

It is also significant to note that the importance placed upon standards by the family far outweighs their enforcement in either the church or school setting.

“Finally, the power of parents sharing their own faith experiences is evident. Such sharing is particularly important to youth, because it both models a dynamic faith and also gives opportunity to reflect on and expand one’s own religious understandings.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Congregational Effectiveness Factors**

The church congregation provides another nurturing center for development of faith and loyalty in Adventist youth. *Valuegenesis* identified 12 congregational factors related to development in both areas. Four factors relate to the climate of the congregation, and eight to the religious education programming the congregation provides.<sup>5</sup>

#### **CONGREGATIONAL CLIMATE**

- Emphasizes learning, discussion, question-asking, and independent thinking
- Feels friendly and hospitable
- Youth frequently experience support and concern from adults
- Youth frequently experience support and concern from peers

#### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMMING**

- Sabbath School and other church youth programs are viewed as interesting
- Sabbath School and other church youth programs are thought-provoking
- Emphasizes drug and alcohol education
- Emphasizes sexuality education
- Emphasizes involving youth in helping the poor and hungry
- Involves youth in intergenerational programs and events
- Religious educators are experienced as warm, caring and supportive

Several themes predominate within the congregational effectiveness factors. Note the emphasis on congregational warmth and the importance of caring adults, peers, and teachers in the lives of young people who develop a mature faith and a strong loyalty to their church. Another strong influence is the thinking climate of a congregation. Programming which promotes thinking and is perceived as interesting as well as an atmosphere which encourages questioning and independent thinking are shown to be significant factors. The third theme which surfaces is the relevance which youth perceive the church to have to their adolescent experience, as evidenced by the church's willingness to deal openly with life-related issues such as drugs and sexuality.

### **School Effectiveness Factors**

Among the many school dynamics addressed by the survey, nine were found to be positively related to faith maturity and/or loyalty to Adventism. Six of the nine factors were related to both, with the exceptions noted below:

#### RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING AND FAITH-TALK

- Program is of high quality
- Students frequently talk to teachers at school about God and faith

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS

- Caring and supportive
- Competent

#### SCHOOL CLIMATE

- School spirit is high
- Discipline is perceived as fair\*
- Students have a voice in school policy
- Teachers refrain from “putting down” students\*\*
- School enforces standards important to the Adventist way of life\*\*

\* Related to faith maturity only

\*\*Related to denominational loyalty only

The most powerful school factor is the quality of a school's religious education program. As was shown to be the case in the home and in the church, the overall climate in the school also plays an important role in effectiveness in promoting the development of faith and denominational loyalty in youth. An atmosphere marked by support, encouragement, school spirit, mutual respect, fair discipline, and caring teachers is positively associated with such development.

Recognizing the complexity of the process of passing the torch of faith from one generation to the next and knowing all of the other influences that call youth away from Adventism, the researchers of *Valuegenesis* devised a means of measuring the cumulative effectiveness, if any, of the home, church and school working together to transmit religious heritage. Findings indicate that when family, congregation and school are consistent in providing both warmth and support and high quality religious education, an effective environment for both faith development and denominational loyalty is created. In the North American Division sample, the additive power of family, congregation and school could be documented. “One effective document is better than none, two are better than one; and three are better than two. A compelling case, then, can be made for the importance of ensuring that Adventist youth are connected to strong families **and** strong congregations **and** strong schools.”<sup>6</sup>

Certainly *Valuegenesis* confirms the place of family ministry in the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. That the process of discipling among children and youth rests first and foremost in the family circle is confirmed by the findings that of 42 factors shown to be related to higher levels of faith maturity and denominational loyalty, a full 50% occur within the family.

<sup>1</sup>Peter L. Benson and Michael J. Donahue, *Valuegenesis, Report 1*, North American Division Office of Education (Silver Spring, MD: 1990), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 17-18.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

Sermon Resource  
Christian Marriage Day  
February 15, 1992  
**Your Marriage: Shaping the Next Generation**

### Theme

When the Spirit of Christ resides in the hearts of a husband and wife, their marriage can be a powerful influence to mold the lives of children and guide them toward positive values.

### Theme Texts

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Eph. 5:25    | “Husbands, love your wives.”  |
| Titus 2:4    | “Admonish the . . . women to love their husbands.”  |
| Deut. 6:6, 7 | “And these words which I command you today . . . you shall teach them diligently to your children.” |

### Presentation Notes

Throughout the following outline, superscripts such as <sup>1,2,3</sup> are used to indicate items from the section called **Sermon Illumination** which may be used for illustration. The addition of your personal illustrations will enhance the presentation.

### Introduction

As we celebrate Christian marriage today, we recognize at the outset that, while marriage is God's general plan, it is not His only plan. Many members in our midst love and serve the Lord faithfully as singles, making profound contributions to the nurture and outreach of the church. We also recognize that for some individuals, the very mention of the word “marriage” brings discomfort, even great pain because of their experience in marriage, or their contact with others in marital difficulty.

Marriage suffered a great tragedy at the fall of our first parents into sin. Since then the tendency to exploit or dominate one another, which is the characteristic of sin, has brought suffering into the lives of many a marriage partner. Hostility, abuse, violence, lust and unfaithfulness have marred many marriages and destroyed others. The ideal of an exclusive lifelong relationship between one man and one woman eludes many who try today. And some, who long for marital companionship, never know that joy.

- Yet, because Jesus comforts the brokenhearted, we rejoice that His Spirit can bring a deep sense of personal fulfillment to those who have wanted to marry and have been unable to do so.
- Because His gospel enables us to be healed, to forgive and to begin again, we lift up to Him for encouragement and extend ourselves in support to those who have experienced such trauma as to bring about divorce or separation.

- Because grace redeems what Satan has corrupted, we have hope today for what His grace may do in the lives of couples who are discouraged or disappointed in marriage right now, who continue to live together, but who would like to experience better resolution of conflicts, deeper appreciation and respect for each other, and a revival of the flame of romance.
- We celebrate what He is doing to bring spiritual growth and enrichment to the lives of so many married couples.

Today, we are thinking about the significance of Christian marriage to the lives of children. Let us bring three texts together:

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Eph. 5:25    | “Husbands, love your wives.”  |
| Titus 2:4    | “Admonish the . . . women to love their husbands.”  |
| Deut. 6:6, 7 | “And these words which I command you today . . . you shall teach them diligently to your children.” |

Christian love in the hearts of a husband and wife makes their marriage a powerful influence for good in the lives of their children.

### **The Significance of Marriage to the Family**

When human beings live closely together, they each contribute to the environment in which they all live. This environment influences each one's thinking and behavior. In the rearing of children, the family environment has a crucial effect in the development of the child's attitude toward himself, toward others, even toward God.<sup>1,2</sup>

In a two-parent family, the marriage relationship is a dominant influence upon the family environment. Not only do father and mother make it likely that the family's physical needs for food, clothing, shelter and security will be met, but their relationship with their children and even more so *their relationship with each other* determines in a profound way how their children's emotional needs will be supplied. If Christ's love has made their marriage fragrant, its aroma will permeate throughout the whole family. “Mutual affection between husband and wife will be to the family what the heating system is to a house. It will maintain the relationship of all family members in a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere.”—David and Vera Mace, *In the Presence of God*, p. 109.

Thus, the effectiveness parents have in transmitting the values that are important to them to their children is related to the bond of love they share as a couple. If we would “teach diligently” our children, husbands must love their wives and wives their husbands.

### **Marriage Qualities that Enhance Values Transmission**

Marriage and family enrichment specialist Jim Larson lists several qualities of a family environment that have a positive impact on the moral development of children and which we should strive for in our families: an environment that is *loving, empathic, and just*. (Larson, p. 100.) When these qualities reside in the marriage relationship, they will tend to shape the total family environment.

**Loving.** Bonds formed with warm and loving parents tend to cause children to imitate them more so than unloving parents. Such an environment also causes children to be more willing to learn and become more positive and confident than a hostile or frightening environment.<sup>3</sup>

In the vital arena of sexual values, love of parents for each other plays a crucial role.<sup>4</sup> Children in homes where love is expressed will be more able to trust parents as sources of information and feel comfortable, even willing, to ask questions and reveal the experiences, feelings, and fears of their growing years.

“If the husband and wife would only continue to cultivate these attentions which nourish love, they would be happy in each other’s society and would have a sanctifying influence upon their families.”—Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character and Personality*, p. 158.

What might these “attentions which nourish love” be?

- kind words of appreciation, a loving touch, a happy smile offered to each other in the presence of the children
- a note or card written by one to the other which children know about or which might be read when they are present
- a gift given which children watch being unwrapped
- perhaps a romantic surprise planned by one for the other with the help of the children.

**Empathic.** To be empathic is to enter into another’s feelings.<sup>5</sup> A family with empathy is concerned about each other’s needs and feelings as well as being concerned about behavior. While behavior is important, an empathic family gives more consideration to understanding the “why” of the behavior. Each is moved by the human needs and feelings of the others and is willing to make changes as necessary to enable one another to enjoy respect and dignity as persons. The principle for this is that of Phil. 2:4, “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

“If the parents would enter more fully into the feelings of their children and draw out what is in their hearts, it would have a beneficial influence upon them.”—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 190.

Many researchers are convinced that empathy is the most important contribution a family can make to its children’s values and that empathy can be developed at a fairly young age. Children appreciate having their feelings cared for, and will more likely respond in a positive way when a parent says, “Billy, when the ball is thrown at sister, it hurts her.”

Ultimately, empathy is caught rather than taught. When we take children on our laps and communicate with them at the feeling level it helps to build into them the idea that their feelings and the feelings of others are important. Instead of the more rough and impersonal, “It’s time to take your nap and that’s that!” we can say more gently and with regard for feelings, “It really makes you upset when naptime comes and you have to interrupt your play for a little while.”

Dwelling in an empathic environment helps children learn to look outside of themselves and become more attentive and mindful of others. Again, if father and mother have a relationship which models empathy, it will set the tone for learning this value.<sup>6</sup>

Empathic listening specialist Gleam Powell assures us of the benefits to marriage empathy brings:

“When I am speaking and my spouse is listening empathically, I feel very, very good. . . . I feel understood, respected, cherished.

“When I listen empathically to my partner, I benefit as well. . . . I feel closer to him, more a part of him.

“Whenever spouses express to each other what they appreciate about one another, they increase and underline their mutual caring. . . . We feel warm and secure about ourselves, our spouses, and our marriages.”—Gleam S. Powell, *Listening and Loving*, pp. 34, 45.

**Just.** A just environment gives equal consideration for all family members. “Nothing has more influence on the development of moral judgment than participation in a just environment.”—Ted Ward, *Values Begin at Home*, p. 75.

Children perceive their environment is just when

- the feelings and opinions of every family member are respected.
- rules or guidelines are consistently applied without double standards.
- family members are allowed and encouraged to participate in family decision-making, such as those regarding rules.

Jesus treated children with respect as persons (Matt. 19:14). Paul taught that youthfulness was not to be a source of disdain (1 Tim. 4:12). “Remember that your sons and daughters are younger members of God's family.” “Children . . . are miniature men and women, younger members of the Lord's family.”—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, pp. 161, 358.

Children pick up quickly on attitudes between father and mother which are unjust, critical, or disrespectful and reflect these in their own attitudes and behavior. As a result they may lose respect for one or both parents, or may imitate these unjust attitudes and actions when relating to parents, siblings, or others outside the home. A child may identify with the parent who is being unjustly treated with the result that his or her own emotional wellbeing is affected. A young man feels respected when his father is respected by his mother. A young woman feels respected when her mother is respected by her father.

Marriage contributes to a just family environment when just attitudes and behaviors are present in the relationship of husband and wife.

- Maintaining confidence in each other and refraining from criticism by one of the other in the presence of the children. “Perfect confidence should exist between husband and wife. Together they should work for the highest good of their children. Never should they in the presence of the children criticize each other's plans or question each other's judgment.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 393, 394.

- Treating each other as equals. “Eve was created from a rib from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, not to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46. “Woman should fill the position which God originally designed for her, as her husband's equal.”—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 231.

- Working to resolve conflicts and differences. A conflict-free environment may be desirable, but unrealistic, since some conflict is inevitable in a close relationship. By discovering the values, needs and the hurt feelings which have triggered the conflict, a couple can learn something important about their relationship, make adjustments and grow. An environment where conflicts and differences go unresolved is toxic to the couple and their children. Children need the assurance of resolution of conflicts between their parents.

- Accepting responsibility, asking forgiveness, saying, “I’m sorry.” Children also need some exposure to the process whereby conflicts are resolved and hurts healed. They need to hear their parents make apologies, ask for forgiveness and receive forgiveness.

### **One Good Marriage Makes a Difference**

The growing epidemic of marital difficulties and break-up means that growing numbers of young people are without examples for healthy Christian marriage. They lack models of Christian love and commitment enacted in the lives of couples, models which show how to undertake the often difficult work of listening, understanding, accepting and adjusting, of resolving conflicts in ways in which no one loses but both win, models of how their Christian love enables their romantic and friendship love to blossom in ever more beautiful ways.

Though our human lives in marriage will but dimly reflect it, God has provided us with a model of the perfect marriage partner, as we view Him in relationship to His bride, the Church. Throughout the pages of Scripture we find Him (Is. 54:5; Jer. 31:32; 2 Cor. 11:2) as a loving spouse who shows love and care, exhibits tender regard for the feelings of His partner, treats her with dignity and respect, allows full freedom of choice, entreating her rather than forcing a response from her. Through all the difficulties of the relationship, He keeps His covenant and makes great personal sacrifices to maintain their union. With great pain does He acknowledge His spouse's choice to end the relationship (Matt. 23:37, 38).

Each married couple constitutes a witnessing unit to exhibit by God's grace and power the divine qualities in human relationships. “Our sphere of influence may seem narrow, our ability small, our opportunities few, our acquirements limited; yet wonderful possibilities are ours through a faithful use of the opportunities of our own homes.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 355. To our own children and those children of other families who pass through our homes, our marriages may be a witness and an inspiration that will exert a wonderful power on human hearts and lives.<sup>7</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Some can thank God today for the homes in which they grew up and for the marriages their parents worked to create that were wholesome, happy and growing relationships. Others have not such positive examples to look back upon. However, wherever we are, we can determine at this point to be transitional persons and, with God's help, to be positive influences for Christ to make better the relationships in which we find ourselves and to be a source of blessing for those whose lives are touched by ours.

## **Sermon Illumination**

### **1. Importance of family environment upon children**

“Study after study has shown that the family environment is the most critical factor in effecting children's self-esteem, success in marriage and family life, and achievement in jobs. In fact, family environment—the quality of relationships within the family—seem to be more important than level of income, degree of intelligence, social status, or any other factor.”—Jim Larson, *Rights, Wrongs and In-Betweens: Guiding Our Children to Christian Maturity*, p. 100.

### **2. Importance of relationship to parents to emotional and spiritual development of children**

“A person's image of God is often patterned after his image of his own parents, especially his father. If his parents were happy, loving, accepting, and forgiving, he finds it easier to experience a positive and satisfying relationship with God. But if his parents were cold and indifferent, he may feel that God is far away and disinterested in him personally. If his parents were angry, hostile, and rejecting, he often feels that God can never



accept him. If his parents were hard to please, he usually has the nagging notion that God is not very happy with him either.”—Richard L. Strauss, *How to Raise Confident Children*, pp. 23, 24.

### **3. Effects of a loving environment**

“Studies have shown a warm and loving parent will be imitated more than an unloving parent. And children who live in positive, accepting environments have been found to be more willing to learn and will generally be more positive and confident than children living in environments that are hostile and frightening.

“Children who have positive self-esteem are usually from homes where they feel loved, wanted, and appreciated.”—Jim Larson, *Rights, Wrongs, and In-Betweens: Guiding Our Children to Christian Maturity*, p. 100.

### **4. Love of parents a primary in children's healthy sexual development**

“It is not simply a pretty phrase, ‘the best thing mothers and fathers can do for their children is to love one another.’ It is a truism which is particularly applicable to helping children to get a well-balanced and sensitive picture of sexuality, always associated in their minds with love, commitment, and responsibility.”—Alberta Mazat, *That Friday in Eden*, p. 141.

### **5. Empathy: awareness of others' feelings and needs**

“A morally maturing person is . . . one who has a developing awareness of the feelings and needs of others. There is a sensitivity to the consequence of personal behavior on others. A moral person is learning to consider the viewpoints of others in deciding the best or most moral way to act.”—Jim Larson, *Rights, Wrongs, and In-Betweens: Guiding Our Children*, p. 101.

### **6. Empathy is “caught” rather than “taught”**

After attending classes in communication and learning about how to listen empathically by reflecting another's feelings, a couple determined to use it in their communication with each other. One morning as the family was together, the husband, walking barefoot about the house, stubbed his toe on a chair leg. When he cried out in pain, his wife resisted her usual, “If you'd watch where you're going you wouldn't stub your toe,” or “Why don't you wear your houseshoes (slippers)?” or “If you'd stay out of the kitchen while I'm sweeping the floor you wouldn't bump into things” and tried a more empathic response: “O darling, that must really hurt!”

Later that day as the children were playing together, the younger son dropped a heavy object on his foot. As he screamed and yelped and hopped around on one foot, the couple could not help noting the response of their older son to him. Instead of, “You're so clumsy, why didn't you ask me help you?” or “If you wouldn't try to carry so much all at one time . . .,” he responded, “O Billy, that must really hurt. Let me see how badly you hurt your foot!”

### **7. The influence of one good marriage**

Lynda Barry “grew up on the last street before a garbage ravine where people from other places drove up to dump old refrigerators and mattresses and bodies of dogs and other trash.” But her physical surroundings weren't the only parts of her life in disarray. Things weren't going so well in her family either. She had seen her father make a bedroom for himself in the basement, and though few words were exchanged, she knew that wasn't good.

About that time a family moved into the neighborhood that was different. Though obviously they moved there because they couldn't move anywhere else, so they had plenty in common with everyone else, there was something about Mrs. Taylor and her home that drew kids like a magnet. When they brought her flowers, even if they were only weeds torn up by the roots, she seemed genuinely delighted. She smiled a lot, and hugged a lot.

She took the kids to church and talked to them about God. She even knew how to make work fun. As Lynda tells it, "Most of the kids on my street saw things like this on TV or read about it at school, but for the most part it seemed like a lost practice from an ancient tribe. Almost all of us had parents who were deep in various sorts of trouble and they just could not remember how to do this anymore. Mrs. Taylor was about the only remaining evidence of purely affectionate contact for no good reason between adult and child, and I have no doubt that a lot of credit for the sanity of the kids who grew up in my neighborhood is due to her."

Early one morning, drawn irresistibly to the Taylor doorstep, Lynda knocked and invited herself to breakfast. Surprised, but not disturbed, Mrs. Taylor set an extra plate at the table. Lynda remembers, "I'll never forget that morning, sitting at their table eating eggs and toast, watching them talk to each other and smile. How Mr. Taylor made a joke and Mrs. Taylor laughed. How she put her hand on his shoulder as she poured coffee and how he leaned his face down to kiss it. And that was all I needed to see. I only needed to see it once to be able to believe for the rest of my life that happiness between two people can exist. And I remember Sammy walking in and crawling up onto his father's lap, leaning his head into his dad's green coveralls like doing that was the most ordinary thing in the world. Even if it wasn't happening in my house, I knew that just being near it counted for something."

Mrs. Taylor was an artist, at least she made posters and backdrops for the church. But in the minds of the children who flowed through her home, she was a Michelangelo. Once when she let Lynda make one of the shining lines coming out from the cross on a backdrop she was creating, Lynda vowed she was going to grow up and be a great artist just like Mrs. Taylor. And she did. But far more significantly, she grew up like Mrs. Taylor in more important ways. And faith passed from one generation to the next.—Adapted from Lynda Barry, "Guardian Neighbor," *Newsweek*, Special Edition (Summer, 1991), pp. 70-73.

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Sermon Resource  
Christian Home Day  
February 22, 1992  
**Families Who Foster Faith**

### Theme

Scripture reveals the paramount importance of the family in transmitting spiritual values from generation to generation.

### Theme Text

Deuteronomy 6:4-25  
Matthew 22:37-38

### Presentation Notes

Throughout the following outline, superscripts such as <sup>1,2,3</sup> are used to indicate items from the section called **Sermon Illumination** which may be used for illustration. The addition of your personal illustrations will enhance the presentation.

### Introduction

As Moses neared the close of his life, he longed to transfer to those who followed him the legacy of faith and trust in God which had become his. Inspired by God, the aging leader sought, like the runners of the Olympiad, to “pass on the torch” to a new generation in the messages set down in the book of Deuteronomy.

Writes Dr. John Youngberg, professor of Religious Education at Andrews University, “The Book of Deuteronomy . . . is the most comprehensive statement on religious education to be found in sacred scripture. This book defines the problem of religious educators, its context, and enumerates factors which contribute or even determine the successful transmission of a religious heritage from one generation to another. . . . The problem of Deuteronomy is how can a dying ‘pioneer’ bequeath his faith legacy to a new generation that did not witness the miracle of the Exodus or the majesty of Sinai.”

What Moses faced is similar to what parents face as they ponder the need to convey to their children spiritual convictions and a religious heritage. Says Dr. Youngberg, “Great ideals don't live on just because they are great or because they are true. They live on only when they are enshrined in the hearts of the young. Our most treasured religious ideals are always only one generation from extinction!”

Deuteronomy 6:4-25 contains counsel from God that will help us today as we think about fostering faith in our families.

### **Worship God Supremely**

Deut. 6:4, 5. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 has come to be known in the Jewish faith as the Shema, from the Hebrew word for "hear" in vs. 4. The Shema is the basic and essential creed of Judaism and is used to open every Jewish service. Its opening line is the first Scripture that every Jewish child commits to memory. "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." Amidst religions with many gods, this verse declares our God to be one. It also declares that our commitment to God must be single-minded. It's as if Moses were saying, "Put your priorities in order. One thing is primary—your total love relationship with God. Everything else is secondary."

Jesus also said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all the rest will be added unto you" Matthew 6:33. Elsewhere He underscored the instruction of Deuteronomy 6:5, proclaiming it the first and great commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment" Matt. 22:37, 38.

### **Receive God's Word Inwardly**

Deut. 6:6. "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart."

God desires each one to experience His love in a personal way and to take the word of God into his heart. *Heart* means thoughts, emotions, the very center of ones being as far as the Hebrew scriptures were concerned. Though the religion of Jehovah affects the behavior and outward actions of a person, it is concerned first of all with the condition of the heart, the inner spirit of the believer.

The highest level of motivation in life, in relationships and service occurs when God's Word has been accepted, appreciated and taken within the heart.<sup>1</sup> The heart is preeminent in the words of both Moses and Jesus (cf. Matt. 22:37, 38). External actions, such as talking, teaching and other behaviors, are not substitutes for the inner experience. Love of God's precepts in the heart is necessary before they can be effectively taught to others.<sup>2</sup>

### **Teach God's Word Diligently**

Deut. 6:7. "You shall teach them diligently to your children."

***A perpetual covenant.*** God's covenant with His people is intended to be a perpetual one (Gen. 9:12; Ex. 31:16). It was not intended for one generation only. Understanding of God's covenant with His people does not automatically transfer from one generation to another. The individuals within each succeeding generation must be taught the meaning of the covenant and invited to enter that covenant relationship with God personally.

***Significance of home instruction.*** Deuteronomy attaches importance to teaching within the family (Deut. 4:9; 6:20-25; 11:19). The home is to be the center for conserving and propagating truth. Moses understood that the greatness of the nation depended upon the teaching of God's Word in the home.<sup>3</sup>

**How to teach diligently.** In the verses that follow the counsel to “teach diligently” is explained.

- **Teach continually.** Deut. 6:7. “You . . . shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” Instruction from the parents is to be a continual way of life with spontaneous instruction mingled with more regular times for teaching. “Sitting,” “walking,” “lying down,” and “rising up” describe typical, habitual activities of life. “Modern man may furnish the daily round of his life with devotional customs—grace at meals, regular Bible reading, family prayer, private prayer.”—*The Interpreter's Bible*, p. 375.

- **Teach practically.** Deut. 6:8, 9. “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Instruction was to be made real and practical in work, study, recreation, in family living and all aspects of life.<sup>4,5</sup>

This verse eventually lost its meaning when the rabbis interpreted it literally, actually fixing small bits of written material from the books of Moses on their arms and foreheads and on the doorframes of their houses.<sup>6</sup> The counsel, however, is couched in figurative language to express important principles. The truths of God's Word are to govern our *actions*, symbolized by the hands, and our *thinking*, symbolized by the forehead. Placing the Word of God on the doorframes of our homes indicates that God's truth is to be our identifying mark, just as blood on the doorframe of Israelite homes in Egypt provided an identifying mark so that the family within would be saved (cf. Ex. 12:7, 13).<sup>7</sup>

- **Teach wisely.** Deut. 6:20 ff. “When your son asks you in time to come . . . then you shall say . . .” Here God presents two powerful factors in effective values teaching. A wise parent recognizes the value both of children's *questions* and of the *personal story*.

It is the nature of children to be inquisitive. Let us encourage this questioning spirit and thus help them to establish their own faith. Their questions may be difficult, but do not be afraid to try to answer them. To be afraid of questions and discourage asking may stifle the growth of a child's faith. We must answer the questions as they come up, providing answers adequate and appropriate to the developmental level of the child. Each time we answer truthfully, honestly and openly, we help build trust and prepare the way so that young people will be encouraged to ask the meaningful questions.<sup>8</sup>

In response to children's questions, God instructs parents to respond with their personal story of how He has been active in their lives. Stories teach and inspire imitation as well as entertain. Self-disclosure to children of one's personal spiritual pilgrimage has a mighty influence on the minds and hearts of the young.<sup>9</sup>

### **Live God's Word Faithfully**

Deut. 6:12, 14, 18. “Beware, lest you forget . . . You shall not go after other gods . . . Do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord.”

**Fidelity.** The word of God is aware that individuals who are in need and in want require little incentive to turn to God and serve Him. What is needed are individuals who in the midst of

abundance and plenty will continue to be faithful to Him, who will not be distracted by other gods, nor go after the gods of the people around them.

**Consistent modeling.** Children pick up the values that are lived consistently before them. Inconsistency creates confusion and doubt.<sup>10</sup>

**The courage to be imperfect.** A faithful Christian life as a parent does not mean a flawless life. God does not require us to be perfect parents, but in our brokenness and imperfection to direct our children to the perfect Savior we have found and to guide their feet along the path to find Him for themselves.

## Conclusion

Our great purpose is to prepare the way for our children to make a covenant with their God as we have made a covenant with ours. We cannot coerce, we cannot force, but we can lovingly and patiently instruct them. We can live faithfully before them and we can invite them as did Moses who said, "Choose life, that both you and your children may live" Deut. 30:19. May we ourselves and our children after us respond as did Joshua, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" Josh. 24:15.

## Sermon Illumination

### 1. Processes affecting attitude change

Herbert Kelman once described three processes that affect attitude change: *compliance*, *identification*, and *internalization* (Kelman, 1958). *Compliance* results when one is in some way controlled by another. A child complies with a parent's values because the parent enforces behavior by spanking, or denying privileges. In the process of *identification*, a desire for a relationship with another person or group leads to adoption of values. Liking to be with someone, or belonging to a group leads to an acceptance of their values for one's own. With *internalization*, the value with accompanying behavior is adopted as meaningful for its own sake. Internalization of Godly values is the intention expressed in Deuteronomy 6:6.

### 2. Love in the heart brings change in the life

Seventy-eight-year-old Aleida Huissen of Rotterdam in the Netherlands had been smoking for fifty years. For most of that time she had been trying unsuccessfully to give up the habit. Then something happened and she succeeded. The secret? She met seventy-nine-year-old Leo Jansen. The two fell in love and Leo proposed marriage. "I'll want you around for a long time," he said. "You must quit smoking before it kills you." Aleida said, "Will power never was enough to get me off the habit. Love made me do it."—Adapted from John C. Maxwell, *The Communicator's Commentary*, p. 127.

### 3. Importance of the home as a center for teaching values

The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation depend upon home influences.—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 349.

The restoration and uplifting of humanity begins in the home. The work of parents underlies every other. Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it.—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 349.

#### **4. Bread without salt**

Allen and Mark liked to join in when Mother made bread. Once the salt was accidentally left out and the bread was not very tasty. Mother took the opportunity to talk to the children about what Jesus had said about Christians being the salt of the earth, to make the world a better place by their love. “You are the world's seasoning to make it tolerable. If you lose your flavor, what will happen to the world?” (Matt. 5:13, LB).

The bread was well-formed and nice in texture, but it tasted “flat,” like something important was missing. “Many people seem to be getting along quite well without Jesus as you look at them,” Mother pointed out, “but without Jesus something very important will always be missing from the lives of human beings.” They tried spreading the bread with butter and then sprinkling on the salt, but that didn't work too well either. Mother added, “Christians who don't make friends with their neighbors and mix with those around them who don't know Jesus don't do much to flavor the world either. Jesus needs us to be mixed in and to share His love in all the circles where we live.”

#### **5. A lesson from weeds**

A few years ago my son and I were working in the garden. “Did God make weeds, Daddy?” Dickie asked, puzzled. I started to give a quick answer so that I could go on with my work, but then I realized that this was an opportunity to teach a spiritual lesson.

I laid down my weeding fork and said, “Dickie, you know about Adam and Eve. They were the first people who ever lived on earth. God put them in a beautiful garden without *any* weeds. Then one day the devil came along, and he looked like a snake. He told Adam and Eve to disobey God; he said they should eat some fruit God had told them not to eat. And you know what happened? They ate it. Then the world started having problems. After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, weeds started growing and they had to go to work and leave their pretty garden.”

With a serious look Dickie replied, “Isn't that a shame!”

I relate this incident to illustrate an important biblical principle: Lessons arising out of real-life experiences are usually much more effective than formal learning.

This real-life instruction is what is spoken of in Deuteronomy 6. The Israelites were to weave child training into the fabric of their daily lives. In our culture we have a strong tendency to separate the sacred and the secular. We see to it that our children receive education (at school), training (at home), and spiritual instruction (at church, at family devotions, and, in some cases, at school).

But this compartmentalizing creates problems. One of the reasons so many children and young adults from Christian homes find little meaning in their Christian experience is that their Christian faith was never integrated with daily living. Their parents failed to experience or failed to convey their joy at God's creative genius shown in nature. They failed to see and explain their business and family affairs from God's perspective—His children gaining dominion over the world for the glory of their Creator. As a result, their children failed to see that God is deeply interested and involved in every area of life.—Bruce Narramore, *Parenting With Love and Limits*, p. 61.

**6. Jews placed the law on “hands,” “foreheads,” and “doorposts”**

Interpreting literally the words of verse 8, the custom of Orthodox Jewish men has been to copy four sections from the law (Exod. 12:1-10; 13:11-16; Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21) and put these passages in leather cases on straps and bind them to their left arms and on their foreheads during morning prayers. They also put Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and 11:13-20 in a metal or glass case and affixed it to the right-hand doorpost of every entrance to their homes.—John C. Maxwell, *The Communicator's Commentary*, p. 128.

**7. God's truth identifies our homes**

On Foxly Lane, near Newbold College, the homes, like many throughout England, are designated by names rather than by street numbers. Pastor and Mrs. Ernest Marter, a retired Seventh-day Adventist minister and his wife, built a home on this street. To this residence they gave the name “Gratitude” and placed an attractive sign with the name inscribed at their curbside. How like the symbolism in the book of Deuteronomy! Just as the Israelite was admonished to write the words of the Lord “on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,” so the home Gratitude proclaims to all who enter and pass by the thankfulness and love for Jesus which pervades the hearts of those who dwell within.

**8. “I don't know” doesn't answer the question**

One day a small boy was walking with his father. When they passed an unusual looking truck, he asked, “What's that, Daddy?”

“I don't know,” his father said.

Then they came to a large, old-fashioned warehouse. “What's in there, Daddy?” the little boy asked.

“I don't know,” his father replied.

Then they saw a man with a pneumatic drill breaking up the pavement. “What's that man doing, Daddy?” the boy asked.

“I don't know,” was again the father's answer.

After they had walked on a short way in silence, the little boy turned to his father and said, “Daddy, do you mind my asking you so many questions?”

“Of course not,” replied the father. “How else are you going to learn anything?”—John C. Maxwell, *The Communicator's Commentary*, p. 134.

**9. The power of stories**

Another reason why everyone likes stories is that narrative is the easiest form of thinking. It does not take much mental effort to follow a story, and yet through the story one may learn a great deal of truth in concrete form. . . . Children cannot reason so well as adults are supposed to, nor grasp abstract ideas as adults are expected to; so the story is the natural means of teaching them truth. The right story, adapted to their understanding, is a little bundle of truth in such form that their minds can digest it.—Arthur Spalding and Eric B. Hare, *Christian Storytelling*, p. 14.

**10. Children Learn What They Live**

If a child lives with criticism,  
    He learns to condemn.  
If a child lives with hostility,  
    He learns to fight.  
If a child lives with ridicule,



He learns to be shy.  
If a child lives with shame,  
He learns to feel guilty.  
If a child lives with tolerance,  
He learns to be patient.  
If a child lives with encouragement,  
He learns confidence.  
If a child lives with praise,  
He learns to appreciate.  
If a child lives with fairness,  
He learns justice.  
If a child lives with security,  
He learns to have faith.  
If a child lives with approval,  
He learns to like himself.  
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,  
He learns to find love in the world.

—Dorothy Law Nolte

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Sermon Resource  
Family Fellowship Day  
September 19, 1992  
**A Time for Turning**

## Theme

Within the heart-turning, family-strengthening Elijah message for our time there is a hopeful, redemptive message for those who have departed from the values of God's word.

## Theme Texts

1 Kings 18:20-45  
1 Kings 17:17-24  
Luke 15:11-32

## Presentation Notes

Throughout the following outline, superscripts such as <sup>1,2,3</sup> are used to indicate items from the section called **Sermon Illumination** which may be used for illustration. The addition of your personal illustrations will enhance the presentation.

## Introduction

In the early morning hours a most unusual procession wends its way up the once fruitful slopes of Mt. Carmel led by a lone old man. The king has called him a troublemaker. Three and a half years ago he disappeared after making a most ominous prediction of terrible drought. Since then drought and famine have borne grim testimony to the fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy.

Feelings of worry and anger, fear and frustration are written on the faces of the people, the priests, the courtiers and the king himself. Most hostile of all are the high priests of Baal, the god of rain, who have been under ever increasing pressure to produce life-giving water.

Royal heralds have announced Elijah's challenge to the priests of Baal. All know that Elijah stands for the old religion—the Jehovah-worship of their fathers. Little is heard of Jehovah these days, not since King Ahab and his wife Jezebel have promoted Baal so aggressively. Understanding little of the old, growing increasingly frustrated with the new, the people gather, sensing only that something big is in the offing.

Arriving at the summit, Elijah, outnumbered by the prophets of Baal 450:1, makes a proposal (1 Kings 18:21-29).

The stage is set for one of the most dramatic events in Israel's history. Forever in the minds of those gathered this day it will be fixed—the truth about Jehovah, the true God. Bible prophets would refer to this day. Jesus would speak of it. Elijah's work would become a type of the ministry of John the Baptist going in advance of Christ. Seventh-day Adventists would

identify with Elijah and see themselves as participating in the great heart-turning, reformatory work predicted by Malachi 4:5, 6.

To better understand the work of Elijah and the meaning of the message of Elijah for our time, we must look more closely at this incident.

## **Baal Worship in the Time of Elijah**

### **The myth.**

Baal, the Canaanite rain god, was believed to cause the winter rains, and thus the fertility of the country. His sister and wife was Anath, the ferocious goddess of bloodshed and war. In Canaanite legend, Mot, the god of drought, killed Baal. Anath begged Mot to restore him to life. When he would not, she overpowered and killed Mot, took her dead brother/husband to the Mountain of the Gods where he was resurrected.

This legend served to explain the seasons. Baal's death in the spring, which resulted in the summer's drought and scorching heat, was accompanied by bitter mourning. With His resurrection and the return of the rains, there were celebrations and feasting.

### **A strong fascination within the religion of Baal.**

- *Modern.* Jehovah worship by contrast was viewed as archaic and unsophisticated.
- *Sensuous.* Kings 19:18 indicates kissing was part of worship. Since Baal himself was incestuous, sexual sin of all kinds was rampant. Female prostitutes in the groves and shrines of Baal drew the Israelite men into unfaithfulness as an "act of worship." Acts of sodomy (2 Kings 23:7) were practiced in temple houses by the Israelite men with homosexual priests.
- *Rational, scientific base.* Connected to events of nature, Baal worship appeared to have a natural, empirical basis that made it more rational and believable than Jehovah-worship with its supernatural emphasis.
- *Liberating.* Whereas Jehovah worship was seen as closely proscribed and restrictive, Baal worship was liberating.

## **Elijah's Exaltation of Jehovah**

Everything about Elijah and his ministry was a foundational attack on the pagan worship of Baal.

**His name.** "Jehovah is my God."

**Drought.** (1 Kings 17:1)

The withholding of rain was a visible, tangible assault on the false religion of the rain god. Baal had no power over death, even his own death. Baal could not give life.

**Resurrection at Zarepath.** (1 Kings 17:17-24)

Vs. 18 reflects a belief rampant among the heathen: sin on the part of parents required sacrifice. Great sin required great sacrifice. From time to time children were even taken from their parents and offered as living sacrifices (Jer. 19:5, Micah 6:7). Even if children died prematurely, it was believed that Baal had taken them as a propitiation to himself.

Vss. 21-23 exalts Jehovah as the true Life-giver, the Life-restorer, the One who brings the family together again.

In vs. 24, the mother's response reveals the effect of the Elijah message. Faith in God and His word arises in the heart as His power causes life to be restored and families to be reunited. While Baal worship wrenches families apart, the resurrection of this child and restoration to his mother illustrates the power of the true God.

This episode anticipates the power of the resurrection of Christ and its meaning in the lives of believers (cf. Eph. 1:19—2:9).

### **Turning Hearts to the True God**

#### **The assembled gathering.**

- **Heathen priests.** After a day of incantations, of blood-letting, shouting and cursing, they are exhausted and spent. No devilish miracle has been permitted.
- **Wayward people.** They are as sheep without a shepherd, misled and abused. Some are hardened and defiant. Some are bewildered. Some are half-starved for want of food. Men, women, and children, all are there, shorn by the false worship of Baal of their dignity and personhood.

There is a striking similarity to the parable of the prodigal son which Jesus told (Luke 15:11-32). They have departed from the worship and values of the true God. They have experienced what is the inevitable result of following faulty, self-centered, materialistic values. But this story, like the story of the prodigal son, is not so much that of a wayward child or a wayward people, but a waiting Father.

**The invitation.** Elijah knows there is but one hope for Israel now, as there has been but one hope for all mankind. The great burden on his heart is that Jehovah may again be lifted up, that Israel might be drawn to Him. He yearns for the conversion of his people, for reformation, for a renewal of their relationship with Jehovah, a turning back to the faith of their fathers which would bring healing to their homes and to their land.

It is not accidental that Elijah speaks at the hour of the evening sacrifice. To do so now centers attention on God's redemptive plan. The invitation, "Draw near to me," comes directly from the heart of God. It is the entreaty of One who longs for fellowship, for the companionship of His children. He is a God who opens His arms to embrace us, prodigal children that we are. He loves, accepts and saves us, just as we are. He cares for our wayward children. When we reach our extremity with them, we may release them to His care, knowing that He works unceasingly to draw them to Himself.<sup>1</sup>

**Rebuilding the altar.** Jehovah's altar must again be given its central place. It is the place where God himself has appointed that Israel shall know and understand her salvation. To restore the altar is to put Jesus Christ back into central place. To pray to Him, to speak often of Him in our homes, to our children, to worship Him and allow our lives to be affected by the salvation He freely offers. It was needed in Elijah's day, and it is needed in ours.<sup>2</sup>

Not only is there significance to the *time* (vs. 29) and the *invitation* (vs. 30), but the *twelve stones* (vs. 31) recalls instruction given by God to Moses and Joshua when God had acted for His people in a mighty way. “According to the number of the tribes” remembers their past as a unified nation under God, their history as one family. The story of Jacob's new name speaks of the change Jehovah brings to the heart of a man. The experience is one of recalling salvation history.<sup>3</sup>

**The prayer.** Elijah mentions the fathers of the nation to whom God made known His covenant. His prayer is that the people will recognize God's mighty act for their salvation, that they will know that God has turned their hearts back to Him. The prayer is *not* that God would act redemptively for the people, but that the people may have a sign that God has acted redemptively and may acknowledge what He has done already.

**The fire.** It does not consume the guilty sinners, but consumes the sacrifice. The wrath of God fell upon Christ, God making Him “to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (1 Cor. 5:21). It is a mighty answer to the prayer of faithful Elijah, a demonstration of the total commitment God has to our redemption.<sup>4</sup>

Igniting the wood under the offering would have been adequate to demonstrate that Jehovah was God, but no. The works of God are more than adequate. *Everything* is taken in one grand, glorious moment. It is as though God were saying in the most convincing way possible,

I am the Lord God of Israel  
 I am the covenant keeping God  
 Though this people have sinned a great sin, yet I have loved them with a greater love  
 I will renew my covenant  
 I will draw them to myself  
 I will forgive their iniquities and remember their sin no more  
 I will turn them to Myself  
 I will restore their relationships in their families  
 I will write my law in their hearts  
 I will be their God and they shall be my people.

The response. The people confessed “The Lord, He is God!” The priests of Baal were seized and executed as tangible evidence of the intent upon reform. Shortly after, the refreshing rains came.

| Elijah's time     | Christ's time | Our time          |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Sacrifice offered | Calvary       | Christ exalted    |
| Rains came        | Pentecost     | Spirit's blessing |

## Conclusion

Some today have grown restless with the old religion of their fathers. Some have turned to other gods. Some have tried to hang on to the old religion, but their experience has been cold and lifeless. Internal conflicts exist and so do conflicts between family members.

Our need today is similar to that of those who gathered on Mt. Carmel. Jesus Christ must be placed at the center of our lives. He and He alone is our hope. He has acted in history for our salvation. He awaits our response of faith and belief in His mighty work for us.<sup>5</sup>

And that hope must be extended to those who, like the prodigal son, have gone into a far country. Would that all prodigal sons and daughters, when they turn their thoughts toward home, (and they *will* at some point turn their thoughts toward home) might think, not of a vindictive, revengeful, punitive parent, but of a loving, waiting parent.

Would that all prodigal sons and daughters might acknowledge their true condition, and come home—first of all to the waiting, forgiving Heavenly Parent and then to seek to rebuild relationships that may have been strained with their families.

Would that fathers and mothers were tenderhearted and forgiving as the Heavenly Father. May God give us the grace in our homes to live the message of Elijah.

## Sermon Illumination

### 1. Parental peace through a prayer of relinquishment

O God, I love my son very much. I tried to be a good father, as best I knew how, to him, although I'm sure I made plenty of mistakes. I don't fully understand why he has turned out the way he has. He has no room for You in his life. His actions lately I deplore. But I do not know what else to do. His mother and I are at the end of the road and we are brokenhearted. *We turn loose of our son today and place him into Your hands. We give him to You as You once gave him to us. We believe You love him, infinitely more than we do. We ask that You take complete charge of this entire situation. We ask for Your will to be done in our lives. Show his mother and me what changes we need to make in our relationship to him. Thank You for Your love which gives us hope. Amen.*—Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Parent*, pp. 92, 93.

### 2. The significance of the altar

This heap of ruins is more precious than all the magnificent altars of heathendom.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 151.

### 3. Importance of remembering our religious history

We have nothing to fear for the future, except we forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.—Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 196.

### 4. The White Handkerchief

Reared in a Christian home, John had grown tired of its restrictions. One day frustrations ran so high he decided to leave. "You can have your religion," he announced to his

parents, "it seems to suit you fine. But there's a great big world out there, and I intend to live life to the full." With that, he left.

Months passed. From time to time friends and neighbors would see John and bring word to his parents. He was indeed "living life to the full" as he had threatened, and the weight on his parents' hearts seemed too heavy to bear. Everyday they searched the mailbox for a letter from him, and everyday they were disappointed.

At last, like the boy in the Bible, John came to himself. The emptiness of life settled over him, threatening to smother his soul. Thoughts of home brought him a glimmer of hope. Mustering the courage to take up his pen, he wrote his parents a letter.

The arrival of that letter at the old home address created no small stir. With trembling hands his mother and father opened the envelope and began to read.

Dear Mom and Dad,

I know it has been a long time since you have heard from me, but this morning I could not get you out of my thoughts. I am so sorry for all the trouble I have caused you. It's a long story, but I have been so wrong. You may not want to have anything more to do with me after the way I have treated you, and if this is the case, I will understand. I will be coming through our town on the train next Wednesday. I would like to stop and see you, but did not think I should without asking. If it's okay for me to stop by, just hang a white handkerchief on the back fence where I will see it when the train goes by behind the house.

I hope you and Dad are well. I would really like to see you again. I have much to say that needs to be said in person. But, like I say, if you don't want to see me, I will understand and just keep on going.

Your son,

John

What conflicting emotions filled these two parents as they read and reread his letter! They loved so much, they ached to see him. Yet they hurt so much. It was a deep hurt that had forever changed the course of their lives. Could they risk being hurt so deeply again?

Few words passed between them as they stood locked in one another's arms for a long moment. Then it was as if both knew at the same time what they must do, what they wanted to do, what they would do! Together they went upstairs and began to search. From drawers and closets they pulled, not one small handkerchief, but sheets and pillowcases, towels and tablecloths, shirts and socks—every white piece of cloth owned by the household. Bundling them into their arms they made their way to the backyard.

John's emotions were mixed also as the train approached the bend in the tracks just before they ran behind his country home. Would there be a white handkerchief? He braced himself for the disappointment in case there was not. But as the old home came into view, he could not believe his eyes. No mere handkerchief was there, but billowing in the breeze, from the trees,

along the fence, from the clothesline, from the rooftop was a mass of white linen, all beckoning “Come home, son, come home!”

## 5. The secret of family unity

The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties—though there will be much of this to do—but union with Christ.

Picture a large circle, from the edge of which are many lines all running to the center. The nearer these lines approach the center, the nearer they are to one another.

Thus it is in the Christian life. The closer we come to Christ, the nearer we shall be to one another. God is glorified as His people unite in harmonious action.—Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 179.

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## Children's Story

### Me-Me

Once upon a time, away over in the mission field, there lived a little girl called "Me-me." When she was six years old, her mother brought her to the mission school.

And her face was *all* dirty.

And her hands were *all* dirty.

And her dress was *all* dirty.

And her feet were *all* dirty.

And in her nose was a dirty little string with a dirty little penny tied on it.

And in her ears were two more dirty little strings, with dirty little pennies tied onto them.

Around her neck was another dirty little string with more dirty pennies tied onto it.

Around her stomach was another dirty little string with more dirty pennies tied onto it.

And around her wrists were two more dirty little strings with more dirty little pennies tied onto them.

And around her ankles were two more dirty little strings with dirty little pennies tied onto them.

And our missionary looked at that dirty little girl, and said, "What's your name, little girl?"

And she said, "My name is Me-me."

Now "me-me" means "kitty," so the missionary said, "Isn't that a lovely name for a lovely little girl who wants to come here to school!"

Then he said, "Me-me, what is that dirty little string with the dirty little pennies tied on it in your nose for?"

And Me-me said, "That's so as the devils can't get into my head."

And the missionary said, "O-o-oh! And what are those dirty little strings with

the dirty little pennies tied onto them in your ears for?"

And Me-me said, "That's so as the devils can't get into my ears."

And the missionary said, "O-o-oh! And what is that dirty little string with the dirty little pennies tied onto them around your neck for?"

And Me-me said, "That's so as the devils can't get inside of me."

And the missionary said, "O-o-oh! And what is that dirty little string with the dirty little pennies tied onto it around your stomach for?"

And Me-me said, "That's so as the devils can't make my stomach ache."

And the missionary said, "O-o-oh! And what are those dirty little strings with the dirty little pennies tied onto them around your wrists for?"

And Me-me said, "That's so as the devils can't make me do bad things with my hands."

And the missionary said, "O-o-oh! And what are those dirty little strings with the dirty little pennies tied onto them around your ankles for?"

And Me-me said, "That's so as the devils can't make me fall over when I'm running along."

And the missionary said, "O-o-oh!" Then he looked into Me-me's little face and said, "Me-me, do you know that you needn't be afraid of the devils while you are here at our mission school, for God has more good angels than there are fence posts around the mission, and they won't let a single devil hurt anyone who is here."

Then Me-me said "O-o-oh!" And she went over to the girl's house, and she took a

pair of scissors, and she cut off the dirty little string in her nose.

And she cut off the dirty little strings in her ears.

And she cut off the dirty little string around her neck.

And she cut off the dirty little string around her stomach.

And she cut off the dirty little strings around her wrists.

And she cut off the dirty little strings around her ankles.

And she put them all away.

Then the school mother gave her a clean dress and some soap, and Me-me went down to the river with the other girls and she washed and she washed till her face was *all* clean, and her hands were *all* clean, and her feet were *all* clean. Then she got dressed in her clean dress, and the big girls combed her hair, and you should have seen Me-me! She was one of the sweetest little girls in all the school, and you should have heard her singing, "Jesus loves me! this I know"!

One day the missionary went over to the school and said, "How many would like to go with me in the motorboat to Me-me's village this afternoon?"

And every one of the twenty-six boys and girls put up both hands, they were so happy to go. After school they got into the motorboat, and the missionary started the engine, untied the rope, and away they went, pop-pop-pop-pop; pop-pop-pop-pop; pop-pop-pop-pop; pop-pop-pop-pop; pop-pop-pop-pop; pop-pop-pop-pop—all the way to Me-me's village. Then they got out and stood in a big ring around the missionary and sang, "Jesus loves me! this I know." And while they sang, their mothers, and fathers, and uncles, and aunties, and grandpas, and grandmas, their nieces, and nephews, and all their little cousins came running to hear.

"Oh, who are these children singing such beautiful songs?" they said. "Are these angels out of heaven?"

"Why, no, these are not angels; these are your children," the missionary replied.

"Oh, no they're not! No, they're not!" they said. "Our children don't have clean faces like that! Our children don't have clean dresses like that!"

And the missionary said, "They are *too* your children!" Then he saw Me-me's mother standing there, and he said, "Don't you know your own little girl Me-me? This is your little Me-me!"

And Me-me's mother went up close and she felt her face, and she felt her dress, and she looked—and she looked. Then she grinned and said, "So it is! So it is! It's my little Me-me, and I didn't know her because she was so clean."

After the meeting there was a little time for visiting, and the missionary went up into Me-me's house to visit with Me-me's mother. As he was going up the bamboo ladder, he saw Me-me run over to her mother and put something in her hand. Then, holding her mother's hand shut tight in both of hers, she danced up and down as she said, "Mother! we don't need these anymore now, Mother, because up at the missionary school there are so many good angels that they won't let the devils come anywhere near us."

The missionary wondered what it was that Me-me put in her mother's hand, so he went up close till he could peek into Me-me's mother's hand. And what do you think he saw?—all those *dirty little strings* with all the *dirty little pennies* tied onto them. Me-me had given them all back to her mother. And Me-me was so happy. And her mother was so happy. And the missionary was so happy, and I think Jesus was happy too! Don't you?

From Arthur W. Spalding and Eric B. Hare, *Christian Storytelling*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1966, pp. 10-12

## Children's Story

### Trouble with Hands

It was Pedro's first day at the mission school, and he was wide-eyed. There were so many new things to see and do, but one thing captured his attention more than anything else. On teacher's desk was a strange little object that made a quiet ticking sound.

"Teacher, what is this?" Pedro asked.

"That, Pedro, is a clock," teacher answered.

"But what does it do?" Pedro continued.

"It tells me the time of day," teacher replied. "I can sit right here at my desk and tell where the sun is all day long by that little clock. I can tell when it is time to eat dinner and when it is time to dismiss school so that you boys and girls can reach your homes before dark."

This was almost more than Pedro could believe. How could the little clock do all that?

The teacher explained further. "When the two hands of this clock point straight up, the sun will be right overhead. Your shadow will be the shortest at that time of day. And when the hands are right here at three o'clock, the sun will be about there," she said, pointing to a spot in the West.

This all seemed strange indeed to Pedro. But sure enough, when the teacher announced that it was time for their noonday lunch, Pedro saw that the hands of the clock were right straight up and the sun was directly overhead. And he scarcely made any shadow at all. It was all so amazing, he watched the clock day after day. It did seem to know just where the sun was all the time.

One day teacher said, "Pedro, if you save your money, you can have a clock of your very own at home."

Pedro was so happy! Every time he earned some money helping his father sell his goat cheeses, Pedro brought it to teacher until one day she called him to her side. "Pedro," she whispered, "this is what you have been waiting for." And she handed him a box.

Inside Pedro found the most beautiful clock you could ever imagine. It was made of carved wood and had two delicate little hands that moved around to tell the time. When he got home that night, he placed it right beside his bed where he could see it every day.

One morning Pedro noticed that the hands on his clock had stopped. He picked it up and shook it a little and they started again which made him very glad. But one day when it happened again and he gave it a little shake, the hands still did not move. I will take it to Teacher, he thought. She will know what to do. But Teacher could not make the hands start moving again either. "You will have to take it with you to the big city when you go with your father to sell goat cheeses," she said. "I will tell you where you can find a clock repairman there who will be able to fix your clock."

It was several weeks before father told Pedro they would be going again to the big city. As Pedro was packing up his things for the journey, he carefully picked up his clock. It was quite heavy to carry all that way by foot. Maybe, he thought to himself, he wouldn't need to take the whole thing. After all there was nothing wrong with the wood or the numbers on his clock. It was only the hands that didn't work. He would just take the hands to the big city and get

them fixed. Then he would bring them home and put them back on his clock again. So he gently removed the hands from his clock, wrapped them in paper, and put them into his pack. Then he hurried off to school to tell teacher that tomorrow he would go to the big city and find the clock repairman and get his clock fixed.

Now usually Pedro was a good boy in school. But there were some bigger boys who sometimes teased Pedro, and Pedro had a hard time not getting into a fight with them. In fact, sometimes he even started the fights because he did not like these boys at all. Teacher had talked to Pedro about this many times, but today turned out to be an especially bad day. Pedro met the big boys in the schoolyard before school. He couldn't remember just how it got started, but before you know it Pedro found himself standing by teacher's desk.

"Pedro, you have been fighting again, haven't you," Teacher asked softly.

"Yes," Pedro replied without lifting his eyes.

"We have talked many times about your fighting," Teacher went on. "Whatever will we do to help you remember not to use your fists to solve your problems?"

"I just don't know what's the matter with my hands," Pedro said. "They just start hitting and I can't stop them."

"The problem isn't with your hands," Teacher answered. "There's something wrong inside of you. But it's time to begin class now. We will talk more about this later."

Pedro thought she must be mistaken. He felt his chest. He felt his arms and legs. He was not very sore anywhere, even though he had been in a fight. But Pedro's mind was quickly absorbed in his lessons and in his thoughts about tomorrow when he would be able to get his clock fixed.

The next morning Pedro's father woke him very early. When they finally arrived at the big city, Pedro went directly to

the clock repairman's shop and unwrapped the two hands from his clock on the counter. "Here, mister," he began. "These hands are from my clock that the teacher bought me from the big city. But they don't work any more. They won't go around. I want you to fix them so they will tell the time again."

The man smiled. "Sonny," he said, "I can't fix these hands."

"Oh yes you can!" Pedro insisted. "My teacher says you can. I must have them fixed. I want my clock to work again."

But the man explained, "Young man, the problem is not with the hands. There is something wrong inside your clock, and that's why the hands don't work the way they should. Inside your clock are some little screws and wheels that sometimes get dust or dirt in them. When they stop, the hands on the outside of your clock stop too. Next time you come to the big city, bring me the rest of your clock too and I will fix it so that the hands will go around again."

Pedro wrapped the hands of his clock up again and put them back into his pack. On the way home he thought and thought about what the clock repairman had said. It seemed very strange indeed that dust and dirt on the inside of his clock would keep the hands from going around on the outside. Then he remembered something. He would ask teacher first thing in the morning.

"Teacher, Teacher," Pedro called as he came up the path to the school house. "Teacher, I must have dirty screws and wheels inside of me that need fixing!"

"Whatever are you talking about?" Teacher asked.

Then Pedro told teacher all about his visit to the clock repairman's. "So you see," he concluded, "if dust and dirt on the inside make the hands on my clock stop, then I thought maybe dust and dirt inside of me makes my hands hit and do bad things I don't want them to."

Teacher put her arm around Pedro and drew him close. "I've been wanting to

talk to you about this for a long time," she said. "You are right that your hands hit and do bad things because something is wrong inside of you. But you do not have screws and wheels like the inside of your clock. You have a heart and a mind that makes wrong choices and causes your hands to get you into trouble." "Is there anyone who can fix me?" Pedro asked with tears in the corners of his eyes. "Yes, yes, yes," Teacher reassured him. "Jesus can fix your insides. He loves you very much, Pedro! He died on the cross for you, so He could fix your insides. He needs your hands to do good things for Him. Shall we ask Him right now to fix your insides and to help you with your hands?"

"Yes, Teacher," Pedro said softly. "I want to be fixed inside. I want to give Jesus my hands."

Adapted from Archa O. Dart, *Tips for Storytellers*. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Assn., 1966, pp. 104-109.

## Children's Story

### Jon's Hard Lesson

Jon and Brent could hardly wait to leave on vacation. Mom and Dad had talked with them the night before about all the interesting places they would be visiting and had given each of them some spending money. This money, Dad explained, was their very own and they could choose how they would spend it. However, it was all the money they would have for the entire trip, and when it was gone they would not be able to buy anything more. Both boys said this was fine with them! They would take care not to lose it and would think very hard before spending it all.

Brent immediately asked Mom if she would put his money envelope in her purse and keep it for him until he was sure he was ready to spend it. But Jon liked the feel of his own money in his own pocket, so he decided to take care of his own. Soon they were off on their big adventure.

After they had travelled for several hours, Dad stopped to get some gas. Inside the station there was candy and a few small toys for sale. Brent and Jon both looked at everything there was to be had, and some things did look like they would taste good. "I like red licorice," Brent said to Jon, "and I haven't had any for a long time, but once it's gone, it's gone. I think I'll save my money."

"I don't think I'll get any candy either," Jon replied. "They don't have my favorite, anyway. Besides, Mom said we'll stop for a picnic soon." Jon fingered the money in his pocket. Some of the travel games did look fun, but he still had things to do in the bag he had packed to entertain himself in the car.

Later that day, Mom pulled into the parking lot of a large store. "I need to run in here and get some mosquito repellent

before we camp tonight," Mom said. "I'll only be a minute."

"Can we go in, too?" chimed both boys together.

"I guess so," Mom agreed. "It'll give you a chance to stretch your legs."

Brent and Jon told Mom she'd find them in the toy section when she was ready to leave and began immediately to scan the shelves. "Look at these roller skates!" Brent called to Jon. "Someday I want a pair just like these. We could skate on the bike path in the park." When Jon did not come to look at the skates, Brent went looking for him. He found him struggling to get a bag with a plastic marble game in it down from a high shelf. It was a new game that neither boy had seen before. "This looks great! And I have enough money right here to buy it!" Jon announced. "Just think of all the fun we can have in the car with this!"

"But Jon, that will take nearly all your money! What about all the special places we will be going? I'm sure they will have wonderful things to buy, but you'll have no money left. You better ask Mom before you buy that." Brent instructed.

"I don't have to ask anyone, least of all you!" Jon snapped. "Dad says this money is mine and I can do anything I please with it! You just take care of your money and I'll take care of mine."

Just at that moment Mom called to the boys that she was finished. When they met her at the cashiers she was a little surprised to see Jon with the marble game. "What do you have there?" she asked?

"A wonderful new game that I have decided to buy with my own money," Jon informed her.

"Are you sure this is how you want to spend most of your money?" Mom

questioned. "We have many fun places to visit where you may find other things you would like to buy."

"I want to buy this," Jon insisted. And buy it he did.

Back in the car, Jon opened his bag and for quite a long while forgot about everything else while he learned how to play his new game. It had a snapper which shot marbles into a large open area full of pegs. Eventually the marble bounced into one of several compartments at the bottom each worth a certain number of points. It was fun, so it was quite a long time before Jon began to tire of it and look for something else to do. Even the next day and the next he enjoyed the game for a while each day. But then it happened. The snapper that shot the marbles around the pegs suddenly broke off in his hands. Now there was no way to shoot the marbles, no way to play the game. Jon felt bad for a while, but they were having so much fun on the trip he soon forgot about it.

"Today we will be stopping at our country's first Pony Express Office," Dad told the boys early one morning. "A long time ago, mail was carried across our country by men on horseback," he continued. "There were post offices all along the way where they stopped to change horses and riders. You will see one of them and learn more about the riders in just about an hour now. I think you will enjoy."

The boys were excited. They had read all about the Pony Express. But what would it really be like? They were not disappointed. At the old post office there was a man dressed up like one of the riders all the spending money you would have before we left home." "Yes, I know, but I didn't know that game was going to cost so much, and now I only have this much left, and it's not enough to buy my buckle like Brent's. Can't you just give me a little more money?"

who told his story and then answered questions. Inside there was a little store where they sold old fashioned candy, copies of old newspapers from the days of the Pony Express, and wonderful hats and belt buckles like the riders wore.

Brent and Jon pressed their noses against the glass case full of buckles. "I think I would like one of those, right over there," Brent pointed out to Jon.

"I like the one up in the right-hand corner," Jon replied. "Let's see if Dad will get us one."

"Hey Dad, look at these!" Brent called. "Can we get one for each of us? I like that one, and Jon likes this one."

"Sure boys," Dad replied, "if that's what you decide you want to spend your money on, I will get the clerk to help you."

"I'll get my money from Mom," Brent called to Jon. "Dad will get someone to help us."

Brent returned with his envelope from Mom's purse. He found Jon digging deep into his pocket, but coming up with only a few coins. "I thought I had more than this," Jon mumbled. "I couldn't have spent that much for that crazy game."

Brent made his purchase and the clerk turned to Jon. "And which one did you want, son?" he asked.

"Just a minute," Jon stuttered. "I have to get some more money from my Dad."

"Dad, Dad!" he called. "I need some more money for my belt buckle." But Dad motioned Jon to come to his side.

"Where is the money I gave you for the trip?" Dad asked. "You remember I gave you

"I'm sorry Jon, but that was not our agreement. I'm sorry if you spent all your money on the game and don't have enough for a buckle. You can look around and see if there is something else you would like for the money you have left."

Big tears started to form in Jon's eyes as he looked into the glass case for the last time at the beautiful belt buckle. How he wished he had listened to Brent and Mom before he spent nearly all his money for that crazy game. But now all he could do was hope there would be a next time when he could buy a buckle like this one. One thing he knew for sure, on their next vacation, he would think longer and harder before spending his money. He would make better choices next time. And Mom and Dad reassured him that they knew that he would.



## Children's Story

### The Bible that Saved the Ships

Mary lived with her father in a lighthouse on the coast of England. The light from their lighthouse shone at night to guide ships on their way and to keep them from dangerous parts of the channel. As its beams of light swept over the dark seas, the lighthouse seemed to say, "Take care, sailors, for rocks and sands are here. Watch carefully where you sail, or your ship may run onto the rocks and be crushed."

One afternoon, after he had prepared the lamps for lighting that night, Mary's father said to her, "I have to leave you alone for awhile, Mary, while I cross the causeway and go into the village. There's a storm coming and I want to be sure we have enough food."

Mary knew that the causeway was a path that could be used only when the tide was low. At high tide the water covered it.

"Hurry back, father," Mary said as she waved good-bye to him.

"I'll be back before high tide and in time to light the lamps," he called back to her as he headed down the path.

As Mary watched her father cross the causeway to land, neither she nor he knew that some rough-looking men were also watching him. These men were called "wreckers," thieves who lurked along the coast waiting for a ship in trouble. If a storm drove a ship on the rocks they would rush out, not to help the sailors, but to rob them and take whatever they could from the ship.

One of these wicked men said to the others, "There's a good chance that a ship filled with rich goods will pass this point before morning. If we capture the lighthouse keeper, the lamps will not be lit. Without the light, the storm will surely wreck some ship on the rocks and all its cargo will be ours!"

As Mary's father passed along the road near the place where the wreckers were watching him, they jumped out from their hiding place and threw him to the ground. They bound his hands and feet with ropes and carried him to an old shed, where they left him.

"Oh, Mary, what will you do?" cried the father as he lay in the shed. "There will be no one to light the lamps. Ships may be wrecked, and sailors may be drowned."

Meanwhile Mary waited. Six o'clock. The water was rising.

"Where is father?" Mary wondered.

Seven o'clock. Water was lapping over the causeway.

"He must be coming any time now," thought Mary, as she strained her eyes in the fading light watching for him.

By the time it was eight, the tide had all but covered the causeway; only bits of rock here and there were above the water.

"O father, hurry," cried Mary, as though he could hear her. "Have you forgotten me?" But the only answer was the crashing of the waves over the causeway and the roar of the wind which told of the coming storm.

Mary thought of what her mother used to say when she was alive, "We should pray in every time of need." Mary knelt and prayed for help: "O Lord, show me what to do, and bless my father, and bring him home safe."

The wreckers walked along the shore, looking for some ship to strike on the coast. The sun had now set and black storm clouds covered the moon. They hoped that the sailors, not seeing the lighthouse, would think they were far at sea.

At this moment Mary decided she would try to light the lamps. But what could a little girl do? The lamps were far above

her reach. She got matches and carried a small stepladder to the spot. After much labor, she found that the lamps were still above her head. Then she pushed a small table over and, with a struggle, succeeded in lifting the stepladder onto it. But when she climbed to the top the lights were still beyond her reach.

"If I had a stick," she thought, "I would tie a match to it, and then I could set a light to the wicks." But she couldn't find a stick.

Meanwhile the storm was raging outside with almost hurricane force. The sailors at sea looked along the coast for the light. Where could it be? Had they sailed in the wrong direction? They were lost and knew not which way to steer.

All this time Mary's father too was praying in the shed that God would take care of his child in the dark and lonely lighthouse.

Mary, feeling frightened and lonely, was about to give up on ever being able to light the lamps. She was just not quite tall enough to reach them. Then she thought of the large family Bible lying on a table in a room below. "If I put the stepladder on the table and the Bible on it, I might just be able to reach," she thought. But how could she

step on that Book? She had always been taught that it was God's Holy Word, and was to be treated with special respect. Then she thought, "I am using it this way only to save lives. If mother or father were here, they would surely allow me to take it.

In a minute the large book was brought and placed under the steps, and up she climbed once more. Yes, she was high enough! She touched one wick, then another, and another, until the rays of the lamps shone brightly far above the dark waters.

Sailors saw the light and steered their ships away from the rocks. The wreckers saw the light and were angry to see that their evil plot had failed. Mary's father saw the light as he lay in the shed and thanked God for sending help in the hour of danger.

All that stormy night the lamps cast their rays over the foaming sea. A passer-by heard father's cries for help in the morning and he was freed from the ropes that bound him. Soon he reached the lighthouse and found out how God had answered prayer and of the strange, yet wonderful way in which the Bible saved the ships.

Adapted from "Keeper of the Light," *Scrapbook Stories from Ellen G. White's Scrapbooks*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1949.

Resource for Married Couples  
Christian Home and Marriage Week  
February 15-22, 1992  
**Growing Together Through Conflict**

**Theme**

Resolving conflicts so that everyone wins.

**Objective**

To teach a theoretical model for conflict-resolution and provide couples with an opportunity to explore its effectiveness through case studies.

**How to Use This Resource**

This program idea can be used as part of a marriage retreat or as an individual program for family life education in the church. It affords an opportunity to include non-Adventist couples. Singles are welcome to attend, however much of the material as presented here is oriented toward married couples. With some adaptation, the material may be made more useful to singles. At the time of the problem-solving exercises, they should be paired with another individual.

**Agree-Disagree Ice-breaker**

This exercise will enable group members to become relaxed with each other and will stimulate interest in the topic. Designate one end (or side) of the room as "Agree" and the other as "Disagree." Read the following statements and ask participants to move either to the "Agree" end or the "Disagree" end, according to their convictions. Make no attempt to explain the statements or to answer any questions. When you are finished, tell the class that these are some of the issues you will be working through together.

1. Since the husband is the head of the household, decision-making rests with him.
2. The wife should make the decisions in her realm while the husband makes them in his.
3. All decisions should be made mutually.
4. In areas of disagreement, husband and wife should work together on a decision, each offering input that carries equal weight.
5. When a problem arises, husband and wife should explore alternatives until one is found that is acceptable to both of them.
6. The husband should always have the final word.
7. When a disagreement occurs, it is best to just be quiet so a fight or argument can be avoided.

## Introduction

Our differences tend to pose barriers to close relationships. “We differ so widely in disposition, habits, education, that our ways of looking at things vary. We judge differently. Our understanding of truth, our ideas in regard to the conduct of life, are not in all respects the same. There are not two whose experience is alike in every particular. The trials of one are not the trials of another. The duties that one finds light, are to another most difficult and perplexing.”—Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 473.

The way we deal with our differences determines the quality of our marriages, our families and our other friendships. To accept differences with understanding and a willingness to make adjustments results in progressive growth toward intimacy. Otherwise, differences cause disagreement. Disagreements can lead to anger and conflict. Unresolved anger and conflict can cause us to give up in the quest for oneness. This may be followed by resentment, bitterness, rebellion and alienation. Other individuals may live an existence of endless disputing, never settled. Some may work out a form of agreement by the capitulation of one of the partners to the other and a loss of his own personality. Or withdrawal may occur, with each person organizing his own life and becoming more and more secretive. (Cf. Paul Tournier, *To Understand Each Other*, p. 32.)

**Small group exercise.** Discover the differences in the lives of the following Bible couples in disposition, habits and values. What conflicts did they experience?

Michal and David (1 Sam. 18:20-28; 2 Sam. 6:16-23)

Rebekah and Isaac (Gen. 24:15-67; 27:1-46)

Hannah and Elkanah (1 Sam. 1:1—2:11)

## How Shall We Deal With Conflict?

“It is our conflicts that clearly identify for us the vital adjustments we *must* make if our marriages are to become the intimate, loving, trusting relationships we want them to be.”—David & Vera Mace, *We Can Have Better Marriages*, p. 91.

Couples typically manage conflict by *excluding* it, by *avoiding* it, or by *resolving* it. In some marriages one is in a position of power, control and decision-making over the other. Differences are suppressed; conflict is excluded. Others avoid conflict by dividing control and decision-making between husband and wife and by not discussing sensitive issues or sharing deep feelings. Couples who seek deeper levels of intimacy endeavor to resolve conflict. They build up each other's sense of respect and personal worth. They open themselves in communication and attempt to understand each other's inner needs. They work to find a solution with which both are satisfied.

## Steps to Creative Solutions to Conflict

- *Think of the problem in terms of needs.*  
Which partner has a need? The husband? The wife? Both?

Think of the needs evident in the following problem situations.

**Problem I:** The wife has an extra choir practice because the choir, which is an important outlet for her, is planning a special Christmas concert. The children will have to be cared for.

**Problem II:** The husband has spilled milk on his suit. It must be dry-cleaned before Sabbath. He finds he cannot get it to the cleaners by the deadline.

**Problem III:** The family owns one car. The wife's schedule at home has been unusually hectic all week. Tonight she has been invited to a friend's house for a special social gathering honoring a retiring school teacher. She has promised to pick up a friend who needs transportation, but the husband learns of an after-hours appointment related to his work which requires him to be across town.

In Problem I, the wife's needs include:

- a. To be a responsible member of the choir by keeping her commitments to the rehearsal appointment.
- b. To have the opportunity for Christian service and personal enrichment which comes from singing in the choir.
- c. To learn her part well so as to avoid embarrassment to herself and the choir.

In Problem II, the husband's needs include:

- a. To be well-groomed in public, especially at Sabbath services.
- b. To avoid the embarrassment of wearing his dirty suit.
- c. To receive empathy and understanding because of his forgetfulness.
- d. To find some means of getting his suit cleaned by Sabbath.

In Problem III, the wife's needs include:

- a. To be faithful to her promises.
- b. To have a social outlet with friends.
- c. To express her thanks and appreciation for one who has been very important in the lives of her children.
- d. To relieve her fatigue and enjoy some recreation.

In Problem III, the husband's needs include:

- a. To fulfill responsibilities related to his work.
- b. To maintain good relationships with boss and fellow employees.
- c. To be a good provider for his family.
- d. To be punctual.

Remember that the needs in question are not always immediately evident. Behaviors are driven by internal emotional and psychological needs that are related to temperament, habit, culture, one's sense of self-worth or perhaps one's gender.

- ***Make sincere attempts to accommodate each other when needs are expressed.*** Recognize that both husband and wife stand equal before God in terms of human worth and the right to dignity and respect. Ask yourself the question, “Is there any way I can accommodate him/her to show my respect and love?”

In Problem I, the husband might ask himself:

- Can I personally care for the children and relieve my wife of this responsibility?
- Can I arrange for a baby sitter?
- How can I let my wife know I appreciate her participation in the choir?

In Problem II, the wife might ask herself:

- Can I take the suit to the cleaners for him?
- Can I telephone and arrange for pickup and delivery?
- In what other ways can I help to meet his needs for a clean Sabbath suit?

- ***When needs are in conflict, love and respect demand that a solution be found that accommodates both.*** The following steps will be helpful in arriving at such a mutually acceptable solution:

1. Pray together. Pray for guidance to work through the problem in a manner which leaves you close together, rather than driven apart. Do not pray for the surrender of your partner to your wishes or point of view, but rather that you may understand each other better.
2. Let each express their *internal* needs as clearly as they can to the other. Each should seek to listen for needs and feelings, repeating what he or she thinks they hear for clarification from the other. Needs and feelings should be accepted without being judged or rejected as unimportant. They are important to your partner! It may be helpful to write these needs down.
3. Write down as many ideas as you can for a solution. Determine to use your creative powers together to find a way to accommodate one another. Try to find alternatives that satisfy the needs. Do not evaluate the alternatives at this time. Let each feel free to make suggestions to the list. Strive for at least 10 or more alternatives. Do not discard even those which seem farfetched, they may later become an integral part of a creative solution.

For example, in Problem III, the list of alternatives might look something like this:

- Husband or wife could use public transportation (bus, taxi).
- Husband could ride with a colleague or business associate.
- Husband could ask a friend to drive him.
- Wife could ask one of her friends to drive.
- Wife could choose to have the social event at her home.

- f. Husband could agree to cancel his plans for another evening so that the wife could have the car for a social outing with friends to somewhat make up for not being able to go tonight.
- g. The wife could drive the husband to his appointment before she leaves (or en route) and arrange to pick him up when his appointment is finished.
- h. The husband could drop his wife and her friends off at the social event and meet them when it is finished.
- i. They could borrow or rent a second car for the evening.
- j. Husband could decide not to go to his meeting.
- k. Wife could decide not to go to her meeting.
- l. They could both stay home and explain to their friends and colleagues the irresolvable nature of their problem.

- **Evaluate your solution possibilities to see if any one or any combination of them will meet the needs of both partners. If not, generate more possibilities.** The fact that one or another of the solutions is not acceptable generally indicates that some need is not being satisfied by the solution. This can further help to clarify the internal needs. The important thing is not which alternative is chosen, but that both partners feel good about what has been worked out.

- **Make sure that each partner understands and feels good about the solution you have chosen.** Thank God in prayer for His leading and help and the growth that has taken place in your relationship as you have endeavored to understand and accommodate each other.

- **Plan to evaluate the solution.** If the problem involves more than a one-time situation (for example, the sharing of household duties), plan a time when the solution to the problem can be evaluated. You may decide to abandon it and start over, to modify it, or to keep it the same. You may even discover that the problem has evaporated.

**Exercise for couples.** In each of the following, list what you think are the wife's needs and the husband's needs. Suggest alternatives, then choose the alternative which would satisfy these needs were you in the place of this couple. Share what you learned from doing this exercise together.

Lloyd's mother did everything for him from straightening his tie to picking up his underwear and pajamas. Janet, after only a month of marriage has grown weary with reminding and picking up. Lloyd enters the bedroom in mid-afternoon and wants to know why it's still a mess.

Sue, who likes to wear the latest fashions, returns from a shopping trip with several unexpected outfits. Doug, reared in a home where every penny was pinched, knows that they have already overspent their limit and tells her she cannot keep them.

Barry's parents, who live in the same town as Barry and Donna, have telephoned at the last minute to say they're dropping by for dinner. Donna, reminding Barry that they've invited themselves in this manner for three weeks in a row, complains that they show little respect for her. Barry feels he can do nothing about it.

## Summary

The ways in which we handle problems and conflicts affect us individually and as couples. They also affect our families who must live in the environment we create. To ignore or avoid coping with a problem may reveal areas of insecurity or insensitivity where growth is needed. To take responsibility for problem-solving in your own hands implies that one's partner's needs are unimportant or that he or she is incapable of contributing to a creative solution. To work out the problem together, however, is to discover some of the deepest joys of marriage—true communication, mutual respect and intimate sharing of ourselves.

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Additional Program Resource  
Christian Home and Marriage Week  
February 15-22, 1992  
**Making Christian Values Winsome**

**Theme**

Teaching Christian values in the home setting.

**Objective**

To present a learning activity which identifies a core of Christian values, enables participants to discover their own value systems, and shares ideas for helping youth adopt Christian values.

**How to Use This Resource**

The ideas which follow may be used to create one or more special Family Life seminars or be adapted for Sabbath School, Adventist Youth Meetings, or the mid-week service.

**Agree-Disagree Ice-breaker**

To start the group thinking about Christian values, invite them to respond to the following agree/disagree statements. Do not discuss the statements now or offer your opinion. They are designed to be somewhat ambiguous and controversial with the purpose of starting people thinking.

1. A person's value system involves not only what they value, but also why they consider these values important and what they do with their values.
2. Obedience indicates that a young person has accepted certain values for himself/herself and is making choices based on principles.
3. Churchgoers should be more tolerant of others with differing beliefs than non-churchgoers.
4. Teaching young people to think and act for themselves on the basis of a set of moral principles they have personally espoused is the goal of values transmission.
5. There are universal biblical values which everyone should be strongly urged to accept.
6. Values transmission from parent to child is basically finished by the time the child leaves home.
7. Unlike the physical or intellectual development of a child, moral or character development does not move through predictable stages.
8. The highest values pertain to maintaining loving relationships.
9. Modeling is the most effective means of transmitting values.

10. Parents should make decisions for their children until they demonstrate they are capable of making correct choices for themselves.

### Presentation Ideas

Scripture makes it abundantly clear that each generation is given the responsibility of both learning the principles of God's kingdom from those who have gone before and transmitting those principles to the generation which follows after. No plea in all of Scripture is more poignant and direct than that of the wise man to his son.

“Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching” (Proverbs 1:8, RSV).

Nor is any command to parents given in the Bible clearer than that pertaining to their responsibility to instruct their children.

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut. 6:6-9, NKJV).

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6, NKJV).

Most parents hope, above everything else, that their children will find the values they hold dear to be attractive and will make them part of their lives. How can parents go about increasing the likelihood that this will happen? The Hebrew verb translated “train up” provides some interesting insights. The original term meant “the palate, the roof of the mouth, the gums.” It was used with two interesting connotations:

“It was the term used for breaking a wild horse and bringing it into submission by using a rope in its mouth. The word was also used to describe the actions of a midwife who assisted in the birth of a child. After the baby was born, the midwife would dip her finger into the juice of chewed or crushed dates. She would then place her finger into the mouth of the infant and massage the gums and the palate, so as to create a sensation for sucking. Next, she would take the child and place it in the mother's arms to begin feeding at her breast.”—Charles Swindol, “What Does It Mean to Train Up a Child,” reprinted in *Family Life Today*, October 1980, p. 5.

The two meanings come together in the Proverbs passage. Children, born with a bent toward evil, do not naturally accept and follow God's principles. In many ways, training them can be likened to the breaking of a wild horse. But in God's plan for the transmission of values, firmness and kindness always go together. So in the admonition to “train up” there is also the idea that the parental task is to create a thirst for the things of God, making His way so

attractive, so winsome, that children will seek after His kingdom as eagerly as a newborn turns to his mother's breast.

“I like to think of value transmission as a huge smorgasbord where all the tempting dishes of competing values are displayed. Here the youth will eventually get to choose the items that are most appealing to them. And which will they choose? Those that are most colorful and attractive, most delectable, most tasty! It is not our responsibility to force our values upon our young people. It is our responsibility to model our values so attractively that these youth cannot help seeing that they are vastly superior to the competition, and will freely choose them.”—Roger Dudley, *Passing on the Torch*, p. 117.

### **Isolating A Core of Values**

What are “values”? The noun *value* means “something of worth.” Values are those clusters of truths, attitudes, convictions, behaviors, objects, etc. which we believe to be important, especially as we are forced to make choices between these values and other alternatives by the experiences of our lives. Merton Strommen, a well known researcher of youth, writes in his book *A Study of Generations*, “Values are ideas people have about the ‘good life’ and about what life means. They are the ideas we use to tell whether we like something or not; whether it is important or unimportant to us; whether we are frightened of or feel good about an object, an event, a course of action, or a person.”—Quoted in Roger Dudley, *Passing on the Torch*, p. 15.

Ultimately, values determine everything we do. Important choices always call values into action. When we are confronted with situations where we cannot behave in a manner in keeping with all of our values, we are forced to prioritize our values and choose among them. “Teaching youth the process for making these choices and resolving these conflicts lies at the very heart of value transmission between the generations.”—Roger Dudley, *Passing on the Torch*, p. 24.

**Group Activity Option #1.** Read the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl from Matthew 13:44-46. Then read the following scenario:

Assume for a moment that your house is on fire. The people and pets in the household are all safe. You are informed you have two minutes when it will still be safe for you to run through the house and gather up the most important things in your life. Imagine yourself running through every room, grabbing the things which are of highest value to you. Consider size and weight no problem. When you are safely outside, take inventory of what you have gathered. Jot down a list of the things you have saved from the flames.

Allow approximately 3-5 minutes for the first part of the exercise, then ask participants to look at their lists again and place the following symbols beside appropriate items in their lists.

- O has recently become of value to me
- < will likely go down in value to me in the next 5 years
- > will likely go up in value to me in the next 5 years
- + to get this item I would risk returning to the house
- X its loss would seriously affect my life and lifestyle
- \* would come the closest to being the "pearl of great price" in my life right now
- P would probably be on my parents' list too
- F would probably be on my friends' list too

The most valuable part of this exercise is the potential for discussion. For discussion in small groups: Consider your list of treasures again. Are you happy with your choices? Why did you make the selections that you did? If you could go back into the house again, would you choose differently? What was the most difficult choice you had to make? What do your choices indicate about your highest values? What underlying principles do you think prompted your choices?

**Group Activity Option #2.** For this activity, each participant is supplied with the Value Auction Sheet (Handout 1) and a pretend bank account of \$5,000 (You may need to adapt to local currency). Give participants a few minutes to familiarize themselves with the values up for sale and to budget the amounts they think they would be willing to bid for the ones they would like to buy. The leader (or someone he has chosen) serves as the auctioneer. Participants bid on each value, with sale made to the highest bidder. Participants may wish to record the highest amount they actually bid on each item and its final selling price to help them remember the level of interest in that particular value. However, they deduct the sale price from their "bank account" only if they are the highest bidder and the sale goes to them. Each participant may purchase as many values as his bank account allows.

The most valuable part of this exercise is the potential for discussion following the auction. Are you happy with the values you were able to purchase? Why did you choose to spend your money the way you did? If you had another chance to bid, what would you do differently? What was the most difficult choice you had to make? What do the amounts that you bid for each item indicate about your highest values? What underlying principles do you think prompted your choices?

## Sources of Values

The source of one's values is one factor in determining their level of importance. For example, Christians would elevate values rooted in a clear "thus saith the Lord" (i.e. biblical value statements like Matt. 5:3-9, 6:25-33, 16:24-26, Phil. 4:8, Heb. 11:24-26, etc.) above other values which they hold that come from their particular culture or personal preference.

**Activity.** Give participants a few minutes to make a list of the most important values they desire to pass to the next generation. For discussion: Have we truly placed greater emphasis on passing biblical values on to the next generation than we have cultural or personal values? Are we having difficulty sometimes separating the two? What other factors influence the level of importance we place on particular values?

The level of our spiritual maturity, the experiences of our lives, the quality of relationships we have known, the alternatives open to us, are also among the factors which determine the level of importance we place on particular values.

When Jesus was asked by the religious leaders to sum up biblical values in a nutshell, He replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matt. 22:37-40). In His mind, love is the value which overarches all others. Timeless, self-emptying, covenant-keeping agape love which is born of God. (See John 3:16, Phil. 2:5-8, 1 Cor. 13, 1 John 4:7-21).

In truth, the transmission of religious heritage begins and ends at the cross. There, teacher and student, parent and child, husband and wife, believer and non-believer may behold the Lamb of God and be drawn to Him by the winsome call of the Spirit. There we may return every day of our lives to bask in the full assurance of abundant salvation, secured forever by His sacrifice. At the cross, all the truths of Scripture come alive in the God-Man Jesus Christ whose covenant with us is from everlasting to everlasting and who calls us into an intimate relationship with Himself and others in our circle. We cannot but be drawn toward holiness in response to the loveliness of His character and His unconditional love, even as we cling to His robe of righteousness which alone can make us right with God. Thoughts of Him push their way into our consciousness and infuse our relationships and activities with meaning and purpose. Our hearts burst with personal testimony of the miracle of conversion and growth. We cannot help but worship; we cannot help but share the good news. So we become part of the braided cord of humanity called by God's name, who, by His grace, will declare "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" for all eternity. To write this story into the heritage and experience of every man, woman and child alive is at the heart of values transmission.

## The Challenge of Passing On the Torch

Judges 2:6-12 presents one of the central challenges of values transmission:

“After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to his own inheritance. The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel. Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. *After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.* Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. They forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt.” (Italics added.)

Studies regarding the passing on of values in a society, organization, or religion verify that the first generation which determines the values of the group knows exactly why they have chosen these values over others. For example, in Adventism our pioneers knew exactly why they believed what they believed. They participated in the process of earnest Bible study and prayer which established these values and they determined to make them their own. The second generation, for the most part, adopts the values of the first generation, but primarily because of the role-modeling of their parents, although they understand some of the reasons that precipitated the development of their system of values. However, by the third generation, the young have largely lost sight of the principles behind the values. Most of them will, nonetheless, go along with the behaviors that reflect those values out of habit. Unfortunately, in the generations which follow, habit too tends to break down, and unless the young are involved in a “first generation” experience, the values may be lost altogether.

### **Understanding Levels of Moral Development**

Human beings pass through successive stages of moral development which are as predictable as the stages of physical or intellectual development. Understanding these stages makes it possible for parents and teachers to accommodate their approaches to values transmission to the readiness of the child.

“These things should be explained to the children in simple language, easy to be understood; and as they grow in years, the lessons imparted should be suited to their increasing capacity.” —Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 495.

An early student of moral development was Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist who worked for more than 30 years before anyone paid much attention. He brought to light the fact that moral development and intellectual development are very closely linked and was the first to chart the developmental stages of moral growth in ways which were similar to the mapping of child growth in other areas.

His work triggered a number of different studies, and other names like Lawrence Kohlberg of Harvard University began to appear in the literature. Two who followed in the aftermath of Piaget's work were Robert Peck and Robert Havighurst. We will look at their outline for the stages of moral development since Peck as a Christian has insights meaningful from our perspective and recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit.

Peck and Havighurst designed a longitudinal study to look at the moral development of one group of children over an eight-year period. In their attempt to describe growth in moral or spiritual development, they have outlined five developmental stages of moral behavior through which people pass:

**1. Amoral (infancy)**

The infant does not have a conscience. He doesn't think about what's right or wrong. He views himself as the center of the universe and tries to get what he wants immediately with no regard for the welfare of others. It is silly to think of explaining to a baby who awakens and cries at 2:00 a.m. that his parents are tired and it would be really nice of him to turn over and go back to sleep! The child of this age can begin to learn what mother and father approve and disapprove, but for this period he cannot distinguish right from wrong on any higher plane.

**2. Expedient (early childhood)**

The child in this stage is still primarily self-centered. He considers the welfare of others only in order to gain his own personal desires. He does what will win him favor and approval. He also wants to avoid unpleasant discipline. He lacks internal controls or conscience to govern his own behavior. When the parent or teacher is out of sight, his behavior may quickly degenerate. He needs parents and other adults to be conscience for him. As Ellen White puts it,

“These little ones cannot discern what spirit is influencing them, and it is the duty of parents to exercise judgment and discretion for them.”—Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 93.

**3. Conforming (middle-later childhood)**

This child's one general internalized principle is to conform to the rules of his group. He wants an authority for everything. You frequently hear him say, “My mother says . . .” or “Teacher said . . .” But it tends to be a blind reliance on the authority rather than a conscious, rational decision that the authority is right. He sees rules as black and white with no gray areas and no exceptions. This is the boy who reads every rule before playing a game and considers them unchangeable. It would never occur to him that a group playing the game could decide together to alter the rules. He lives by the letter of the law and not the spirit of it. He differs from the expedient child because he accepts the rules even when they are contrary to his desires. He differs from the amoral child who feels no guilt or shame when his behavior violates the law.

**4. Irrational conscientious (adolescence)**

During this stage the young person moves from conformity to a group code to conformity to a code he has internalized and believes in. An act then is “good” or “bad” because he defines it as such within his personal system of values. He has a definite and distinct conscience, and values that he holds absolutely firm, but his value system may not all be in harmony. One belief may contradict another. His values tend to be isolated in water-tight compartments—one set for home, one for school, one for when he's away and nobody knows him. The adolescent also tends to be very hard on adults in whom he perceives hypocrisy, but much easier on himself when he violates his internal code.

### **5. Rational-altruistic (adulthood)**

The rational-altruistic person describes the highest level of moral maturity. He lives to bless others. He has a stable, well-integrated set of moral principles by which he lives. He decides how to act on the basis of these principles and a consideration of the effects his actions will have both on himself and others. His decisions rest on what is “right” in the light of careful study rather than what is pleasurable or the popular thing to do.

These stages have been described simplistically, as though children progress through them as naturally as their legs lengthen, but the process is far more complex than that. A few adults, known as sociopaths, never develop beyond the amoral stage and never develop a conscience. Many other adults have for one reason or another stalled out in their moral development and have never grown beyond the stages of early childhood. In any group of adults, for example, you will have those who make decisions primarily in terms of the effects these decisions will have on them personally. Others will always want to know what the “official position” or the church is on this matter. Some others will behave in confusing ways in that the stand they take in one instance seems in conflict with a strong opinion they express on another. A few are able to deliberate issues on the basis of the spirit of the law and broad spiritual principles, seeking decisions that will be for the best of all concerned.

No one operates in one stage all the time. Adults tend to move, as do children, back and forth through the stages, making strides forward only to retrogress again. It is the lifetime process of sanctification that is being described here, growing toward Christlikeness. However, we must be careful to separate salvation and the gospel from growth in Christian living. We need not strive to be like Jesus in order to be saved. We can rest in the full assurance that Jesus has already attained moral perfection, and that “in Him” we are accounted righteous. We want to be like Jesus, not to obtain favor with God, but because we have known His look of love and experienced His grace. We want to be like Him because we have beheld the beauty of His character and recognized His agape love to be the highest principle we could choose to govern our lives.

Parents should not be discouraged to find their children at stages of moral development appropriate for their ages. To tailor our approaches to their developmental level, is to capitalize on opportunities which may eventually pass. For example, our recognition that during the “conforming stage” what authority figures do and say carries heavy weight in the lives of children, should cause us to carefully guard our influence and use every opportunity this stage presents us to show them what we believe and why. At the same time, we must continually seek avenues to gently encourage them toward higher levels of spiritual maturity.

### **Success Secrets for Effective Values Transmission**

#### **1. Maintain positive relationships.**

Think about the person or persons most responsible for what you believe personally. Who influenced you the most as you were carving out your own personal identity? How did they convey values to you? Why did you accept their values for yourself?

Chances are these significant people in your life were people with whom you shared a positive relationship. Children—even adults—tend to be interested in the beliefs and ideas of others with whom they share a warm relationship. Notice the endearing relational terms “best



friends,” “dear children,” “loving interest,” “companions” that appear in the following paragraph about making Christian values winsome:

“As the very best friends of these inexperienced ones, they [parents] should help them in the work of overcoming, for it means everything to them to be victorious. They should consider that their own dear children who are seeking to do right are younger members of the Lord's family, and they should feel an intense interest in helping them to make straight paths in the King's highway of obedience. With loving interest they should teach them day by day what it means to be children of God and to yield the will in obedience to Him. Teach them that obedience to God involves obedience to their parents. This must be a daily, hourly work. Parents, watch, watch and pray, and make your children your companions.”—Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 496.

**Small Group Activity.** How are warm, positive relationships developed and maintained? Share memories you have of significant others in your life with whom you have shared warm relationships and who made Christian values so winsome and attractive you wanted to be like them and make their values your own. (Handout 2, “Evangelists in the Home” provides further illumination on this section.)

## **2. Model your faith.**

Children watch the people around them. They study their actions, their words, their overall demeanor. They observe how they treat others and are keenly aware of their feelings and attitudes toward them personally. Over time, they decide who they like, and who they don't like, and after whom they will pattern their lives. Children do not “learn” values, they imitate people. They do not make lists of values they wish to accept, they identify with people who live those values.

Ellen White comments, “Parents must see that their own hearts and lives are controlled by the divine precepts, if they would bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”—Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 67.

It can be frightening to realize the extent to which our children emulate our behavior. To hear your daughter scold her doll in a tone of voice that sounds all too familiar, to see your son control his friend with anger, to see your foibles take shape before your eyes in the person of your child, can be overwhelmingly discouraging. Our homes, our family relationships, we must confess are far from perfect.

But there is hope. For modeling as a means of transmitting values does not require perfection. Our task is not to raise perfect children who have no need of a Saviour. Rather, we who have found the perfect Saviour are given the privilege of bringing our children to Him for healing and restoration. Modeling means showing our children what Christians do when they have made mistakes, how followers of Jesus seek and offer forgiveness and find the courage to begin again. Modeling also means demonstrating how Christians handle their disappointments, that it's okay to experience discouragement and doubt, how Jesus can bring comfort and peace

and reassurance. Modeling means being real, allowing our children to see God at work in our lives, making new people for His kingdom out of the brokenness of our lives.

**Small Group Activity.** Read the following passage from the book *Education* by Ellen White. Then share in small groups experiences when personal testimonies—perhaps of a father or mother or close family member, or of some other significant person have made a dramatic impact on their lives. Some may wish to share a time when they shared their testimony with a child. Why are testimonies important in a family? in the life of the church?

“In his childhood, Joseph had been taught the love and fear of God. Often in his father's tent, under the Syrian stars, he had been told the story of the night vision at Bethel, of the ladder from heaven to earth, and the descending and ascending angels, and of Him who from the throne above revealed Himself to Jacob. He had been told the story of the conflict beside the Jabbok, when, renouncing cherished sins, Jacob stood conqueror, and received the title of prince of God. . . .

“By communion with God through nature and the study of the great truths handed down as a sacred trust from father to son, he had gained strength of mind and firmness of principle.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 52.

### **3. Establish your family altar.**

Family worship has surfaced in many studies as a key factor in values transmission. (See “The Role of Family in Faith Development: A Look at the Valuegenesis Report,” *Family Ministries Planbook*, 1992, p. 4.) Family worship provides opportunity for:

- covenant renewal
- rehearsal of religious heritage
- testimony sharing
- values exploration and instruction
- relationship building

Ellen White offers these guidelines for family worship. It should be:

- short and spirited (*Child Guidance*, p. 521)
- pleasant and interesting (*5 Testimonies*, p. 335)
- the most enjoyable time of the day (*7 Testimonies*, p. 43)

**Group Activity.** Invite the group to share memorable family worship experiences they have particularly enjoyed. Compile a list of ideas. (You may wish to prepare Handout 3, “101 Ideas for Family Worship” for participants to take home.)

**4. Involve your family in thinking more deeply about moral issues and dilemmas.**

Human beings do not progress through the stages of moral development simply because someone tells them they should or because they are “taught” good moral values. The call of Scripture is to think critically for oneself (Isa. 1:18). Growth is encouraged when we are challenged to think more deeply about moral issues and dilemmas. Occasion to wrestle with questions and to allow the expression of differing perspectives also promotes faith development. A prime opportunity for growth occurs when a person encounters situations—either in real life or in a values learning experience—for which his/her belief system is inadequate or needs some rethinking. No matter how good or right the values may be that we are trying to pass to our children, ultimate success will lie in our children's internalization of these values and their capacity to put them into real-life action.

“Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. . . . It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 17.

“All too often we are giving our young people cut flowers when we should be teaching them to grow their own plants. We are stuffing their heads with earlier innovation rather than teaching them to innovate. We think of the mind as a storehouse to be filled when we should be thinking of it as an instrument to be used.”—John W. Gardner, *Self-renewal*, pp. 21, 22, quoted in Dudley, p. 67.

“Instead of giving young people the impression that their task is to stand a dreary watch over the ancient values, we should be telling them . . . that it is their task to recreate those values continuously in their own behavior, facing the dilemmas and catastrophes of their own time” (*Ibid.*, p. 126, quoted in Dudley, p. 67).

**Group Activity Option #1.** Read several current newspaper clippings and discuss the values revealed in the words and actions of those involved. How do you feel about the values implied? What would you do in the same situation? On what biblical principles do you think the people in the news may have based their actions? Are there other biblical principles which support what you would have done? Here are a couple starters.

“A father gave his life to save his son's here today, following a blood exchange operation. The son, 11-year-old Robert Bruce Lawrence, probably will recover, physicians said. He has nephrosis, a kidney disease, and needed a complete change of blood. Sidney E. Lawrence, 40, the father, volunteered for the operation. The bloods were of matching type. He was told that in such an operation, there always is some danger to the donor because of foreign material he is taking into his own system. ‘Go ahead,’ he said. The three-hour operation was performed several days ago. Today the father died.”—Roger Dudley, *Passing on the Torch*, p. 18.

General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, at 83 years of age—just three months before his death, said: “While women weep as they do now, I'll fight; while little children go hungry as they do now, I'll fight; while there yet remains one dark soul without the light of God, I'll fight—I'll fight to the very end!”—Roger Dudley, *Passing on the Torch*, p. 57.

**Group Activity Option #2.** Consider the following situations. What are the main character's choices? What would each choice reveal about their values? Are there any biblical principles involved? Put yourself in the main character's place. Try to feel the pressures they are feeling. What would you do? Why?

Susan has worked very hard in her English class. There are several students who have asked her to help them prepare for the final examination. She understands the material and could help them, but the teacher will give high marks only to a few students who get the highest scores.

Tammy knows that her brother is taking drugs, but he promised her he would quit if she wouldn't tell. She has evidence that he hasn't kept his promise, but she knows her parents will be terribly hurt if she tells them and that her brother will probably be expelled from school if they find out.

### **5. Involve your family in service.**

Service provides opportunity to put values into action. Make a list of possibilities for families to become involved in service in your church and community, as well as in the home. A few starters are listed below. (Handout 4, “101 Ideas for Involving Families in Global Mission” provides a take-home idea source.)

- start an “adopt a grandmother/grandfather program”
- make cheery cards for placement on food trays in the hospital and nursing home
- volunteer at a local soup kitchen or shelter

- clean up a park
- write ADRA for project ideas
- rake leaves, cut grass, etc. for elderly
- bake cookies and send to students away at school
- provide a Sabbath School in the home of a shut-in
- give each member \$1.00 to help someone, share stories

### **A Closing Word of Encouragement**

“Jesus spoke words of encouragement to the mothers in reference to their work, and, oh, what a relief was thus brought to their minds! With what joy they dwelt upon the goodness and mercy of Jesus, as they looked back to that memorable occasion! His gracious words had removed the burden from their hearts and inspired them with fresh hope and courage. All sense of weariness was gone.

“This is an encouraging lesson to mothers for all time. After they have done the best they can do for the good of their children, they may bring them to Jesus. Even the babes in the mother's arms are precious in His sight. And as the mother's heart yearns for the help she knows she cannot give, the grace she cannot bestow, and she casts herself and children into the merciful arms of Christ, He will receive and bless them; He will give peace, hope and happiness to mother and children. This is a precious privilege which Jesus has granted to all mothers. . . .

“These precious words [Matt. 19:14] are to be cherished, not only by every mother, but by every father as well. These words are an encouragement to parents to press their children into His notice, to ask in the name of Christ that the Father may let His blessing rest upon their entire family. Not only are the best beloved to receive particular attention, but also the restless, wayward children, who need careful training and tender guidance.”—Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home*, pp. 274-276.

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Making Christian Values Winsome  
Handout — 1  
**Value Auction Sheet**

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|  | Amount Budgeted | Highest Amount I Bid | Selling Price | Declining Bank Balance |
|--|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Beginning Balance \$5,000.00                               |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 1. A satisfying and fulfilling marriage                    |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 2. Freedom to do what I want                               |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 3. A chance to direct the destiny of a nation              |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 4. The love and admiration of friends                      |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 5. Tickets to travel anywhere in the world                 |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 6. Complete self-confidence and a positive outlook on life |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 7. A happy family  |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 8. Attractive features/body build                          |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 9. A long life free of illness                             |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 10. Free use of a complete library                         |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 11. A satisfying religious faith                           |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 12. A month's vacation with nothing to do but enjoy        |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 13. Lifetime financial security                            |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 14. A lovely home in a beautiful setting                   |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 15. A world without prejudice                              |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 16. A chance to eliminate sickness and poverty             |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 17. International fame and popularity                      |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 18. Success in my chosen profession or vocation            |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 19. A world without hunger and poverty                     |                 |                      |               |                        |
| 20. Assurance of a home in heaven                          |                 |                      |               |                        |

Adapted from Maury Smith, *A Practical Guide to Value Clarification*, La Jolla, CA: University Associates, 1977, pp. 25-29.

Making Christian Values Winsome  
Handout — 2  
**Evangelists in the Home**

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Think of the time when you first heard the gospel of God's grace. Do you remember the evangelist who carried the good news? Was it a parent, a relative, a friend, a neighbor, a minister, a stranger? Perhaps it was the author of a book or magazine article you read. How happy you were! How thankful! Your heart still has a special place of honor for that individual who first presented the precious truth of Jesus to you. There are strong ties between you.

What a blessed experience it is for a parent to be this person for a son or daughter! How wonderful to have this special level of bonding between us and our children! And parenting gives us an opportunity, not only to be the first to bring the good news to our children, but to be a continuing source of that message. We can be “evangelists in the home” and “ministers of grace” to our children.—Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 47.

What experience of God's love do we have to share with them? What do we have to tell of the meaning of Jesus to us? of the Holy Spirit's activity in our lives? of our commitment to the way of faith?

Jesus once told how a wayward son felt God's saving love ministered to him through the forgiveness of his father and his restoration to the family (Luke 15:11-32). Our relationship with God, our spiritual story, is mirrored in that parable. Our story has a beginning and its chapters are being written each day. The recounting of it will have a profound effect on our children. Let's reflect on our own experience with God and recommit ourselves to Him once again as we relive this parable told by Jesus. Let's bask again in the good news and, as our hearts turn toward Him in

repentance, let us feel enfolded in His arms of infinite love.

Picture this once-prodigal son later in life telling his story to his own children . . .

“Tell us about the pigs again, father,” little voices clamor for a familiar, yet much-loved story.

“Well, it all happened because I thought I didn't like living under your grandfather's rules. I felt tied down and wanted nothing more than to have my own way and leave home. When I asked for my inheritance money that would have been left in their will for me your grandparents tried to talk me out of going of course, but they did give the money to me. It took a lot of their life's savings. I'm sure they were heartbroken to watch me go. . . .”

**We can be “evangelists in the home” and “ministers of grace” to our children.**

“Poor grandmama; poor grandpapa,” murmur the children.

“Yes, poor grandmama; poor grandpapa,” sighs the once-prodigal father, “But I didn't care then about their feelings, I didn't care about the future, I didn't care about anything, but me! I wanted a good time and I wanted it right then. I was so glad to go, I didn't stop until I was a long way away, far enough so I knew they couldn't find me.”

“I took the money and did all the things my parents had taught me not to. There were a lot



of people whom I thought were my friends at first. I figured I didn't need to work; I had so much money I believed it would last forever. But it didn't. And when I realized I couldn't spend anymore on parties and 'good' times, I saw my 'friends' walk away from me."

"What did you do then, papa? Where did you go?" Childish eyes widen and little faces grow anxious.

"At last, without any money, unable to find any work, I became a slave for a man and tended his pigs for him. I can't tell you how awful it felt! My clothes were in rags. Famine in that country left all of us slaves starving. I was ready to eat the garbage I carried every day to those pigs!"

"Did you really do that?" the children ask in disbelief.

**"He was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."**

"No, something else happened first. When I got to that point, I began to realize what I had really done. The picture of home came into my mind, the really good life I had left behind. I was so miserable! I just knew I could never belong to the family again because of the things I had done and the shame I had brought to the family name. But one night I couldn't sleep and I finally decided to come back home, to face up to what I had done and beg my father, your grandfather, to hire me as one of his workers. That would be far better than the life I had there."

"And that's when Grandpapa saw you in the distance coming up the road and went running to meet you, right?" the children eagerly join in, for they especially love this part of the story. "And Grandpa hugged and kissed you and held you close even in your dirty ragged clothes!"

"Yes, yes, you're right," whispers their Dad as he pulls them closer, his voice choking up as the vision of it floods his memory once again.

"I had gone over and over what I was going to say. I was so ashamed. I planned to tell him, 'Father, I have done wrong in the sight of heaven and in your eyes. I don't deserve to be called your son any more. Please take me on as one of your hired men.' When he met me I began to blurt it out, but he wouldn't let me get beyond the words, 'I don't deserve to be called your son any more. . . .' He just squeezed me and ordered his hired workers who had gathered around to bring out his most expensive suit of clothes for me to wear instead of those rags."

"That night he put on a grand homecoming banquet for me, a party greater than any of those on which I had wasted his money. Before all the assembled guests I stood next to him, wearing his clothes, his sandals, his family signet ring. 'This,' my undeserving heart heard him announce proudly, 'is *my son*. He was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they all cheered."

For further reading: E. G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 198-211.

Making Christian Values Winsome  
Handout — 3  
**101 Ideas for Family Worship**

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*Gathering together each day to celebrate our faith and renew our covenant with God can forge strong bonds between us and build a precious religious heritage within our families.*

### Preschoolers

- Using a soft toy lamb and making the sound effects of an approaching storm with thunder and wind, illustrate the story of the lost sheep. Hide the lamb and have the small child find it. Tell the child, "That's what the shepherd does. When the lamb is lost, he finds it. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who wants His lambs safe from harm." Sing, "I am Jesus' Little Lamb." Read from the Bible the story of the lost lamb.
- Have the small child stand behind a closed door while the family sings, "I'll Meet You in Heaven." When the family sings, "Let's open the door and look inside," open the door. Then sing, "Why Mary will be there!"
- On Friday evening, light a Sabbath candle to indicate the Sabbath hours have begun. On Sabbath evening, blow it out to indicate the Sabbath hours are over.
- Find books on the appropriate level and read to the child while holding him. Let him point to pictures he recognizes or fill in words as you pause.
- As soon as they're able, have the little ones memorize short phrases of Scripture.
- Older children may make a book entitled, "My Daddy, My Mommy, My Brother, My sister." The family can help with the contents of the book.
- Tell short stories on character topics and then ask the child questions relating to them. Good topics can be: "peacemaker," "you are special," "love," "Jesus loves you."
- Rewrite the Bible stories into a simple vocabulary. Reread frequently until the child can tell the story alone.
- Outline the hands of the child and talk about helping hands.
- Outline the child's foot and discuss using little feet for Jesus.
- Tell a story to the child about a miracle. Then act out a Bible miracle with the child taking part.
- Put a Bible puzzle together. Tell the story of the picture of the puzzle.
- Show big pictures of Jesus and Bible characters and tell the story while identifying the picture items.
- Have pictures of animals. Point to each animal and say, "Jesus made the animal." Point to another one and repeat. Then, after all the animals have been identified, let the child say their names. Tell the child, "Jesus loves the animals."

He loves us too, and knows our names.”

- Play Sabbath School. Sing Sabbath School songs and tell Sabbath stories.
- Teach the child to pray. Have the child say simple phrases of prayer, repeating after you. Be sure to ask God to bless each family member in the prayer.

### Primaries

- On Friday evening ask questions about the Sabbath School lesson and help the child to learn the memory verse.
- Read about the fruits of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23. Have children make a notebook with a page for each fruit, one each day. Make a checklist for each and check when during the day there is evidence of one of the fruits in his or her life.
- Have children prepare a Bible quiz for their parents.
- Go for a nature walk. Pick up nature objects. Then look up what the Bible says about each one. If no reference can be found, work as a family to make up an object lesson about the nature items.
- Read a spiritual story and ask children to identify the lessons/values presented. Decide if they are good ones or bad ones.
- Record several life situations on cards so that each person can have one. Ask each to read their situation and tell how the situation might be handled, such as, “Mother asked Sue to get her room cleaned for Sabbath. Mother just couldn't help her. Sue however, wanted to read the book that Jane gave her at school that day. What should Sue do?”
- Find a word that describes God,

Jesus, or the Holy Spirit for every letter of the alphabet.

- Look up the meaning of each child's name. Talk about the meanings of the names of Bible characters such as Abraham, Elijah, and Jacob.
- Read a Bible story and leave out the name of the main characters. Say “blank” when the name is given. See who can be the first to guess the name of the person in the story.
- Show slides or pictures of the family and discuss how God helped in a special way at that time. Recount family blessings.
- Talk about your family history and how other lives have affected your lives. Emphasize your family's spiritual history.
- Make a “Thankful” booklet in which the child can continue to add new pages on answered prayers and on special events that enrich their lives.
- Assign stories of Bible characters to the children. Have them do their own research on these characters and when finished have them tell the story of the person's life to the family at worship.
- Make a family motto. Decorate and hang in the worship room. Each month make a new one.
- Choose a family ministry and in worship decide how it will be done. It could be that the family might choose to hold a Sabbath story hour, or present special music at church or Sabbath School, or give friendship cards to patients at a nursing home. If so, part of worship time could be used for preparation.
- Plan a special service when the

children are asked to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Tell them the plan of salvation and discuss how Lucifer wants to dominate the world and their lives, but that Christ is stronger because of the victory won on the cross. Help them to realize the power in the shed blood of Jesus and to invite Him to be Lord of their lives.

- Read in *The Desire of Ages* the chapter on Christ as a child. Search within the chapter for character traits of Christ. Have a time of family evaluation and ask if these are character traits of the family. If not, what steps should be taken to be more Christlike?
- Draw a story from the Bible and put a new frame for each change in the story. Tell the story using the picture as an aid.
- Establish a tradition of having children prepare a part or all of Friday and Sabbath evening worship. Suggest that they pantomime a story or a Bible character. Use props or homemade costumes and have the family guess the story.
- Make an A-Z Bible Book by making one page a week. Choose a letter and let each family member make a page emphasizing that letter. For the letter "A", "angel" pictures or stories can be drawn or pasted in, "angel" quotes or texts can be printed. Some other family member might specialize on "animals" of the Bible or "Abraham." When finished, have each one share their page and tell what he learned about the topic as he prepared it.
- Read the Golden Rule text. Make "loving coupons" for each member of the family, listing something that will be done for them. When all have finished, distribute the coupons. Example:

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Coupon is presented to \_\_\_\_\_

It entitles him/her to (e.g. a free shoe polishing)

- Give clues to a Bible character. The first person who knows who it is stands up and identifies him. If correct, the identifier will then give clues to another Bible character.

### **Juniors and Teens**

- Identify the trials of a Bible character. Discuss how these trials turned out for good in the end. Make a list of personal trials and ask for family input as to what can be done about them.
- Have a worship on the topic of "hostilities." Discuss what causes hostilities, and pray that God will help each family member to deal appropriately with them. Pray that God will help each one to communicate and listen to each other's problems.
- Order from the Voice of Prophecy the Bible course for youth and study it as a family.
- Find books on Christian living and read them together. Don't preach, but let the book give the message.
- Listen to tapes or records of music that is uplifting and pleasing to God.
- Evaluate movies and TV viewing. Think of questions which should be asked to help determine whether or not a program is appropriate to watch. Think about how to evaluate the content of programs which have been watched. How can we deal with peer pressure to watch TV or to engage in behaviors presented on TV which we deem

inappropriate?

- Spend time on the topic of friendships. Read the story of David and Jonathan and make a list of the characteristics of a good friend. Determine if friends can be used by Satan to lead others astray.
- Have a goal-setting time. Have each one write five goals for life, and how they plan to accomplish them. How will they relate to goals they could not accomplish?
- Discuss topics of justice, prejudice, equality, environment, war, abortion. Find Bible stories and texts that deal with these topics. How does the Scripture speak to the issues of today?
- Assign topics like the following to study: patience, forgiveness, dependability, gratitude, responsibility, purity, peace, efficiency, and unconditional love. Have each one choose one and share it on an assigned night for worship.
- Discuss individual devotional time. Read books on how to read the Bible and how to pray. Take steps to organize family routines so that all can have their private devotions.
- Decide who you would put into a Heavenly Hall of Fame. Limit it to ten people. Tell why you would induct them.
- Discuss God's plan for marriage. List characteristics of a good husband/wife. Use Bible to help in making out the list. Discuss the types of friends suitable for Christians and the age at which serious boy-girl friendships can begin. Work together as a family to establish the guidelines and rules for such friendships.

### **Older Teens and Young Adults**

- Study the following doctrines and share with the family: Sabbath, Baptism,

Second Coming, and State of the Dead.

- Read one chapter of Proverbs each day. Discuss what Solomon is saying to teens and young adults.
- Paul writes a letter to Timothy, a young man. Read 1 Tim. 4:12. Discuss what this verse is saying to the modern young person.
- Find in a concordance texts that deal with "strength" such as 2 Cor. 12:9. Discuss how God can give us His strength for our personal problems.
- Look up the word "trials" in the *Index to the Writings of E.G. White* and have each person locate information on trials and share with the family. If a very good quotation is located, consider committing it to memory.

### **Singles**

- Invite one or more families to join you for your worship.
- Travel to an invalid's home or to the elderly in a nursing home and have worship with them.
- Invite children in the neighborhood to your home for stories, Bible reading, and songs once a week.
- Visit your parents once a week, if nearby, and worship with them.
- Find a prayer partner for a daily prayer and Bible study.
- Go to special places to worship God, such as an orange grove, a riverside, a garden, or a safe woods.
- Read books on personal devotions and experiment with new spiritual skills. Then share with others.

## Marrieds

- Make a prayer request book listing requests, recording a promise to go with each request, recording the date when made, and the date when answered.
- Read a devotional book through together. Use two books and alternate reading of paragraphs.
- Start worship by stating what good thing happened to you during the day or what your blessings were.
- Read a chapter of the Bible together, using different versions if available. Compare as you alternate reading verses. Privately write your feelings about some portion of the chapter. Visualize yourself doing what God commands, and make plans for the day to act upon God's instruction. For evening worship, discuss with your spouse how you implemented God's command.
- Search a concordance for all texts relating to wives and husbands. Categorize these and evaluate whether you are following God's plan.
- Individually write a letter to God as though writing to a friend. Share your letter with your spouse.
- Paraphrase a chapter, such as 1 Cor. 13, and include your own experiences as examples. Other good portions of the Scripture for personalizing are Rom. 5:1-11 and Ps. 121. These can be memorized and made even more meaningful by reciting them while traveling.
- Underline doctrinal texts and promises in the Bible by using red for doctrines and blue for promises. Take time to memorize where these are found. Sort them by Bible books, starting with Matthew. Learn all promises and doctrinal texts in this book and then proceed to texts in Mark.
- Invite another couple to have worship with you every week on a certain day.
- Have a special room in the house called the prayer room, with special lighting, music, and books for worship.
- Do "10 and 10" on a specific text. Have 10 minutes of writing about a text by each spouse and then 10 minutes of dialoging on it.
- Have an Agape Feast. Invite some couples or friends to such a meal and thank God for His blessings. Have white candles for atmosphere and an Eden diet menu of fresh fruits, nuts, and bread. Avoid general conversation. Spend time talking of God's goodness, sharing texts and giving testimonies of faith, hope, and love.
- Make a book of promises. Each time a promise is found when reading, record it in the Promise Book. Memorize some of these to be claimed on a difficult day.
- Write appreciation notes to each other. Read what the Bible says on the topic of "love."
- Have conversational prayer—one praying on a topic and then the other praying, alternating throughout the prayer.
- Keep a record of answered prayers in a Miracle Book.
- Pray out loud for each other after each identifies his/her needs.
- Go out in nature for worship by a stream, by the ocean, or on a mountaintop.

- Try candlelight or fireside worship on Friday evening.
- Make a personal devotional book of favorite texts, doctrinal texts, and their interpretation, promises, and memorized portions of Scripture.
- Have a telephone worship when apart from each other.
- Dedicate a new home by having prayer for activities in each room of house.
- Alternate evening worships. One night the husband prepares, the wife the next night.
- Decide to have a set day when one of the children now living away from home will be prayed for in a special in-depth way. Monday—Mary, Tuesday—David, Wednesday—Judy, etc.
- Invite friends over for a Passover Feast. Read *Patriarchs and Prophets* where it speaks of the Exodus, and eat typical Passover food eaten by Jewish people at the Passover time.
- Turn Scripture into prayers and record them. Insert names into the prayers, including yours or those of the children away from home.
- Read about the Holy Spirit for two weeks and pray for change in the life.
- Study from the Bible the character of Christ. In a series of worships discover what Christ is like and pray for the Holy Spirit to more fully develop these character qualities in family members.
- Read a chapter of the Bible together. Then privately write feelings about some portion of it. Each is to visualize himself/herself doing what God commands and then make plans for the day to act upon God's instruction.
- Personalize some words of Jesus as though He were speaking to you. Have each write how he/she feels about Jesus saying this to him/her. After writing feelings, share with the family.
- Paraphrase or personalize a chapter such as 1 Cor. 13 or Rom. 5:1-11. Record your experiences in a "Family Worship Book."
- Leave a Scripture text at the breakfast table for meditation by late risers (if time schedules can't synchronize). A continuous family prayer can also be written with each adding to it before leaving the house.
- Assign a text to the family on Friday evening. Sometime during the Sabbath each person writes about what the text is saying to him/her. Share with the family the written masterpiece at evening worship.
- Study a difficult book of the Bible, such as Revelation, outlining the chapters, drawing symbols of beasts and interpreting them, reading a commentary and making notes of findings in a devotional notebook.
- Read about the heavens in Ps. 8 on a bright clear night. Have family go outdoors and identify stars and

### **Additional Worship Ideas Using Scripture**

- On Friday evening read Bible texts about Sabbath and discuss how to keep the Sabbath holy. Record ideas for happy Sabbath observance in a "Family Worship Book." Add to this list frequently and reread in preparation for Sabbath worships.

constellations.

- Read and record Scripture, using one family member as a narrator and others assisting by searching for dramatic sound effects to add such as thunder, rain, beat of hoofs, fire crackling. Share the tape for guests at worship time and follow up with questions.
- Read Matthew 14:23-33 slowly and with feeling to the group. Allow each participant to reflect quietly for a few moments. Then those who wish to do so share with others their thoughts on the following: "The particular point in this story that catches my attention and feelings right now is . . ." "My Christian experience tells me that Jesus continues to be the master of troubled waters in my life when . . ."

Adapted from *Families at Worship*, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1989.



## **101 Ideas for Involving Families in Global Mission**

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*Beginning with the mission fields of our own homes, families can make a profound impact on the world for Christ.*

### **Missionaries in the Family**

“All can be home missionaries in their families and neighborhoods.” (*ChS 9*) “As workers for God, our work is to begin with those nearest. It is to begin in our own home. There is no more important missionary field than this.” (*CG 476*) “You may be evangelists in the home, ministers of grace to your children.” (*CG 479*) “Every family is a church, over which the parents preside. The first consideration of the parents should be to work for the salvation of their children.” (*CG 549*)

- Discuss as husband and wife the meaning of being “evangelists in the home, ministers of grace to your children.” List ways in which unsaved children are like non-Adventists living in our homes.
- Prepare a list of changes you would like to make to give a more evangelistic approach to your parenting. What will be necessary to implement these changes? Make one of the changes starting today.
- How is each family “a church”? Make a list of comparisons. What responsibility rests upon the home for the salvation of family members? How can the home cooperate with the church in this spiritual task?
- Discuss as parents the spiritual condition of your children. List their individual needs and differences.

- Plan strategies for giving your children opportunities to make their decisions to follow Christ and to be baptized.
- Pray for relatives. Discuss together what efforts the family members can make to lead unsaved relatives to Christ.
- During family worship relate what special opportunities for gospel sharing have occurred for each one during the day in your family, at work, at school, in the neighborhood.
- Discuss as a family the prospective spiritual interest of individuals in work, neighborhood, school, family circles.
- Keep a prayer list of neighborhood individuals and families to whom the family would like to witness and for whom the family regularly prays.
- During family worship talk about special ways of witnessing for the various interests listed.

### **The Family a Religious Training School**

“Consider the family institution a training school, preparatory for the performance of religious duties.” (*CG 482*)

- Spend some extra time with your children today, reading together, talking, playing. Think about their spiritual development as you are with them.

- As parents, take time to talk together about how the upbringing of your children is affecting their present and future religious experience.
- Think of Bible examples of the religious training of children. What can be learned from the home lives of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Daniel about preparation for service to God?
- Talk together as parents about the meaning of making “your children your companions” and being their “very best friends.” (CG 496) How might this equip them to serve God among their companions now and to witness for Him as adults?
- How do the attitudes and skills such as communication, mutual respect, showing appreciation, teamwork, ability to solve problems and loyalty—which make for a satisfying relationship with God and others in His church—have their counterpart in the family?
- Allow God's love for your children to be yours by reading and meditating on Christ's love for children as indicated in Matt. 19:14.
- Read Spirit of Prophecy encouragement sections such as *Christ's Encouragement to Mothers*. (CG 273-276)
- Make your teaching of spiritual values attractive to your children by your positive relationships with them, by smiling often, by entering into your child's feelings.
- By modeling a high regard for all people, teach your children that with God “there are no territorial lines, no artificial distinctions, no caste, no aristocracy.” (6T 294)
- Cooperate with your child in some task of Christian service to which their abilities, strengths and interests are suited and from which they can gain some success and joy.
- Help your older children and young people to form into missionary bands with their playmates and schoolmates for some task of Christian help work.
- Show the value of singing and prayer to your children by singing and praying with them. In later years your child's ability to sing and pray with others will be “genuine missionary work.” (CG 548)
- Teach children “to do little errands of love and mercy for those less fortunate than themselves.” (6T 435)
- Teach children that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) and that both male and female are one in Christ (Gal. 3:28) by involving both boys and girls in acts of Christian help work and missionary service.
- Prepare both “young men and women . . . to become workers in their own neighborhoods and in other places” and “to do that for which they are best adapted.” (9T 118, 119)
- Give opportunities to girls and young women to excel in missionary work, recognizing their gifts and abilities alongside boys and young men and realizing that “they can do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach.” (9T 128, 129)

### **Using the Spiritual Gifts of Individual Family Members**

“A distinct work is assigned to every Christian.” (ChS 9) “Each one has a mission

of some wonderful importance, . . .” (ChS 10)  
“There is a variety of work, adapted to different minds and varied capabilities.” (ChS 12)

- Spend some family worship periods reading and studying the Bible texts on spiritual gifts (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12, 13; Eph. 4). Note that the gifts, though differing, combine in a harmonious way for the upbuilding of the work of God.
- Ask your church leaders about the possibility of taking a spiritual gift or temperament inventory to discuss the unique strengths and abilities which you and your family members possess.
- Study the lives of Old and New Testament men and women such as Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Miriam, Joseph, Deborah, Gideon, Samson, Huldah, David, Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Peter, John, Paul, Barnabas, Luke, Priscilla and Aquilla, looking especially for their spiritual gifts and capabilities and how these were used to glorify God and upbuild His cause.
- Ask your church leaders or your church/church school librarian for biographies of Seventh-day Adventist pioneers or other notable Christian leaders whose spirit of service and spiritual gifts may inspire and encourage your family.
- Think together, pray about and discover what each family member's talents and abilities are and how they could be used by God in the home, in the church, in missionary work in the community.
- Take time to express appreciation in a special way for the unique talents, gifts and abilities of each one in your family, affirming the contribution each one makes to the smooth running of the family.

- The gifts that God has given your children may differ from yours as parents. Invite other Adventist Christian relatives or members in the church who may have spiritual gifts and abilities more nearly like those of your children to share their stories and experiences with your young people to help provide models and examples for them.
- Based on recognized individual talents and abilities, let each family member prepare a list of several specific things he or she could do to witness for God. Solicit help from other family members if you have difficulty preparing the list. Small children may draw pictures depicting their contributions.
- Ask family members to share on a regular basis how God has prompted them to use their talents and abilities in their everyday activities.

### **A Family Missionary Project**

- Discuss how the family's various talents could fit together and be used cooperatively in a special, distinct missionary work.
- Consult with your church leadership for suggestions on special missionary projects that might be helped by your family's involvement.
- Invite each family member to offer a suggestion for a family missionary project. Consider the following variety of activities that are near to home. Add to this list your suggestions.
  - Read the Bible or gospel literature to an elderly or visually impaired person
  - Shop for a shut-in
  - Write a letter of encouragement to a bereaved, grieving or discouraged family

- Visit the sick
  - Provide a no-interest loan to a financially struggling family
  - Bake bread for the hungry
  - Offer a food basket to a family in need
  - Provide once-a-week child care for a single parent
  - Distribute gospel literature
  - Conduct a Bible study for fellow employees during your lunch break
  - Give a few hours of service on occasion to families needing assistance in child care, home remodeling, financial management
  - Provide foster child care for a young person in need
- Pray about and select together your special family missionary project or the ways you might become involved together in more than one project.
  - Give everyone in the family an opportunity to share in some way in the project, utilizing their special talents and skills.
  - Solicit the help of extended family members in the family missionary project.
  - If there are aspects to the missionary project which can be done during family worship, such as writing invitations, preparing mailings, developing Bible studies, then plan for some special worship time which will incorporate these, giving family members time to discuss their feelings about the missionary activity.
  - Tailor the family's involvement to accommodate various ages of family members, keeping an appropriate balance between the family's personal needs and the need to share with others. Strive toward an experience that has some measurable results and whereby all can feel a sense of success and fulfillment.
- Keep a log or journal with observances and reflections on the family's missionary activities. Note areas of need which are present and how God has blessed both participants and recipients of the activities.
  - Pass the joy arising from the missionary project along to others sharing what God is doing through you in a report at prayer meetings, at youth meetings, at Sabbath School, at Divine Worship, or whenever opportunities are present.

### **A Family of Stewards**

- Have a family worship on the topic of tithe. Review the Bible commands, promises and experiences regarding tithe. Recommit yourselves as a family to faithfulness in returning the Lord's tithe.
- Ask your church leaders for information on the distribution of tithe in your division and throughout the world which will help your family members feel a part of the world missionary endeavor of the church.
- Plan some additional family worships on the subject of Christian stewardship as it relates to our time, talents, treasure and body temple. What does it mean to manage each of these areas for God? Recommit yourselves as a family to being faithful stewards over that which God has entrusted us to use for Him.
- Allow children and young people to manage a small amount of the family income as an allowance. The amount can be increased as children grow older. From this, teach the practical meaning of tithes and offerings, including contributions to missions, as well as management of the remainder for some of their needs and wants.

- Take an active interest in the distribution of mission offerings. Ask your Sabbath School superintendent about obtaining current or past issues of the adult and junior mission quarterlies and share their stories with your family. Plan a special gift for the current thirteenth Sabbath offering.
- Plan a family investment project. Ask your Sabbath School investment leader or Sabbath School superintendent for more information and suggestions on how your family can become involved in this plan of raising money for missions.
- As children develop the capacity to appreciate family finance, share with them the various aspects of a family budget, especially that portion which comprises tithes and offerings. Let the whole family take counsel together regarding the amount of offerings given from the family income. Study ways to reduce expenses so that more may be shared with missions.
- Establish a “Lord's Fund” as part of the family budget in addition to regular tithes and offerings. This money may be kept in the family treasury and distributed when family members feel especially impressed by God to assist in some unusual missionary project or some other special need that comes to their attention.
- In addition to regular family tithes, offerings and church commitments, consider and pray about some missionary work with which your family might become sacrificially involved, such as the missionary project mentioned above or some other need that you have become acquainted with.
- Avoiding coercion or manipulation and in a spirit of cooperation as a family, think and pray about how the various means over which each family member has stewardship can be used in your special missionary project. Invite each family member to contribute by making a voluntary sacrifice of money or other personal commitment.

### **Winning Ways with Spouses**

- Be a source of emotional and spiritual encouragement for your non-Adventist spouse, striving not to be judgmental of his/her behavior, but offering compliments and affirmation regularly.
  - Provide an example of your belief in God's grace by living your Adventist Christianity before your spouse honestly. You need not hide your weaknesses and faults; they afford opportunities for communicating with your spouse about the forgiveness and continual renewal you are finding in Christ. Let everything you have learned about relationships in Christ make your experience in marriage better.
  - Make extra efforts to identify and emphasize the things you and your spouse have in common. Seek points of agreement and enter willingly and happily into every possible aspect of your spouse's life which you can. Discover together new activities and friends to replace those that have been left behind because of your beliefs, realizing that the strength of your love bond together is the
- A Sacrificing Family**
- “Make special sacrifices in order to save souls.” (*ChS 8*)
- Study and pray about the spirit of sacrifice. Read from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy on this topic. Note that sacrificial giving does not negate a balanced approach to our management of that entrusted to us, but implies a Christian generosity and unselfishness.

greatest asset you have in winning your loved one for Christ.

- As you develop acquaintances at church, invite men to befriend your husband, or women your wife. Often such same-sex friends can be a strong influence for good upon a non-believing spouse.
- Invite your spouse to participate in activities of church life that will be of greater interest or perhaps less threatening to him or her such as: social activities, health seminars, family life events, retreats, camp-outs, or church building/maintenance programs. Build even a greater sense of participation on the part of your spouse in these and other events by recruiting and enlisting his or her expertise in some aspect of the event.

- Ask your pastor, a literature evangelist or other individual successful in visitation for counsel, guidance and suggestions about how to visit your neighbors.
- Ask an individual successful in visitation to take your family, or members

### **Missionaries in the Neighborhood**

“All can be home missionaries in their families and neighborhoods.” (*ChS 9*) “Visit every family in the neighborhood and know their spiritual condition.” (*ChS 12*)

- Plan as a family how and when you can become personally acquainted with the individuals and families living around you so as to know their spiritual condition.
- Discuss with your family the various possible motivations for visiting families in the neighborhood and knowing their spiritual condition. Why do we visit? Out of fear and guilt for what will happen to us if we don't? Out of obedience to a command of God? Out of Christian responsibility? Out of love and joy with a desire to acquaint others with the Bible message?
- Talk together about how the Adventist Christian message can be both a warning message and a winsome message.

of your family, on a visitation excursion into your neighborhood. Allow this individual to coach you in appropriate manners, conversation and conduct of the visit.

- Discuss as a family how friendships develop and how the warmth of friendship is essential to authentic Christian witness.
- Discuss together how to form a winsome acquaintance with unbelievers and perhaps even genuine friendship, yet remain faithful to our Adventist Christian values.
- To provide an opportunity to become acquainted and begin to cultivate friendship, take a “Welcome to the Neighborhood” gift to a family just moving in.
- Take a “Congratulations on your new baby” gift to a family with a newborn.
- Take a “Congratulations on your wedding” gift to a newly wedded couple.
- Take an appropriate expression of sympathy to a family who has experienced some loss.
- Invite your neighbors to programs at your church, i.e. Vacation Bible School, special holiday celebrations, socials, etc. so you will be prepared to invite them to evangelistic meetings and worship services.
- Take a gift of food to a neighbor. Allow your children to have a part in its preparation and its presentation.

- Give gifts that are tailored to perceived interests and tastes of your neighbors, perhaps a potted plant to a neighbor who likes plants, a stamp for a stamp collector, a recipe for one who enjoys cooking.
- Give gifts that will interest and delight your neighbor's children. Christian periodicals with stories, storybooks, or tapes, for example, are gifts that will be appreciated by both adults and children.
- Ask your neighbors for a favor. Show them that you need their friendship and help as a family.

### **Families that Help and Bless Others**

“The members are to find their happiness in the happiness of those whom they help and bless.” (*ChS 14*) “There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts.” (*ChS 19*)

- Have a “help and bless” brainstorming session with your family. What act of Christian helpfulness might your family perform right now for some acquaintance in your extended family, your church, your neighborhood, your community?
- Pay a friendship visit to a shut-in.
- Take a prepared meal to a family or individual in need. If appropriate, stay and enjoy the meal with them in their home, taking care of the necessary preparation and clean-up.

### **Sharing a Personal Testimony**

“They could tell what they knew; what they themselves had seen, and heard, and felt of the power of Christ. This is what every one can do whose heart has been touched by the

grace of God. . . . We can tell how we have tested His promise, and found the promise true. We can bear witness to what we have known of the grace of Christ.” (ChS 17)

- Share your personal testimony with your family during family worship. Invite others in the family to tell something of their experience.
- Look for opportunities to share your testimony with a close friend, a neighbor, a stranger whose experience at the moment may make them receptive to your sharing.

### **Offering Something Better**

“The people of the world . . . are to be turned from their false worship, not by hearing denunciation of their idols, but by beholding something better.” (ChS 15) “Let your voices be heard in humble prayer, in witness against intemperance, the folly and the amusements of this world, and in the proclamation of the truth for this time.” (ChS 19)

- Have a family meeting about how to witness to others in “humble prayer,” “against intemperance,” and “the folly and the amusements of this world,” and “the proclamation of the truth for this time,” not denouncing them for their beliefs, habits, or opinions, but giving them something better to behold. Write down any ideas or suggestions that arise.
- When visiting homes of friends or acquaintances offer a humble prayer as you part company. Your prayer will be a powerful witness to your belief in God, His care, and the truth in which you believe.
- Invite other families, acquaintances of the family or those with whom you would like to become better acquainted, to your home for family worship. Make the service brief, interesting and full of life. Sing songs that can be easily sung and

pray short, simple prayers. Choose cassettes for listening or readings tailored to the age and interest level of those present.

- Invite others to your home for a meal. Teach principles of temperance and



“something better” by sharing with others the way your family enjoys eating and drinking healthfully. Let your meal be simple and typical of what your family regularly enjoys.

- Invite others to join you in a family outing or recreational activity that is typical of the wholesome times your family spends together.
- Lighten the load on your family and spread the joy of fellowship by joining with one or more other Adventist families or single individuals when inviting others for a meal, for worship, or for an outing.

### **Reaching Out to the World**

- Learn the names and locations of missionaries from your locale or region that are serving in missions. Pray daily as a family for these missionaries.
- Obtain addresses and write regular letters of encouragement to foreign missionaries.
- Take special interest in the projects of the 13th Sabbath Mission offering. Learn more from libraries, magazines, etc. about the country, the people and needs of the area where one of these specific projects is located. Pray for this project and plan as a family to support your prayers with a sacrificial offering on 13th Sabbath.
- Discover from your pastor or church leadership where there are areas unentered by Seventh-day Adventist missions in your country or some other country. Learn all you can about this area and its people. Pray that doors for entrance to this people will be opened.
- Contact your pastor or church leadership about how to make contact with a pen pal from a foreign country.

Have family members write to pen pals appropriate to their ages and share with the family what they learn about life in another country.

- Short terms of service are available for adults and young people in a growing number of areas in the world. The doors to service in these areas are open through the General Conference, through educational institutions and private organizations. Inquire of your pastor or church leadership about the possibilities for family members to experience some mission service. If possible, plan to participate in such a missionary experience.
- As the Adventist message circles the globe, more and more workers are needed in foreign fields in a wide variety of professions and occupations. Consult with your pastor or church leadership, pray about and consider as a family whether some of your family members might serve the Lord in full-time mission service.
- Pick a block in your town where there are no Adventists living and consider this your “unentered” area in which to make missionary visits, distribute literature, etc. to win individuals for Christ.
- Make a study as a family of one of the main world religions outside Christianity. Discuss creative ways Adventists might reach these groups with the good news about Jesus. What about their religious beliefs might make them open or closed to such good news?
- Talk as a family about what Adventists share in common with other Christians. Discuss how it is that God has many children not yet of this fold. How can Adventists be blessed by other Christians? How can we share some of our special insights to bless them?

- Plan for mission service as a family if the opportunity arises.
- Should it be necessary to relocate as a family, pray about and consider moving to a section of the city, country or region where Seventh-day Adventists are few or non-existent so as to provide a witness there.
- As children are growing in the family discuss the blessings and importance of missionary service either at home or

abroad and the possibility of settling themselves as adults in parts of the country that need the witnessing presence of Seventh-day Adventists.

#### KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS OF E. G. WHITE BOOK TITLES

CG Child Guidance  
 ChS Christian Service  
 CT Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students  
 6T Testimonies, vol. 6  
 9T Testimonies, vol. 9

Additional Program Resources  
Family Togetherness Week  
September 19-26, 1992  
**Organizing a *Caring Parents* Group**

### **Why a *Caring Parents* group?**

A *Caring Parents* group can provide a setting for parents to fellowship and support each other and work through common parenting issues.

***Parents need other parents.*** The encouragement given them through association and interaction with other parents provides an affirmation of themselves as persons, gives them a sense of belonging to a community of others who share similar concerns, and provides opportunities for celebrating the joy and satisfactions of parenting.

***Parents can help other parents.*** In a *Caring Parents* group, an environment of trust and acceptance is created. Parents experience a sense of freedom to examine their own behavior, to observe others and try alternate ways of relating to their children.

The *Caring Parents* group is a special application of the 'small companies' principle: "Let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers. . . . Let them keep their bond unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 22.

"We meet together to edify one another by an interchange of thoughts and feelings, and to gather strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another's hopes and aspirations; and by our earnest, heartfelt prayers, offered up in faith, we receive refreshment and vigor from the Source of our strength."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 578, 579.

### **Organization**

The *Caring Parents* group is loosely structured with several parents covenanting with each other to meet on a regular basis for a specific period of time. Size of the group is flexible, though personal sharing tends to be diminished in groups larger than ten or twelve. The group may meet as often as once per week or once in 2-3 weeks. Meetings should be kept to a maximum of two hours, beginning on time and ending on time.

It is important that the group have calendar boundaries, perhaps of 9-12 months at which time the group terminates or re-covenants for another year. The school calendar year of nine or ten months has been found by some to provide a satisfactory time framework.

## **Membership**

Open to any parent who is interested and committed to the particular goals of the Caring Parents group. In larger churches several such groups may form with each having a different focus such as early childhood training, challenges of parenting teens, single parenting, or ministry to “wounded” parents, who are discouraged by the rejecting attitudes of their adolescent and early adult children.

## **Leadership**

An individual or couple may serve as facilitator(s) of the Caring Parents group. As the structure of the group is flexible, so the leadership style may vary, depending on the needs and goals of the group and the personalities and abilities of those in leadership. Leadership responsibilities may be rotated around the group during meetings or from meeting to meeting.

Group leaders should be familiar with group process, possess some basic leadership skills, and have a high level of propriety. They should be alert to their own limitations and the limitations of the care group.

## **Process**

Caring Parents groups exist for the purpose of allowing parents to focus on their personal needs, their needs as couples in relation to their children and the needs of their children. Although common bonds and socializing will develop within the group, this must be secondary to the primary task of concentrating on some aspect of the issue affecting relationships. The leader couple may select topics or all members may be asked to suggest issues to be used as topics. The group may construct an agenda for an entire year, for several meetings in advance, or do so on a meeting to meeting basis.

Books, tapes, films, exercises or other materials may be used as springboards for discussion.

Discussion Guide Resource  
for  
**Caring Parents Groups**

The following are discussion starters for a Caring Parents Group using passages from the *The Wounded Parent* by Guy Greenfield. Information for purchasing this book may be found in the Resources section.

**Session 1 - Asking for Help**

When your son or daughter has gone astray, one of the worst things you can do is pull into your shell and hurt. Many of us believe that such problems are so personal that they aren't anyone else's business. We think that in time we can handle our own problems. We learn from our culture that we are supposed to be able to stand on our own two feet.

When you feel your family has been torpedoed, you need help. Asking for help, although at first a difficult step for many, can be the first movement toward recovery. . . .

To ask for help is not only to acknowledge our humanity but also to begin the desired healing process. God uses other people to assist in healing in the emotional realm, just as He does in the physical realm.—Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Parent*, pp. 24, 25.

1. What were your emotions when you first discovered one of your children going astray?
2. Can you talk about your family situation with a small circle of friends from your church? If not, why not?
3. Do you feel that God has failed you in your family situation? If so, can you describe your attitude?

**Session 2 - The Pain of Rejection**

When children do not live up to their parents' expectations, the experience is similar to a divorce. This is especially true when the parents' expectations pertain to morality and religious convictions. This type of divorce is an especially painful form of rejection.

A rejection of the moral codes of one's parents will likely be taken personally by the parents. We parents are too wrapped up in our moral convictions to separate ourselves intellectually from those convictions and not feel the emotional pain of rejection when our children disappoint us with their behavior.

When a child goes astray morally, he or she will also inevitably reject the family's church and all it stands for. This will be embarrassing to many parents. It is so often taken as a sign of

parental failure. What will the parents say to their friends at church (especially if the child's behavior involves the police or a pregnancy)?

God is so identified with religious, church-going parents that when youth rebel against their parents, they will probably rebel against God also. In other words, the will of the parents is the will of God. The lifestyle of the parents is a godly lifestyle. At least, this is what the children think.

This is not a carefully reasoned-out process in a youth's mind. It is usually a subconscious process of identification. However, if there are any deep-seated feelings of anger on the part of the child toward the parents, one way to strike out in anger is to reject those values, beliefs, and practices that mean a great deal to the parents. If God means much to parents whose child is rebelling, the objects of rebellion will likely include God.

The hardest part of the pain of rejection is the thought that a wayward child has rejected your love. Rejection of love hurts and hurts deeply. At the time, there seems to be no reasonable explanation for the rejection of sincere love. Such rejection seems to be ungrateful cruelty.

Rejection of parental love is a very personal form of rejection. For someone to reject your love is to reject **you** as a person. This is difficult for anyone to take.

When your child goes astray, it hurts. And it's all right to hurt if you will use the pain to discover your strengths and weaknesses and to determine to **grow** thereby.—Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Parent*, pp. 37, 39, 41, 42, 45.

1. Can you describe the types of rejection you have experienced as a parent?
2. Is conditional love being expressed in your home? How can you avoid this?
3. How are you coping with marital strain due to your situation with your son or daughter?

### Session 3 - Managing Your Emotions

Pain results from feeling rejected. Feeling rejected by a son or daughter makes a parent hurt emotionally. This is a pain that is as severe as physical pain. Most of us have experienced what is commonly called "hurt feelings."

Pain also results from feeling disappointment. High expectations for a son or daughter can be easily shattered by his or her refusal to meet those expectations and a decision to go his or her own way (especially when such behavior involves actions contrary to the parents' moral standards).

It's all right to hurt (to be disappointed) if you will go beyond the hurt to serious efforts to listen, to understand, to care, to support (if wanted), and to love unconditionally. More important than your hurt feelings is your son's or daughter's freedom to make his or her own decisions, even if you disagree with those decisions. If the decisions, in your estimation, are poor ones, then let the consequences be the ultimate teacher. This is not easy to do; it may be part of the pain of being a parent. But (especially for an older teenager or young adult) it may be the only way.

Listening and understanding are better than anger and resentment. Unselfish concern for your child's problems is better than embarrassment. Asking for help is better than wallowing in self-pity. Resolving grief is better than sinking into it. Pain needs to be transcended by unconditional love in an atmosphere of freedom. Learning from our mistakes is better than indulging in a guilt trip. Trust in God is better than the paralysis of fear.—Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Parent*, pp. 53, 54, 56.

1. How can parents handle embarrassment about their children's behavior?
2. How can your Christian faith help you to choose new and healthy emotions?

#### Session 4 - Staying Out of the Blame Game

When your son or daughter has rebelled against your Christian beliefs and values, it is normal to look back over the years and ask yourself, "What went wrong?" But instead of asking, "Who's to blame?" or "Whose fault was it?" it is so much more productive to ask, "What can I learn from this? How can I best relate to my child now that all of this has happened? How can my husband or wife and I work together in building a new relationship with our child?"

I personally found it to be a great relief the day I discovered that my undershirt does not have a large monogrammed S on the front of it. Likewise, there is no large W on my wife's clothing. I am not Superman and she is not Wonder Woman when it comes to parenting. The day we both accepted that fact was a day a heavy burden was lifted.

God's forgiveness is clearly promised and eagerly offered. Confessing your perceived mistakes to your son or daughter is not so easy. Timing and place will be important. Only God, working through your good common sense, can impress you to know when and where that will be. But do confess your mistakes to your child. However, do not expect your child to readily respond in kindness and forgiveness. He or she will need time and some maturity to know how to respond. Someone has to take the first step in reconciliation. When you do your part, leave the response in the hands of God and in the will of your child. Be patient.

Don't dwell on the past. What has happened has happened. Laying the blame on another is neither your business (you are not omniscient) nor a productive procedure. Avoid berating yourself for your "parental failure." Jesus died for our sins. We need not nor cannot atone for them. Learn from the past as best you can (although our memories and perceptions are often poor). Reach out to bless your child as best you can at this late date with love, acceptance, trust, and encouragement.—Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Parent*, pp. 67, 69, 73.

1. Do you feel an inclination to put up a pretense of perfection? Why?
2. What constructive lessons can you derive from the past in regard to your children?
3. Is there an unblessed child in your family? What can you do about this?

## Session 5 - Building a New Relationship

A wounded parent can neither correct all the mistakes of the past nor bring a son or daughter back to the relationship that existed five or ten years earlier. Present realities must be squarely faced and accepted. Although you may not agree with your child's lifestyle, values, or behavior, it will help the family situation greatly if you can merely accept the fact that "this is the way it is." Such acceptance will facilitate immensely your next move: trying to build a new relationship. This will not always be easy, nor can it be done quickly, but you can start in this direction.

All parents should be working themselves out of the job of being parents and easing themselves into the relationship of being friends of their children. This is especially true of wounded parents. I am not suggesting that you cannot be both parents and friends at the same time during the early formative years of your children's lives. By the phrase *the job of being parents*, I mean the role of parenting. But as children grow up, the role of parenting by father and mother should diminish while the role of friend should increase.

You don't have to compromise your moral convictions or religious beliefs in order to be open in communication. If your son or daughter has moved out of the house or lives at a distance due to location of a job, you can still call or write, but keep the conversation or subject on a nonjudgmental level. He or she knows how you feel about value differences between you. Your son or daughter wants to know if you still care, in spite of differences. Is a communicating friendship still possible? You will have to decide.—Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Parent*, pp. 87, 96.

1. How do you feel about shifting from the role of parent to that of friend with your children?
2. What does it mean to be judgmental of your children? respectful?
3. To what extent should you protect your child from the consequences of his or her behavior?

## Session 6 - Finding Creative Possibilities in Disappointment

Failure doesn't mean you are a failure. . . .

It does mean you haven't succeeded yet.

Failure doesn't mean you have accomplished nothing. . . .

It does mean you have learned something.

Failure doesn't mean you have been a fool. . . .

It does mean you had a lot of faith.

Failure doesn't mean you've been disgraced. . . .

It does mean you were willing to try.

Failure doesn't mean you don't have it. . . .



It does mean you have to do something in a different way.  
Failure doesn't mean you are inferior. . . .  
It does mean you are not perfect.  
Failure doesn't mean you've wasted your life. . . .  
It does mean you have a reason to start afresh.  
Failure doesn't mean you should give up. . . .  
It does mean you must try harder.  
Failure doesn't mean you'll never make it. . . .  
It does mean it will take a little longer.  
Failure doesn't mean God has abandoned you. . . .  
It does mean God has a better idea.

Robert H. Schuller quoted in Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Parent*, pp. 102, 103.

1. Reflect on these thoughts. What idea stands out for you at this moment?
2. What creative possibilities can emerge from your disappointment?

### Session 7 - Supporting Each Other

The church is engaged in a major spiritual war in the midst of a hostile and secular battlefield, and the church is suffering many casualties. The injured need to and can help each other.

Your wounds of disappointment, heartache, and discouragement as a parent can be filled with purpose and meaning as you reach out to other wounded parents to heal their injured spirits.

If you will allow God to use this situation to work through the problems you are facing, it can be an unusual opportunity for God to reveal Himself in a most powerful way to those who are watching how you respond. I have known of several wounded Christian parents who have told their stories time and again to interested people and have related how God continued to bless within their homes. Even in the midst of seemingly tragic circumstances, God was able to bring about miracles between parents and children. People do not ignore that type of witnessing. Such shared faith is never artificial but has the ring of reality.—Guy Greenfield, *The Wounded Parent*, pp. 110, 111, 117.

1. How has the experience of a support group helped you?
2. How do you feel when you discover other wounded parents in your church or circle of friends?

Selected Resources  
for  
**Parenting and Values Training**

**Book Selection of the Year**

Roger L. Dudley, *PASSING ON THE TORCH: HOW TO CONVEY RELIGIOUS VALUES TO YOUNG PEOPLE*. Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1986. 191 pages, \$12.95.

A few people probably shouldn't bother to read this book—namely, those who are (1) already familiar with the most important thinking and research on moral development, and (2) satisfied with the way they are communicating ethical and religious values to the young people in their lives (offspring, students, younger church members). But for those who don't meet both of these criteria, Roger Dudley has provided some useful ideas, information, and insights.

*Passing on the Torch* is addressed to a general Adventist audience. It presupposes no particular familiarity with the professional literature of education, psychology, or ethics. It is replete with appropriate quotations from the Bible and Ellen White, and most of its illustrations are drawn from Adventist faith and life (with many from Dudley's own teaching experience).

After a slow start with a couple of chapters of definitions, Section One gets off the ground with a fresh look at the kind of religion we want to transmit to the coming generation. The answer: a religion that is carefully considered and individually chosen, more concerned with relationships than obedience, integrated and altruistic. Section Two reviews the major theories of moral development (Piaget, Kohlberg) and the most important research (Hartshorne and May, Peck and associates). It also includes reports of two Adventist studies: the Purdue dissertation by Derrick Proctor (1974), which found Adventist academy seniors several years behind other young people their age in the development of moral judgment; and a recent investigation by Dudley and his wife, Margaret (1984), comparing the religious values of teenagers and their parents.

Section Three describes a number of strategies and techniques for developing moral thinking and transmitting moral values—using moral dilemmas, values clarification, value reasoning, parental modeling, et cetera—that can be easily adapted to an Adventist context.

The book makes three main points about moral and religious values: they are freely chosen rather than imposed; they are transmitted by modeling rather than by direct moral instruction; and they are influenced most by parents rather than church, school, or peers. . . .

*Passing on the Torch* is a very good book—good for teachers at every level, for parents, for pastors, for Sabbath school personnel, and for anyone else who cares about the

young people who are the future of the church. If it gets the wide reading it deserves, the whole church will benefit.—Fritz Guy

Dr. Fritz Guy is Associate Pastor of the University Church of Seventh-day Adventists in Loma Linda, California, and a Lecturer in Theology at Loma Linda University. He previously served as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Loma Linda University and as a professor at the SDA Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

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## BOOKS

**HOW TO REALLY LOVE YOUR CHILD.** Campbell, Ross. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1977. 132 pp. \$5.50.

Written by a psychiatrist, a very practical book on helping the parent express love so the child can feel and understand it. Areas included are physical touch, positive eye contact and focused attention. Spanish: *Si Amas a Tu Hijo* (Betania)

**HOW TO REALLY LOVE YOUR TEENAGER.** Campbell, Ross. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1982. 132 pp. \$5.50.

Writing on the premise that few teenagers feel loved and accepted by their parents, Dr. Campbell explains how a parent can meet the need to feel loved and cared for. He offers suggestions for expressing love to the teenager that will benefit the entire family. Spanish: *Si Amas a Tu Adolescente* (Betania)

**HURTING PARENT, THE.** Lewis, Margie M., with Gregg Lewis. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980. 144 pp. \$6.95.

This book describes real experiences of Christians whose children (teenage and adults) have chosen not to follow the Christian way. The author takes these real happenings and then draws from them lessons regarding shame, rejection, anger, guilt, despair, acceptance, unconditional love, forgiveness, hope and more.

**PARENTS, KIDS & SEXUAL INTEGRITY.** Joy, Donald. M. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988. 206 pp. \$12.99.

In this book Joy offers parents an approach to parenting that better prepares children and adolescents to face a world confronting them with difficult choices regarding drugs and alcohol and sexual promiscuity. He examines the characteristics of families that can produce mutually fulfilling relationships and offers parents and kids both an honest look at the painful experience of growing up, and hope for raising and becoming responsible, mature teens.

**PASSING ON THE TORCH.** Dudley, Roger. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1986. 191 pp.

The author draws on his experience as counselor and researcher to discuss religious values and how to make the work of parents in transmitting them to their children more effective.

**VALUES BEGIN AT HOME.** Ward, Ted. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1979. 120 pp.

Believing that our age presents new moral demands and that the family is a key player in preparing individuals to live moral lives and make moral decisions, the author offers an introductory book on how to think about moral issues and make value choices. In addition

to his presentation of biblical values, the greatest contribution of this book is the discussion of the structure of moral judgment, the "why" of values. The moral development theories of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg are examined from a Christian perspective.

**WHY TEENAGERS REJECT RELIGION--AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.** Dudley, Roger. Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978. 160 pp. \$7.95.

From a background of 10 years in youth ministry, Roger Dudley presents a careful study of the basic causes of youth alienation. In a scientific manner, the author explores the thinking and attitudes of academy-age young people and outlines plans and techniques that will reduce the alienation problem. In this book, which is completely Christ-centered, the author has one prime purpose and that is to unite youth and their parents and teachers in joyful fellowship with Jesus.

**WOUNDED PARENT, THE.** Greenfield, Guy. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1982. 135 pp. \$5.95.

"Our culture teaches us to dream, to plan for our children's future," writes Dr. Greenfield. "Although our dreams may be somewhat unrealistic, they are important to us, and we find a degree of pleasure in the dreaming process itself. Dreams, however, can be shattered on the reefs of reality. Things don't always turn out as we had hoped. Yet we are seldom prepared for this." This book offers hope and practical guidance for parents who feel abandoned by God because their children have not turned out as they had planned. It is an answer to a cry for help from parents who cannot understand or cope with their wayward children.

## **CURRICULUM RESOURCES**

**COMPLEAT PARENT WORKSHOP, THE.** Better Living Programs, 366 North Lind Avenue, Fresno, California 93272. Textbook and workbook.

Materials prepared by Nancy Van Pelt for use in her parenting seminars. Covers the topics of self-respect, communication, discipline, character and responsibility, parent/teenager relationships, sibling rivalry and sex education.

**FAMILIES AT WORSHIP.** Department of Church Ministries, General Conference of S.D.A., 12501 Old Columbia Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

Leadership resources for instruction regarding family worship. Featured is a six-session program entitled "Family Worship Seminar" developed by John and Millie Youngberg. This includes cassettes, leader's materials and participant's handouts.

**FAMILY WORSHIP WITH PRESCHOOLERS.** Department of Church Ministries, General Conference of S.D.A., 6840 Eastern Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20012.

Features a four-part seminar for parents developed by Judy Dunn. Includes step by step outline, camera-ready vu-graph masters for making overhead projection transparencies and participant's handouts, prepared mini-talks, songs, stories, and additional resources.

**GROWING KIDS.** Murdoch, Ruth and Flowers, Karen. Department of Church Ministries, General Conference of S.D.A., 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904, 1988.

Leader's Guide to accompany the six-part seminar on character growth and moral development of children by Seventh-day Adventist psychologist and educator, Ruth Murdoch.

**POSITIVE PARENTING.** Bell, Ann W. Concerned Communications, Highway 59 North, Siloam Springs, AR 72761, 1987. Instructor's materials, participants' guides, supplementary booklets and advertising kit.

A five-session seminar on Christian parenting. Topics covered are: Marriage: The Foundation of Your Home; The Art of Communicating and Encouraging; Helping Your Children Learn; Strengthening Family Values; The Reward of Discipline. Also available in Spanish.

## **VIDEO**

**CHRISTIAN HOME, THE / DISCIPLINE IN THE HOME.** Gospel Films, P.O. Box 455, Muskegon, MI 49443. 50 minutes. Purchase price \$29.95.

Dr. Howard Hendricks of Dallas Seminary asks the questions: Why have I failed as a parent? How can we be losing our child when we are so sincere? What can I do to restore a close relationship to my child? While Dr. Hendricks is an avid churchman, he is quick to point out that the church is not and was never meant to be a substitute for the home, that the home is to be a natural and Christ-loving environment where opportunities are strategically arranged by the Spirit of God to relate Christian truth to children. An excellent discussion film for parent groups to emphasize the responsibility of parents in communicating Christian values, rather than relying only on the church for this.

**FAMOUS FATHERS.** David C. Cook Publishing Co., Elgin, Illinois 60120, 1984. Two videos, four 28-minute video presentations. Purchase price \$199.00

Six well-known Christian dads—Josh McDowell, Bill Gaither, Dr. Kenneth Cooper, Rosey Grier, Stan Smith and Noel Paul Stookey—share aspects of their lives and fathering experiences. Topics of the four video segments are: The Fatherhood Adventure; The Gift of Direction; The Gift of Spiritual Discipline; The Gift of Understanding.

**FOCUS ON THE FAMILY.** Mass Media VIDEO Ministries, 2116 N. Charles St., Baltimore, Maryland 21218. Six video cassettes. Purchase price \$79.95.

In this popular program series, Dr. James C. Dobson helps you tackle the problems you may think "are only happening in our family." Dobson is an associate clinical professor of pediatrics and an authority on family relationships. The six segments are: "What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women; Parts 1 & 2," "The Strong-Willed Child," "Christian Fathering," "Shaping the Will Without Breaking the Spirit," "Preparing for Adolescence, Part I: The Origins of Self-Doubt," "Preparing for Adolescence, Part 2: Peer Pressure and Sexuality."

**FOR PARENTS ONLY.** Evangelical Films, 1750 N.W. Hiway, Suite 250, Garland, TX 75043. Twelve 30-minute videos. Purchase price \$250.00.

An excellent parenting resource from a Christian perspective focusing on parent/teen relationships. Twelve, 30-minute small-group lectures on a range of pressing subjects: "The Model Parent," "The Power of Love," Teen Stress Points," "The Erosion of Trust,"

“Parent-Teen Communication,” “Self-Image and Self-Esteem,” “Causes of Teen Depression and Suicide,” “Sexual Issues Facing Teens,” “The Drug and Alcohol Crisis,” “Defusing Anger in Your Home,” “The Power of Labeling,” and “Loving Your Prodigal Teen.”

**GROWING KIDS.** Department of Church Ministries, General Conference of S.D.A., 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904. Six part series. 55 minutes each session. Purchase price \$69.95. Leader's Guide, 111 pp. \$12.95.

A six-session video cassette series on Christian parenting with Dr. Ruth Murdoch, well-known Seventh-day Adventist psychologist and educator. Dr. Ruth shares many stories from years of experience both as teacher/counselor and mother, and explores the fundamentals of child growth and development with special attention given to character development.

**SEX AND THE YOUNG CHILD.** Franciscan Communications/Teleketics, 1229 South Santee Street, Los Angeles, CA 91605. 8 minutes. Purchase price \$89.95.

This is an excellent video discussing the many facets of sexual awareness and development in children. Three sessions address sexual development in children and sex education in the content of a broad philosophy of sexuality and warm, loving, open relationships in the family.

**TREASURES OF THE SNOW.** Glenray Communications, P.O. Box 40400, Pasadena, CA 91114, 1980. Phone: (818) 797-5462. 110 minutes, color. Video purchase \$59.95. Available in French, German, Dutch, Italian and Portuguese.

A gripping and touching film about forgiveness and reconciliation within families and between families. Filmed in an Alpine village, the narrative depicts the very real feelings of anger, hurt and rejection that spring from and cause misunderstandings, poor communication and acts of revenge. As compassion, love and acceptance are experienced, the way opens for forgiveness and renewal to take place. A very moving film with universal appeal.

**UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN.** Adventist Life Seminars, 8201 Bancroft Ave., Lincoln, NB 68506, 1984. Five sessions. Purchase price \$249.00.

Dr. Kay Kuzma discusses children's basic needs and emotions, successful methods of discipline, and how to build self-worth.

**WHAT MAKES A CHRISTIAN FAMILY CHRISTIAN?** David C. Cook Publishing Co., Elgin, Illinois 60120, 1984. Four 30-minute presentations.

*Chapel of the Air* radio speaker David Mains and his wife, author Karen Mains, use actual experiences from their family life to show how strong Christian values can be developed in every Christian home. Topics covered are: “God with Us—Discovering Christ's Everyday Presence;” “Restoring the Sabbath—Celebrating the Lord's Day;” “Different and Proud of It—Examining How We Live;” “Thy Kingdom Come—Using Our Homes to Further God's Kingdom.”

**YOUR FAMILY'S SPIRITUAL LIFE VIDEO SEMINAR.** Kay Kuzma. Family Matters, P. O. Box 7000, Cleveland, TN 37320, 1986. Purchase price \$100.00.

Designed to be presented as video lectures in a family life seminar or mid-week meeting. Topics: Discovering Spiritual Gifts; Values; Making God Real; Leading Your Child to Christ; Living the Life of Faith.



Reprinted Article

**Helping Youth Get the Most from Their Families**  
How the Church can enhance values transmission in families.

Ronald M. Flowers

*THE SATURDAY REVIEW* of June, 1980, published an article entitled "Letters From My Son" that chronicled the life of a young man and his relationship with his parents, particularly his father.\* At age 11 Billy wrote:

*"Dear Dad,*

*"I know you said why . . . but it doesn't seem right, or fair, that you aren't here for my birthday. Do you have to travel so much to make money?"*

*"Love, Billy."*

Other letters to his father through the early teen years reflected on the family's move across the country to California, on the trial separation between his parents, and on the difficult time he was having at boarding school. At age 16 he wrote:

*"Dear Dad,*

*"I always felt sorry for some of the guys here at school who didn't have both parents here on Parent's Day. Now I guess I'll be one of them. You said you and Mom would figure things out as far as the holidays go. Hope you'll let me know soon where I'm to go. Sorry this letter is so glum but all you've both said takes some getting used to."*

Letters throughout the late teen years told of his decision to attend college in the Midwest. (*"I think their values might be good for me to identify with. There seems to be something solid and strong about the Midwest to me."*) His letters also spoke of

his dating, of motorcycles, and of an early marriage. At 21 this letter came:

*"Dear Dad,*

*"My marks are holding up, so is the job. But marriage isn't easy is it?"*

Four years later, now a father himself, a busy traveling executive, and a man with a faltering marriage, he wrote:

*"Dear Dad,*

*"I did what you asked—I stuck it out for a year, but I have to let go of the marriage. I have to live alone for a while. I feel guilty about Jonathan, but I'm drowning and have to save myself. Try to understand."*

*"Love, Bill"*

The last letter the author of the article shared was written when his son had gone through a time of soul-searching and spiritual discovery and had remarried:

*"Dear Dad,*

*"Well, I've had my 'big one.' I know you thought 50 was the big one, but I can't believe I'm 30. Jonathan is 7, and I've already had two honeymoons! Dad, I've never said this to you, and I may only say it once, but I'm proud to be your son. Thanks for understanding."*

*"Love, Bill"*

*"P.S. Cathy likes you a lot too."*

When youth come to church; when they congregate for whatever reason; when

they attend junior high, academy, high school, and college; when they finally step out to face life on their own, they take their families with them. Not in a literal sense, of course, but in a sense that they are the products of life in their families. Despite their intention, sometimes—in trying to be separate and distinct from their families—they are linked to them in subtle yet real ways. Throughout life they will be affected to some degree by what transpired in their homes. The letters from Bill show the influence his father and mother had on him, and how much his life was shaped by their lifestyle.

If we would minister effectively for youth—evangelizing them for Christ, helping them to have healthy relationships today, and making sure preparation for tomorrow—we must recognize not only that they are individuals but also that they are products of family networks that continue to influence them. We must seek to ally ourselves with the home as a discipling agency and seek to strengthen the dynamics that are present within it. If we fail to perceive the linkages that exist between youth and their families, our efforts to minister to them as individuals may actually place greater stress on their relationships than may already exist.

Having worked with many young people, counseled them, sought to establish relationships with them—to motivate and inspire them—I have discovered that their family backgrounds and present family situations influence their attitudes heavily. Their lifestyles—and even to a greater degree than I had anticipated, their decisions—have been influenced too. I remember one young woman, who, it seemed to me, desperately needed to get away from home, find herself, acquire some new friends, meet Adventist young men, and make some decisions for herself. I worked with her on plans to attend one of our colleges. I even helped her sort out her finances. Her family was rather large.

Despite my work with her she felt that she was obligated, as the oldest, to work and to help provide for her family. Years later, she is still doing that.

Youth who know intimate, lasting, satisfying relationships in a Christian home will be more likely to have an interest in being part of the spiritual family of God. They will be more likely to have successful relationships with peers, make wise choices in selecting marriage partners, be effective in rearing their own children, and will be able to form those close relationships with others around them that most naturally lead to fruitful witnessing.

The work of encouraging this primary relationship-building in the home and the reinforcing of the family—this unique support group for the youth—is not peripheral to the work of church ministries but crucial to its accomplishment. The following ideas should help harness the family's potential in building healthy relationships with youth today and preparing them for tomorrow.

**Sponsor events for parents of youth.** Educational programs for parents are now beginning to proliferate on such topics as drugs, depression, and suicide in youth. As important as these are (and we need far more of them), we need to take such educational, informational programs a step further—moving beyond crisis intervention to deal with such topics as developing positive attitudes in youth and how to have healthy parent-youth and youth-peer relationships. Another message that needs to be communicated to the parents of youth is that the process of discipling our youth through positive, Christ-centered relationships at home continues as long as we have contact with them. While much of the transmission of values that parents can effect does occur at early ages, it is never too late to focus on ways to improve relationships.



**Organize support groups.** These provide parents with a network of individuals who know what the others are experiencing. Even for those whose children may not face such crises as drugs and depression, a support group can help a parent not to feel so alone, so guilty, so uninformed, or so anxious. Such networks provide prayer support, and because the friendships that develop between different parents lead to an increased awareness and interest in other people's children, one positive result of such support groups can be to provide youth with other adults interested in them and willing to interact with them at times when their own parents, for various reasons, are unable to do so.

**Encourage youth-family togetherness and interaction.** Family members today are pulled in different directions by conflicting schedules and responsibilities. Add to this the natural tendency of youth to want to be with their peers, and the result is a family who spends little time together. More needs to be done through whole-family events—family clustering activities, family retreats, and family camps—to provide special times when family members can grow in their relationships with one another. Small workshops with youth and parent groups—sometimes together, sometimes separate—can be coupled with recreational activities that families can enjoy by themselves or with others. It will take some creativity, but ways can be found to bring families together and yet allow youth to mingle with their peers.

Ideally, we would want our youth to be discipled in their families. Where possible, I believe we should endeavor to strengthen rather than replace that primary group, improving its relationships and assisting it in its task of transmitting religious values. There is a vast field of endeavor here that we have only begun to touch.

Circumstances, however, often prevent such discipleship from happening at home as it should. Single parents often are overloaded. Spiritually-divided families often are less than effective in dealing with religious instruction and spiritual values. Many youth spend much time away from home or are away at school. Positive, healthy family relationships are no less important for these young people, however. Youth groups led by caring adults can become surrogate families, providing young people with love and acceptance, a sense of belonging and identity. Such leaders and groups assist youth in the socialization process, in the development of relational skills, and in preparation for adult living. These “significant others” can be vitally important in modeling healthy ways of relating to people. Their acceptance, their willingness to listen and to disclose themselves to youth, their ways of responding emotionally and making decisions—all have powerful and lasting impact.

One woman reflecting upon her academy days remembered a student teacher who came to the Facing Life class. In discreet, tasteful ways, this teacher allowed her class to see into her life as a new bride. She shared her thoughts about the transition from single to married living, the adjustments that had to be made, and how special it was to share sex in marriage when it had not been shared with anyone before. She discussed how hard it had been to wait, but how glad she and her husband were that they had. “We could ask her anything,” this woman said, “and know that we'd get an honest answer.”

Because youth are so keenly and vitally interested in relationships, we should endeavor to make our Bible teaching in Sabbath School classes relevant to relationships. A creative leader or teacher can make the Word come alive. Every Bible

doctrine we teach has a relational component that reveals the person of God, draws youth to a deeper relationship with Him, and instructs them regarding their relationship with each other.

The principles of family life in the body of Christ and in our families are the same, and they are taught by being caught—by the experiencing of positive, Christ-centered, redemptive relationships.

Church ministry for children and youth becomes more effective as it recognizes the profound importance of such relationships, endeavors to strengthen the youth's primary relationship with his family, and so structures those other settings where youth are ministered to so as to give them as many of the characteristics of primary family relationships as possible.

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Reprinted Article

### **Marriage: A Heritage worth Celebrating**

Good marriages reach across the years to bless several generations.

Karen M. Flowers

A while back my mother was sorting through some old papers and struck gold, as I have come to value things. Amongst all manner of newspaper clippings, church papers, and ragged recipes was an eleven-year diary kept by my great-grandmother from 1928 to 1939. It is typewritten, single-spaced, and full of typos, for Great-grandma was blind.

Daily entries were sometimes scarcely half a line.

*"Was at Roys for supper."*

*"Broke supporter to new corset today—am mad!"*

*"War broke out in Europe today."*

*"I sure am happy tonight."*

On other days there was time for more reflection.

*"When the children were small and I was tired, I would often wonder whether there would ever be an end of it all, and now I wonder whether they will ever all be home again at once."*

*"An old friend Gimmie Harpst was here for dinner. We talked late into the night of old friends long dead. Can we ever find friends like those of our youth?"*

*"The Wall street crash was a year ago today. But that's sure nothing to celebrate!"*

*"Another year has come around — 1930—with all its joys and sorrows. O gracious God, Thou has been kind, so very kind to me. Through all these challenges, help me find the path that leads to Thee."*

Firsthand I never knew what kind of marriage Great-grandma and Great-grandpa Beckwith had. The diary ends abruptly six years before my birth. But it does provide 11 years of insights into their married life from 1928 to 1939. Here is what I gleaned.

Theirs was a traditional marriage, in keeping with the times.

*"Governor Couper was inaugurated today. Dad—says that's good."*

*"Dad got wallpaper. He is mad at the crooked walls."*

*"Doris and I drove over to Longs. Got a flat tire and tried to fix it, but it didn't stay fixed. Rode clear to Findlay on the rim. A man fixed it for us. Women need men, nice courteous ones who will lend a hand. Dad and Orrin had the laugh on us!"*

*"Dad bought an oil stove yesterday. Just showed up with it from town."*

"Dad" was the affectionate name Great-grandma Beckwith gave her husband.

Here and there the diary smiles with glimmers of tenderness, romance, forgiveness, and love.

*"Dad got the 'stunff' very bad. In bed all day with cheeks flushed. Wish I knew what to do to help him."*

*"Dad 64 today. Got him a hat, too. Handsome man!"*

*"I hate to eat the candy Dad gives me. Every piece is precious."*

*"Dad and I went to see poor Raymond. On the way home I cried and cried, while outside it poured and poured as if all nature sided with me. Dad says it's all right to cry."*

*"Our wedding anniversary. Married 43 years. Stacies, Roys, and Orens gave us a surprise party. Brought cake, ice cream, and gifts. What a celebration!"*

*"Dad cut corn at Roodgers today, 8 miles away. Forgot dinner. I sure felt bad about it!"*

*"Dad's sorry he forgot."*

*"Dad and Ernest came within a hair's breadth of being killed today with auto. Whatever would I do without my man?"*

*“Dad brought me a big bottle of perfume.”*

*“Estella died today and her baby, so sweet and plump, breathed but a few seconds. Poor Dad is so broken up. Estella, our beloved daughter, laid to rest. Sad we are and heartbroken that one so young should go so soon from her loved ones and be wrapped in the arms of death. Dad and I wait together for Jesus to come.”*

When I was 7, Great-grandma died. Not much was left as estates go, but to their family they gave a most precious heritage, memories of a relationship that endured some 50 years and brightened their family circle with love.

In my parent's home we have what's affectionately known as “The Box.” During holidays when we are all together at Mom and Dad's, my brother Joe is always the one to haul it out of the closet. For years now we've threatened to get it organized, even assigned various responsibilities to different family members. But no one ever follows through—reluctant, perhaps, to end a tradition.

In the box are mostly pictures—from antique tintypes of relatives nearly forgotten, to formal family settings through the progressive toothless grins of four siblings. There's Mom and her sister standing pigeon-toed, clutching their dolls, Grandpa on Dad's side holding my two aunts in a rattan rocker; my little brother, aged 3, decked out in his underpants and favorite hat, me in my eighth-grade-graduation regalia; and my folks on their wedding day.

As always we go through it piece by piece, retelling this illustrated story of our lives for the benefit of our partners and the grandchildren. Intimate living has had its ups and downs for us as for every other family, but for now, the good memories press to the fore.

Last time we went through “The Box” I happened to catch a quiet smile pass between Mom and Dad as we chattered over yet another unearthed treasure. That's when I began to understand. This box was and is their best gift to us. These bits and pieces of

heritage, when sifted together over time, speak mostly of laughter, warmth, acceptance, and understanding. The love of a man and woman for each other has been passed along. Because of them and the testimony of their marriage together, we too know how to love. Good marriages give the gift of intimacy to their children.

This summer my husband and I celebrated our twentieth wedding anniversary over a soft ice-cream cone at Rusty's restaurant in the small rural town where Ron grew up. Two heaps of the raw materials of personhood and background brought together at our wedding, August 7, 1966, have been raked together over the years to make us one. There have been times when romance could not have been sweeter, moments when we have leaned hard upon one another and mingled our tears. We have known moments of ecstasy when in our oneness we created something we sensed neither of us could have achieved alone, and times when both of us have been so hurt, angry, and discouraged we have fantasized what it would be like to be out of the relationship all together. And in-between, scores of ho-hum days when we just lived together, side by side.

But as I looked at this man across the picnic table behind Rusty's suddenly it came to me that while twenty years of hills and valleys together merits a celebration, the real celebration of our marriage is rooted in the metaphor “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:25). For it is the unconditional love of this man Ron for this woman Karen that has helped me more than anything else to dare to believe the good news of the gospel, that it's really possible to be both fully known and fully loved. And I hope that in this closest of all earthly ties I have offered my beloved an experience in small measure like the one the cross of Jesus Christ opens for him to know God.

Perhaps in your memories there is no Great-grandma and Great-grandpa, no Mom and Dad, no experience in intimacy that gives you great cause to celebrate marriage. Then let the heritage begin with you. You can determine to be a transitional couple, two persons who decide to provide a model of marriage by grace for your children and their children's children. And there are scores of

married couples who have made a better marriage the object of their quest, who are more than willing to share their experience with you, that together you might grow toward God's ideal. Through our marriages God wants to shed abroad His love. It is the greatest inheritance we have to pass on to our children, our best gift to the world.

Reprinted from *Worker*, Oct/Dec 1986.

## A SONG OF LOVE

Sabbath School Lessons on the Song of Solomon,  
Fourth Quarter, 1992

***Family Ministries leaders will want to link arms with Sabbath School leaders in every way possible to prepare the way for these lessons and to encourage lesson study and the best of Sabbath School teaching for this special quarter of family emphasis.***

### A Sneak Preview

Songs of love flourish in every generation because human beings are created for relationships. That one such song is preserved in Scripture draws the curtain back on God, illuminating Him for all time as One who smiled with great delight on His creation in the beginning and who has not changed His mind about the goodness of all that He has made.

Despite the tragic freefall in human relationships from the perfection of the beginning to the brokenness that marks the endtime, the haunting melody of Eden still lingers. In dark times over the centuries and in the painful life experiences of many, the song of love can scarcely be picked out of the discord, but the Song of Songs represents a grand prelude to the day when, in Jesus Christ, the fully orchestrated symphony of human intimacy—with God and with each other—can again be heard.

Whether you seek a one-finger melody to meet the needs of your own soul, or to blend your voice in more perfect harmony with that of another, or whether you yearn for the restoration of the majestic themes of co-regency and oneness which vibrated through human instruments when the world was a paradise, the Song of Songs plays for you.

***“Rise up, my love, my fair one,  
And come away.  
For lo, the winter is past,  
The rain is over and gone.  
The flowers appear on the earth;  
The time of singing has come!”***

***Song 2:10-12***

Division \_\_\_\_\_

Union \_\_\_\_\_

### Evaluation

## 1992 Family Ministries Planbook "Passing On the Torch"

1. On a scale of 1-10 ranging from "Of little value" to "Extremely valuable," how would you rate the materials?

Of little  
value

Extremely  
valuable

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| <i>Role of the Family in Faith Development:<br/>A Look at the Valuegenesis Report</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| <i>Your Marriage: Shaping the Next Generation</i><br>Sermon resource for February 15  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| <i>Families Who Foster Faith</i><br>Sermon resource for February 22                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| <i>A Time for Turning</i><br>Sermon Resource for September 19                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| <i>Me-Me</i><br>Children's Story  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| <i>Trouble With Hands</i><br>Children's Story   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| <i>Jon's Hard Lesson</i><br>Children's Story  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| <i>The Bible that Saved the Ships</i><br>Children's Story                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| <i>Growing Together Through Conflict</i><br>Resource for Married Couples              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| <i>Making Christian Values Winsome</i><br>Additional Program Resources                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| <i>Organizing a Caring Parents Group</i><br>Additional Program Resources      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Discussion Guide Resource for<br>Caring Parents Groups                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Selected Resources for<br>Parenting and Values Training                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| <i>Helping Youth Get the Most from Their<br/>Families</i> , Reprinted Article | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| <i>Marriage: A Heritage Worth Celebrating</i><br>Reprinted Article            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Evaluation  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

2. What changes would make the materials more helpful to you?

Receiving them sooner

More detailed instructions for usage

More sermon illustrations

More program resources

More helps for family life leaders

More children's stories to accompany sermon topics

Other

3. What adaptation of these materials or good ideas for their use can you share with us?

*Please return this form to Karen and Ron Flowers, Department of Church Ministries, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904 USA*